

Pan-London Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) Procedure 2025-26

This document details the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) for London during winter 2025-26. It should be read alongside the GLA and London Councils' *London SWEP Guidance 2025-26* document.

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

'Activation' refers to opening of SWEP accommodation to new referrals. 'Deactivation' relates to closing of SWEP to new referrals only and is not necessarily a directive for those already accommodated to be asked to leave. See the 'In for Good' principle in the *London SWEP Guidance 2025-26*.

SWEP Activation Procedure

Preparation

1. GLA and London Councils will provide all local authorities with this procedure and additional 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 Office¹.
4. If the forecast is for temperatures of 0°C or below within the next three nights 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 10:00.²

¹ 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.

² In some rare instances where temperatures are very close to (but above) 0°C and there are other exacerbating factors, such as heavy snowfall, GLA and London Councils may also activate SWEP. In any unconventional situations, GLA or London Councils will consult with sub-regional rough sleeping coordinators who can be contacted before making a decision on activation.

Activation

6. GLA officers will email the SWEP contacts network by 10:00 with an alert that SWEP has been activated.
7. Lead contacts in each borough will be responsible for cascading activation notification to local services and partners in accordance with local protocols. Sub-regional coordinators will liaise with boroughs and London Councils to confirm local SWEP arrangements are operational across the city.
8. The decision on whether to activate SWEP is based on a bespoke forecast produced by the Met Office each morning and this decision will not be altered later in the day. This is intended to maximise operational efficiency and provide sufficient notice for a good standard of SWEP provision to be stood up.
9. If the forecast temperature has fallen to 0°C on a Friday, or it is forecast on a Friday that temperatures will drop to 0°C during a weekend or bank holiday, SWEP will be activated until the morning of the next working day³. The GLA and London Councils will endeavour to activate SWEP as early as possible on Friday morning, to enable boroughs to prepare for the weekend.
10. SWEP will be activated for the whole weekend even if temperatures are not forecast to fall to 0°C across all three nights. In this scenario, boroughs which can activate and deactivate SWEP locally on a Saturday or Sunday may do so, if they would prefer this approach to keeping SWEP operational for the entire weekend.
11. The GLA and London Councils will not initiate a pan-London SWEP activation on a Saturday or Sunday. In rare cases where temperatures unexpectedly fall to 0°C during the weekend, having not been forecast to do so on Friday, boroughs are encouraged to put local SWEP arrangements in place if they can do so.
12. In the unlikely event that temperatures reach 0°C in one isolated location and are not forecast to be near 0°C in any other part of London, the GLA and London Councils may jointly take the decision not to activate SWEP at a pan-London level and instead discuss with the affected borough whether local SWEP arrangements can be put in place.
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. GLA and London Councils will seek to contact sub-

³ The same principle applies for bank holidays which don't fall on a Monday. SWEP will be activated on the working day preceding this until at least the morning of the next working day.

regional rough sleeping coordinators to consult them on this potential decision prior to activation.

On-going activation

14. This process will repeat daily with alert messages confirming that SWEP remains active as long as minimum forecast temperatures remain at or below 0°C in any part of London.

Deactivation

15. 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.
16. GLA officers will email the SWEP contacts network with an alert that SWEP has been deactivated, and a further reminder of the 'In for Good' principle. This will be done by 10:00.

Local authorities may open local SWEP earlier, or for longer, than pan-London activation. Where this occurs, local leads are requested to notify the GLA and London Councils.