

Newcastle's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol 2024/25

1. Background

This Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) describes Newcastle's arrangements for responding to people who are sleeping rough, and the additional arrangements that will be put in place to protect people when there are 'severe weather conditions'

During periods of extreme cold weather SWEP includes arrangements for a single offer of a safe place to stay for people sleeping rough, including those without recourse to public funds. For those who have no local connection to Newcastle, we will assist people to return to their area of connection, as a priority in normal working hours. If the person contacts out of hours there may be either an offer of a safe place to stay for one night only or assistance to return to a safe place in their area of connection where that is a neighbouring authority area. The single offer of a safe place to stay may be a "sit-up" in one of the city's homeless accommodation services.

During periods of extreme hot weather, the physical risks from sleeping outside at night are different to extreme cold and there is a greater risk associated with spending extended periods of time on the street during day time hours. During periods of severe heat, SWEP includes additional arrangements whilst continuing to provide the daily response of offering accommodation and reconnection. Vulnerable individuals will be provided with information around health and remaining safe in the heat, provided with necessities such as water, reusable water bottles and sun cream and provided with information on those venues that individuals will be encouraged to make use of during the day to have respite from the heat and its effects and to receive support

The SWEP is an extension of Newcastle's ongoing policy to offer somewhere safe to stay and reconnection to everyone who is sleeping rough with no accommodation available to them. We cannot force people to take up this offer and we cannot ask our accommodation providers to continue to provide accommodation for people who place their staff or other residents at risk due to violent or threatening behaviour.

- **What is the trigger for severe weather provision?**

When the weather is predicted by the MET office to be a minimum temperature of 0°C or below using the "feels like" indicator for 3 or more consecutive days the cold weather SWEP measures will be activated in Newcastle. When an Amber heat warning is issued for Newcastle the additional measures for dealing with the heat during the daytime hours will be activated

- **Who qualifies for help under the SWEP?**

Someone who has been verified as sleeping rough by either Changing Lives' Street Outreach Team, Northumbria Police or Newcastle City Council.

- **What can you do if you are concerned about someone sleeping rough or at risk of homelessness?**

If you are sleeping rough or have the consent of someone who is sleeping rough to act on their behalf, please contact us on:

Freephone: 0800 1707 008 (or if out of hours 0800 1707 008 option 2 to discuss with the Emergency Out of Hours Call Handler)

Email: housingadvicecentre@newcastle.gov.uk

If you see someone who you think may be sleeping rough, please contact on:

Email: roughsleeping@newcastle.gov.uk

(This public reporting email is not an emergency response service and if there are serious concerns about a person's immediate health or welfare then contact should be made with the emergency services)

More information is available here: [What to do if you see someone sleeping rough](#)

2. Below is information about how we routinely respond to rough sleeping

Our year-round routine response is to try to make sure no one sleeps rough by:

- preventing people from ending up on the streets by supporting people at risk of homelessness and trying to manage the transition from institutions for example prison and hospital
- having a [Preventing Evictions Protocol](#) in place with all commissioned homeless accommodation providers to prevent evictions on to the street
- where we fail to prevent rough sleeping, we offer specialist short-term relief accommodation and assistance with reconnection to the persons area of connection, so that no one needs to sleep rough
- 365 days a year outreach service offering access into accommodation and support or reconnection to the person's area of connection
- where an offer of accommodation and support is refused, the outreach team will maintain contact and continue to offer accommodation and support
- giving everyone found sleeping rough a coordinated personalised plan to ensure that there is an agreed set of actions to support the person off the street and into accommodation
- working with voluntary sector, faith and community groups to respond to people they work with who are sleeping rough
- working in partnership with the Police, health and social care services to coordinate responses to the unmet complex health and care needs that are often the obstacles to a person being accommodated

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Email: housingadvicecentre@newcastle.gov.uk **Contact telephone:** 0800 1707 008

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