

Derby Severe Weather Emergency Provision for Rough Sleepers

1. Purpose

This document outlines the response that Derby Homes (on behalf of Derby City Council) and its partners have put in place to mitigate the effects of extreme weather on rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping.

2. Background

Severe weather can mean the effects of high heat as well as low temperatures on rough sleepers.

The Government's requirement for the implementation of a severe weather emergency provision is when the weather forecast predicts three consecutive nights, or more, of a minimum temperature of zero degrees Celsius or lower. Public Health England (now OHID) Heatwave Plan for England warns that: "in contrast to deaths associated with cold snaps in winter, the rise in mortality as a result of very warm weather follows very sharply – within one or two days of the temperature rising." Temperatures around 25°C and over are associated with excess summer deaths. Deaths may be from underlying illnesses made worse by heat – primarily lung and heart diseases – or from heat specific conditions, such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

These risk factors vary significantly between people experiencing rough sleeping but they can all increase the risks to health. For people sleeping on the streets, it can be a challenge to find drinking water, cool showers and cool spaces to spend time in. Without safe storage, people are often wearing extra layers or carrying heavy bags all day. Any conditions that increase the risk of harm to people sleeping rough can be classed as severe. This includes extreme cold, wind, snow, rain and even heat.

Cold, Wind and Rain

Many people sleeping rough will already have health issues caused or made worse by homelessness. Extreme cold weather can worsen serious health problems and potentially lead to death for those who are exposed overnight or for long periods of time. High winds can cause a higher likelihood of injury due to uprooted trees, falling walls, displaced roofing among other items. Prolonged periods of rain, or sudden heavy rain can trigger floods and landslides. Individuals who are sleeping near to rivers, streams, canals or under bridges could be at higher risk due to an increased risk of drowning. Those people sleeping rough who are unable to change out of wet clothes or shoes are at greater risk of developing health issues such as trench-foot.

Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include a headache, dizziness, confusion, loss of appetite, feeling sick, cramping in the arms, legs and stomach, extreme sweating, clammy skin, the individual appearing very pale and breathing fast, a high temperature (above 40°C) and feeling very thirsty. If someone is demonstrating these symptoms, they need to be cooled down and rehydrated. The NHS advises the following steps:

1. Move the person to a cool place
2. Get the person to lie down and raise their feet slightly
3. Get the person to drink plenty of water (sports or rehydration drinks are also acceptable)
4. Cool the person's skin (spray or sponge them with cool water and fan them. If cold packs are available, the person can place these under their armpits or on their neck).

Generally people should start to recover within 30 minutes; if the person is still feeling unwell after resting in a cool place for 30 minutes and following the above steps, medical help needs to be sought such as consulting your doctor. Heatstroke is a medical emergency so call 999 if the person displays any signs of heatstroke.

Being prepared and acting early are key to protecting people's health which is why Derby has continued to operate 'Everyone In'.

'Everyone in'

At the start of COVID in March 2020, Dame Louise Casey on behalf of the Government asked all local authorities to provide emergency accommodation for rough sleepers. Derby continues to operate an 'Everyone In' approach that ensures that all rough sleepers or people at risk of rough sleeping are offered some form of emergency accommodation and access to support. For those that are unable to engage with, or take up the emergency accommodation, Safe Space provides an overnight offer that ensures rough sleepers do not have to sleep out at any time during the year.

Protocol Objectives

- To ensure that no one dies on the streets due to extreme weather including heat, cold, wind, rain and snow.
- To ensure that every effort is made to engage with individuals accommodated during the extreme hot and cold weather period, to protect them from health harms and prevent a return to rough sleeping.

Notification of severe weather

Ordinarily DLUHC will advise Derby when a prolonged period of severe weather is imminent. The Rough Sleeper Response Co-ordinator will notify key partners of the need to increase the offer of support to protect anyone still rough sleeping.

Point of contact for agencies

If partners identify someone particularly vulnerable during these periods, Housing Options should be contacted in order for customers to be offered an emergency accommodation placement if they are homeless or at risk of rough sleeping. Any out of hours placements will be made by Careline.

Local accommodation provision

As Derby has continued to offer 'Everyone In' all year round – there is no requirement for additional winter accommodation provision. 'Everyone In' ensures that all known rough sleepers, or anyone deemed to be at risk of rough sleeping is made an offer of accommodation, whatever the time of year. The use of night shelter or communal accommodation is no longer in operation following guidance from the government.

Rehousing Engagement and Support Team (REST) team

The REST team will continue conducting daily outreach visits to engage with those individuals who are rough sleeping and monitor, liaise, signpost those customers who are still refusing offers of accommodation or support

Enhanced support provided during these times includes:

ADDITIONAL PROVISION	PROVIDED BY
Hot or cold drinks offered by outreach team depending on periods of hot or cold weather. Sun cream / sun hats offered during periods of hot weather.	REST Team
To ensure all currently known active rough sleepers have an offer of accommodation	REST team
Referrals to Safe Space for those refusing offers of support	REST team
Additional outreach sessions to be completed throughout the day.	REST team
Health screening/increased outreach during periods of hot or cold weather	EMAS Homelessness Paramedic
Drinks available at the door to any rough sleeper during periods of hot weather or cold weather	Milestone House / Safe Space
Location to store belongings or excessive clothing to any rough sleeper during periods of hot weather	Milestone House / REST team
Referrals from REST, EMAS to use the space to cool down or warm up as part of rest and recovery.	Safe Space
Spare overnight bed for anyone vulnerable to the heat or cold referred by Police/EMAS out of hours	Safe Space

Housing Options

Housing Options will continue to operate a homelessness service as it does all year around.

Safe Space

Safe Space is located at 10 Normanton Road, Derby, DE1 2GW and is staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. Those who are rough sleeping can present at Safe Space for cold drinks and water when temperatures are high, and hot drinks, gloves and hats when the temperatures are low. REST and Safe Space will identify any rough sleepers who need to be prioritised for the Safe Space during this time.

EMAS

The Homelessness Paramedic operates from Safe Space and conducts outreach through Derby City, providing health advice and interventions for rough sleepers. During severe weather periods, those outreach and engagement sessions are increased to ensure continued health screening and monitoring of rough sleepers still sleeping out.

Any young person under 18 years of age found sleeping rough:

Please call the children's Social Services duty team on: - 01332 641172. The YMCA is available for accommodation with provision for a basic meal and toiletries provided.

Telephone Contact Numbers

Housing Options	01332 888777
Safe Space	01332 460346
Care Line (after 5pm)	01332 956606 – for professionals
	01332 956607 – for the public