

## Pan-London SWEP activation procedure 2024-25

This document details the process which will be followed for activation of SWEP in London during winter 2024-25. It should be read alongside the GLA and London Councils' *London SWEP Guidance 2024-25* document.

This procedure has been jointly developed by the GLA and London Councils, with input from services and local authorities, and should be incorporated into all London local SWEP plans.

Note that 'activation' refers to opening of SWEP accommodation to new referrals. 'Deactivation' relates to closing of SWEP to new referrals only and is not a directive for those already booked in to be asked to leave. See the 'In for Good' principle in the *London SWEP Guidance 2024-25*.

### SWEP activation procedure

#### Preparation

1. GLA and London Councils will provide all local authorities with this procedure document and separate SWEP guidance.
2. London Councils will request SWEP information from all local authorities, including planned provision, and key contact details.

#### Monitoring

3. GLA officers will monitor daily temperatures using a bespoke 3-day forecast from the Met Office<sup>1</sup>.
4. If the forecast is for temperatures of 0°C or below within the next three days in any part of London, the GLA will send an advanced warning email to London boroughs.
5. If the daily Met Office report (received at 07:30 every morning) forecasts a minimum temperature of 0°C or lower anywhere in London within the next 24 hours, GLA and London Councils will activate SWEP for all of London by 10:00 (go to step 8 for activation).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The temperatures forecast in these bespoke reports commonly differ slightly from the temperatures forecast for the same boroughs on the Met Office's website or app. The bespoke reports provide a more accurate forecast for each specific area and are therefore used to inform activation and deactivation.

<sup>2</sup> In instances where temperatures are close to 0°C and other factors are in play, such as heavy snowfall or very cold 'feels-like temperatures', GLA and London Councils may also activate SWEP. In any unconventional situations, GLA or London Councils may consult with those borough leads who can be contacted before making a decision on activation or deactivation.

In the unlikely event that temperatures reach 0°C in one isolated location and are not expected to be near 0°C in any other part of the capital, the GLA and London Councils may take the decision not to activate SWEP at a pan-London level.

6. If the daily Met Office report (received at 07:30 every morning) forecasts a minimum temperature of 2°C or lower but above 0°C, this will prompt a specific additional round of manual checks by the team by 11:59<sup>3</sup>.
7. If the forecast temperature has fallen to or below 0°C by 11:59, GLA and London Councils officers will consider whether the forecast of 0°C is localised or widespread.

If localised, GLA will

- contact those specific boroughs affected to advise that they could activate SWEP locally
- confirm that GLA SWEP overflow provision will be available to them if local SWEP capacity becomes full.

If widespread, GLA will

- trigger a pan-London activation of SWEP.

## Activation

8. GLA officers will email the SWEP contacts network with an alert that SWEP has been activated. This will be done by midday at the latest.<sup>4</sup>
9. The lead contact from each borough, or a nominated deputy, will confirm receipt of the alert and activation of local SWEP plans by return email to the GLA. All correspondence from boroughs will be shared with London Councils.
10. Lead contacts in each borough will be responsible for cascading activation notification to local services and partners.
11. If the temperature has fallen to 0°C on a Friday, or it is forecast on a Friday that temperatures will drop to that level during a weekend or bank holiday, SWEP will normally be activated until the morning of the next working day, regardless of any changes in temperature.
12. Only in a very exceptional scenario, such as unusually large variations in temperature over the weekend, will the GLA activate or deactivate SWEP during a weekend or bank holiday. GLA and London Councils officers will make every effort to consult with boroughs before this is actioned. Boroughs who are able to activate and deactivate SWEP locally on a Saturday or Sunday may wish to do so, if they would prefer this approach to keeping SWEP open for an entire weekend.
13. In extreme circumstances, SWEP may be activated during the winter due to periods of severe weather unrelated to freezing temperatures e.g., dangerously high winds or storms. This is most likely to be prompted by a red weather warning issued by the Met Office, indicating risk to life. Wherever possible, GLA and

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<sup>3</sup> In the event that these conditions are met on a Friday the following procedure will apply throughout the weekend.

<sup>4</sup> If no alert is received by midday it should be assumed that SWEP is not being activated, however in conditions that are considered marginal a message to confirm that SWEP is not being activated may be sent.

London Councils will seek to contact a number of borough leads to consult them on this potential decision prior to activation.

14. GLA and London Councils will jointly make the decision whether to activate SWEP in any of the exceptional scenarios above.

### **On-going activation**

15. This process will repeat, with daily alert messages confirming that SWEP remains active as long as minimum forecast temperatures remain at or below 0°C in any part of London. Daily confirmations from borough leads are not required.

### **Deactivation**

16. If the forecast is for minimum temperatures above 0°C in all parts of London, the GLA and London Councils will take the decision to deactivate SWEP across all of London.
17. GLA officers will email the SWEP contacts network with an alert that SWEP has been deactivated, and a reminder of the 'In for Good' principle. This will be done by midday.

If a council opens local SWEP earlier, or for longer, than pan-London activation this is of course welcome, local leads are simply requested to notify the GLA.

The principles of SWEP activation are reliant on accurate forecasting of temperatures. In the event that measured temperatures are significantly higher or lower than those that were forecast there is, unfortunately, little that can be done as this will only become apparent retrospectively. If it is found that this occurs frequently or the impacts of this phenomenon are severe, this will be taken into account when reviewing the current SWEP process and alternative triggers may be considered.