

February 2009

Ending rough sleeping – the London Delivery Board



MAYOR OF LONDON

Contents

Foreword	1
The background	2
The problem	3
The response – the London Delivery Board....	4
The partners	5
The next steps	6



**Putting Down
Roots**

It is deplorable that in this great capital city so many have to resort to sleeping on pavements and in doorways. In 21st century London I am determined that rough sleeping should be a thing of the past, which is why I have committed to ending it.

Clearly this can only be achieved through partnership and a shared response. I want to bring together all those with a role to play in London. To end rough sleeping we must go further than we have before and harness the full potential of the capital's rough sleeping services to deliver action across boundaries. We must also build on the expertise of our boroughs, voluntary services, health professionals and others to provide lasting solutions. For these reasons I am establishing the London Delivery Board to end rough sleeping.

I have no doubt there will be challenges ahead and difficult decisions to be made. In the current economic downturn we will face competing priorities with the possibility of diminishing resources, with the recession threatening to drive up not only rough sleeping but wider homelessness. This Board is



about providing timely, appropriate and sustainable solutions that take and keep rough sleepers off the capital's streets, and preventing new people flowing onto them.

Ending rough sleeping is an ambitious commitment, but with the support, passion and expertise of all stakeholders I believe it is a commitment we can honour and achieve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Boris Johnson'.

Boris Johnson Mayor of London

2 The background

The Mayor has committed to end rough sleeping in London by 2012. The commitment, contained within the draft London Housing Strategy¹, takes forward in the capital the vision of the government's national rough sleeping strategy to bring rough sleeping to an end once and for all².

In London, the Mayor is uniquely placed to deliver on this ambitious target, with his strategic roles in housing, health and refugee integration and as chair of the London Skills and Employment Board. These roles, together with the Mayor's regional leadership, will for the first time give London a cross

sectoral, co-ordinated approach to tackling rough sleeping.

Central to achieving this target will be partnership and a shared response. This will require the Mayor and central government, London's boroughs, voluntary sector providers and other key stakeholders to work together to tackle this challenging and enduring problem. For that reason the Mayor has established a London Delivery Board to end rough sleeping, which for the first time in London will bring together these partners with each tier of government, to identify timely, appropriate and sustainable solutions to rough sleeping in the capital.



¹ The Draft London Housing Strategy, GLA, November 2008
² No One Left out – Communities ending rough sleeping, CLG, November 2008

The problem

Official counts suggest a total of 248 rough sleepers on London streets on any one night – half of the national total. Over the course of a year outreach teams contact almost 3,000 people sleeping rough in the capital – approximately half of whom are newcomers to the capital’s streets. While rough sleeping in London has declined over the past ten years, the capital is the only region in the country that has failed to meet the government’s original 1998 target to reduce rough sleeping by two thirds.

People end up on the street for a range of reasons such as poverty, debt, unemployment, family breakdown or health issues. For some already vulnerable groups there can be trigger points that lead to rough sleeping such as leaving care, prison or hospital. Migration is also a significant factor in London, where up to 20 per cent of rough sleepers are A10 nationals.

A significant majority of rough sleepers find their own way off the streets after a short period of time. However, others have complex needs and issues, such as drug, alcohol and mental health problems, and can remain on the streets for long periods.

Tackling rough sleeping requires action from health, drugs and alcohol and social support services, from



the statutory and voluntary sectors. There is a need for a co-ordinated approach, but this is difficult in London where services cover different geographic areas within a single city. Commissioning boundaries and localised targets have fragmented ownership of the problem and the response to it. This has resulted in service inequalities and exclusions from services due to issues of local connection, which can be particularly problematic for a highly mobile group. Therefore, despite the many excellent services in the capital provided by boroughs, health services and voluntary sector organisations, rough sleeping persists.

The response – the London Delivery Board

The Mayor recognises that ending rough sleeping by 2012 will require a new and dynamic approach and has therefore established the London Delivery Board. The Board will establish among its membership a joint commitment to and ownership of the problem of rough sleeping and the target to end it. It will draw on the strategic reach and expertise of its membership to develop and implement actions that reflect that rough sleeping is a pan-London problem requiring a response that is both wider than borough level and cross sectoral. This partnership approach will ensure that the most effective use of resources is achieved, and that better strategic co-ordination results in better outcomes.

The Board will develop a detailed action plan. This will by necessity have to address a range of key issues if the target to end rough sleeping is to be met. Priorities will include responding to the needs of entrenched rough sleepers and A10 nationals, encouraging greater cross authority co-operation, improving health care for those on the street and in hostels, providing more skills and employment opportunities, and increasing opportunities for moving on from hostel accommodation.

Early priorities of the Board's action plan will include:

- relaunching the London Reconnections Protocol
- supporting the development of new 'working hostels' providing for rough sleepers who are working or job-ready
- learning from the pilot of personalised budgets for entrenched rough sleepers and widen its scope if it is successful
- supporting the development of a specialist project for rough sleepers with multiple needs, especially targeting those who have behavioural and health-related problems linked with alcohol abuse
- working with partners at the United Kingdom Border Agency and Jobcentre Plus to tackle the growing problem of rough sleepers with no recourse to public funds who require a specially targeted intervention
- engaging outer London boroughs to improve their work to prevent rough sleeping
- working with boroughs and providers to dramatically improve the proportion of rough sleepers moving on from hostel accommodation in a planned way.

The Board will also have to reach out to regions and cities beyond the capital to prevent the consequent flow of people into London.

The partners

The London Delivery Board will be chaired by the Mayor's Director of Housing, Richard Blakeway.

Board members include:

- Local authorities: City of London, Westminster, Camden, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Southwark and Tower Hamlets
- Voluntary sector representatives: Homeless Link, Crisis, St Mungo's and Thamesreach
- Government: Communities and Local Government, Jobcentre Plus, Ministry of Justice, United

Kingdom Border Agency,
NHS London

- Other: Greater London Authority, London Development Agency, Metropolitan Police.

The Board will be supported by structures that allow the input of a range of others. This includes the GLA's Homelessness Roundtable Group (a group of chief executives and senior officers of the major voluntary sector providers in London), and groups representing key local authority and voluntary sector officers working on the front line.

Photo courtesy of Crisis



The next steps

In the coming months the Board will:

- hold its first meeting on 13 February 2009 and subsequently meet quarterly
- develop a time-framed action plan with clear milestones
- establish working groups as necessary to deliver in specific areas, such as health or skills.

Further information

For more information on the London Delivery Board please contact Simon Cribbens in the Greater London Authority's Housing and Homelessness Unit.

simon.cribbens@london.gov.uk

Published by Greater London Authority, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, More London, London SE1 2AA www.london.gov.uk

