

## Luton rough sleeping strategy 2019-22

Please note the following message from Councillor Tom Shaw:

August 2019

**'The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 to 2022 will remain in place while we develop a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy in 2025'**

**Our aim is to half the number of individuals verified as rough sleeping in 2016 by 2022, and end rough sleeping by 2027.**

This document outlines the local initiatives in place to end rough sleeping and brings together the rough sleeping ambitions from both the:

- [Housing Strategy 2019-22](#)
- [Luton homelessness prevention strategy review 2018-19](#)

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## Introduction

Rough sleeping happens for different reasons and impacts differently on each individual. It is a dangerous and isolating experience and the longer a person is sleeping rough, the greater the harm caused. Prolonged periods of rough sleeping can result in poor mental and physical health, offending, exploitation and a reduced life expectancy.

The National Rough Sleeping Strategy, launched in 2018, sets out the ambition to end rough sleeping by 2027 through prevention, intervention and recovery initiatives and committed Rough Sleeping Initiative funding to support this ambition in areas that reported a high number of people sleeping rough in 2017.

Accurately measuring the number of people sleeping rough is difficult. The numbers below do not reflect the total rough sleeping population in Luton but the number of people counted bedded down on a single night – this ‘typical’ night count is recognised as the national measure. In November 2017, 4,751 people were recorded as sleeping rough across the country on a typical night – a 15% increase on the previous year.

Number of individuals counted sleeping rough in Luton on a typical night:

- 2014: 30
- 2015: 53
- 2016: 76
- 2017: 87
- 2018: 47

## Rough sleeping initiative (RSI)

Luton was awarded RSI funding in summer 2018. This allowed the commissioning of additional services and opportunity to increase outreach capacity, including:

- specialist mental health nurse
- drug and alcohol link worker

In the first six months, the RSI interventions supported over 130 individuals away from rough sleeping and into accommodation.

This has enabled us to:

- gain greater insight into our rough sleeping population
- understand the challenges that they face
- develop appropriate new pathways and services

Rough sleeping is a complex issue and often people will return to the streets many times before finding accommodation they are able to settle in.

Rough sleeping cannot be tackled in isolation and underpinning this strategy is a principle of collaborative working across the statutory and voluntary sector.

We're a member of the independent Luton Homelessness Partnership, which is committed to inclusion of those who have experienced rough sleeping. Their experiences of homelessness and of the services in place to support them will be fundamental to shaping new services and strategic approaches.

## Strategic priorities

This strategy briefing identifies:

- our plans to increase our effectiveness in the prevention of rough sleeping
- how we will support those currently street homeless
- what we will do to ensure that every person has opportunity to flourish

## Governance

This strategy will be overseen by the Rough Sleeping Strategic Forum which reports to the head of Housing Needs. The strategic lead is John Holman, Director of Housing.

## Prevention

To prevent homelessness we will:

- support the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act through the introduction of the Homeless Prevention Team and personal housing plans for everyone at risk of homelessness
- Back on Track Scheme for households at risk of homelessness to enable them to access independent housing
- develop the existing Capita Referrals system to deliver a multi-agency solution to single homeless applicants
- review supported housing services to prevent repeat rough sleeping amongst people with complex needs
- launch a social lettings agency that will secure private rent one bed properties at affordable rates
- develop a partnership resettlement forum to prevent individuals leaving supported accommodation and return to rough sleeping
- introduce an accessible pathway into temporary accommodation for individuals who are rough sleeping
- launch of new hospital discharge protocol
- ensure that individuals that are relieved from rough sleeping have access to the mental health outreach nurse and drug and alcohol link worker until they are stable in treatment

### Success in prevention will mean:

- less individuals will become street homeless in the first place
- a joined up approach for supported housing providers so people do not fall through the gaps
- increased options in accommodation

## Intervention

Intervening to prevent homelessness will include:

- publicise and encourage staff and members of the public to report individuals who are rough sleeping through the StreetLink app and website
- increase assertive outreach to individuals sleeping rough – including mental health and alcohol and drug specialist outreach

- secure funding to commission emergency assessment accommodation, reconnection and support to find work for those who have no recourse to public funds
- support the provision of the severe weather emergency provision (winter night shelter)
- open a 'Somewhere Safe to Stay' unit that will offer 72 hour assessment beds
- commit 20 one bed properties to a local 'Housing First' scheme and secure funding for support
- coordinate the delivery of the RSI funded interventions and work with providers to develop new pathways
- increase the provision and access to health services for individuals that are sleeping rough
- provide tenancy support across a range of accommodation
- support the design and delivery of a scheme that reduces the amount of cash given to people who beg which prevents them from moving on
- work closely with the Neighbourhood Enforcement team to ensure those facing enforcement action have been offered accessible accommodation and support

#### **Success in intervention will mean:**

- increase in on street support and offers of accommodation
- reduction in the rough sleeping numbers
- improvement in partnership working
- increase in accommodation options
- increase in number of people sustaining accommodation

## **Recovery**

To support people who have experienced homelessness and have been able to move on, we will:

- develop new routes from hostels into independent accommodation for those who are ready
- work with partners to develop long term supported housing options for those with complex needs
- work closely with Luton Lets so people have a choice of affordable private rent accommodation in locations that best suits their recovery needs
- apply for Homes England Move-on fund for a specialist pathway for women
- provide tenancy support for those at risk of risk sleeping who are moving into private rented accommodation and ensure it offers a coaching and resilience building approach
- maintain tenancy support for as long as it is needed through continued grant funding
- connect individuals who are housed into community activities and to reconnect to family support networks if appropriate
- ensure all individuals who have experienced rough sleeping are aware of the independent Homelessness Partnership and the opportunities it offers
- take a co-produced approach to all recovery development

#### **Success in recovery will mean:**

- a reduction in the number of individuals that return to rough sleeping
- increase in the number of individuals engaging in health services
- increase in the number of individuals successfully moving on from hostel accommodation thereby freeing up space