

## **Guidance for winter Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) in Greater London 2018/19**

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Homeless Link Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) and Winter Provision Guidance, which provides advice for local authorities nationwide. The Homeless Link guidance can be read [here](#). Reference should also be made to the GLA's draft review of winter SWEP 2017/18 which highlights best practice and has been sent to all London authorities.

### **1. Background**

The Greater London Authority (GLA) funds pan-London 'overflow' severe weather accommodation. Last year, for the first time, the GLA provided guidance for London's councils regarding local SWEP plans. This guidance, which has been agreed by all 33 London councils, introduced a new trigger point for SWEP activation of 0°C on any one night to ensure consistency across the capital.

Following the successful implementation of the new guidance and unusually severe conditions last winter, the GLA undertook a comprehensive review of SWEP provision. The review highlighted a number of opportunities to improve provision, some of which are set out in this new guidance.

### **2. Guidance on borough SWEP provision**

The Mayor asks that all London councils adhere to the following minimum standards in SWEP provision this winter.

As in previous years:

- councils represented on the Mayor's No Nights Sleeping Rough Taskforce should provide capacity for a minimum 10 rough sleepers in severe weather. Other boroughs should provide a minimum capacity of five; and
- while SWEP provision may be provided in a variety of settings, each council should ensure that their accommodation can be easily accessed from across the borough (by foot or public transport, and by both clients and the services working them).

In addition, from this this year, to agree that:

- SWEP for every council across London will be triggered and activated when any part of the capital is forecast to be 0°C or lower overnight (rather than being triggered locally according to the forecast for the individual borough). The GLA will coordinate this pan-London activation of SWEP which will help reduce confusion and cross-border inconsistencies that our review found to be problematic last year; and
- Councils will commit to implementing the 'In for Good' principle. This means that once someone has accessed SWEP shelter they are accommodated until a support plan is in place to end their rough sleeping - regardless of whether the temperature has risen above 0°C<sup>1 2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A support plan will be considered to consist of an assessment of needs and eligibility, a service offer, and a nominated lead support agency.

<sup>2</sup> It is recognised that some people will have very limited options due to issues outside of the local authority's control; for this reason it is expected that local authorities will work towards this goal, rather than being able to guarantee its delivery in every case.

Councils with local protocols that already exceed these guidelines should, of course, continue operating their current good practice.

SWEP is an emergency response, and as such it is expected that councils will work together in that spirit of cooperation. Specifically, providing shelter should not be considered as accepting a local connection or constitute a relief duty.

### **3. Pan-London overflow SWEP provision**

The GLA pan-London overflow SWEP accommodation is currently provided by St Mungo's. In line with this year's new guidance, SWEP across the London, including pan-London overflow, will be activated whenever the temperature anywhere in the capital reaches 0°C. Once capacity is full within a given council's individual SWEP provision, pan-London SWEP will be available for referrals from that council.

The SWEP coordinator for an area has the responsibility for notifying St Mungo's at [sweepmanagers@mungos.org](mailto:sweepmanagers@mungos.org) and the GLA at [roughsleepingcommissioning@london.gov.uk](mailto:roughsleepingcommissioning@london.gov.uk) when their emergency accommodation is close to capacity and overflow accommodation may be required. Where there is capacity within the borough's own emergency provision, it is expected that all rough sleepers will be accommodated there, rather than in the pan-London beds. Where possible, notification of anticipated need should be made by midday to allow pan-London provision to prepare.

As usual, the GLA will collate information from boroughs of their key contact and planned capacity.<sup>3</sup>

### **4. Monitoring**

All councils should record the number of people supported through their SWEP and share this aggregate information with the GLA, for each activated period.

Councils should also, wherever possible (see below), use CHAIN to record local SWEP stays and monitor the use of their SWEP provision. This should include the numbers accommodated each night and the demographics and support needs of those using the emergency spaces. This will allow a comprehensive evaluation of SWEP provision, inform future pan-London provision, and enable further improvements to the protocol in following years. The CHAIN team can provide more information about this at [ChainHelpdesk@MUNGOS.ORG](mailto:ChainHelpdesk@MUNGOS.ORG).

It is, however, recognised that a requirement to record details on CHAIN can, in some instances, be a barrier to people accessing SWEP. So, while CHAIN recording is strongly encouraged it is not an absolute requirement.

If you have any questions regarding this document please contact:

[roughsleepingcommissioning@london.gov.uk](mailto:roughsleepingcommissioning@london.gov.uk).

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<sup>3</sup> Further detail regarding how pan-London overflow SWEP can be accessed and which organisations will be able to refer will be available imminently through the 'Procedure for access to pan-London SWEP'.