How to help a rough sleeper in Solihull

What is the rough sleeper protocol?

The Rough Sleeper Protocol provides details of the joint working arrangements that are in place to provide advice and assistance to people sleeping rough in Solihull.

It formalises the roles and responsibilities of all partner organisations, sets out the process that any member of the public or organisation should follow if they want to report a rough sleeper and explains the process that will be followed to meet the housing and wider support needs of any rough sleepers identified in Solihull.

Why is it needed?

Although estimates show that the number of rough sleepers in Solihull are relatively small they are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Rough sleepers are likely to have a range of complex problems and support needs which can be worsened by living on the streets or in insecure accommodation.

A co-ordinated multi-agency response is therefore required to ensure that anyone sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough in Solihull is aware of the services available and is able to access the necessary support to help them off the streets and to address the problems that led to them becoming homeless.

Who does it cover?

The protocol covers people who are sleeping rough in Solihull. This includes people whose housing situation falls into one of the following categories:

- People sleeping rough on the streets
- People sleeping in tents, cars or other vehicles
- People sleeping in abandoned buildings or any other accommodation where there is no tenancy

There is no need to prove that a person does come under one of the above categories before a referral is made. If there is “reason to believe” someone is sleeping rough this will be enough to trigger a referral in line with the referral process in this document.

A rough sleeper can only be assisted under the protocol where they are eligible for assistance. This will be determined by Solihull Community Housing once a referral has been made.

The full protocol deals specifically with rough sleepers aged 18 and over. People sleeping rough who are under the age of 18 can be referred as part of this protocol but there is a different process in place for responding to their needs.
What are the aims of the rough sleeper protocol?

The Rough Sleeper Protocol aims to:

- Prevent rough sleeping in Solihull
- Ensure that new rough sleepers are identified and helped off the street immediately so that they do not fall into a dangerous rough sleeping lifestyle (in line with the Government’s aim for a ‘No Second Night Out’ approach nationwide)
- Ensure that people who have been sleeping rough for a long time and who are less likely to want to engage with services are aware of the arrangements that are in place to assist them
- Enable members of the public to report sightings of rough sleepers
- Enable partner organisations to refer rough sleepers to the relevant local services
- Assist rough sleepers to access a place of safety where their needs can be assessed, they can receive advice on their options and are assisted to access other services such as healthcare, if needed
- Reconnect those people who have come from another area or Country back to their local community (where it is safe and appropriate to do so)

Who is involved in delivering the protocol?

The main organisations involved in delivering the protocol are:

- Solihull Council
- Solihull Community Housing (SCH)
- West Midlands Police
- Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust
- Sustain
- Solihull Integrated Addiction Services (SIAS)
- Fry Housing Trust
- Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness (SCAH)

In addition the protocol encourages anyone living or working in Solihull who has concerns regarding someone who may be sleeping rough to report their concerns.
Stage 1 – Rough Sleeper Identified

A rough sleeper could be identified through a report from either a member of the public or a partner organisation. The protocol sets out a specific role for the following services in actively identifying and referring rough sleepers in Solihull:

- Solihull Council – Neighbourhood Services & Town Centre Management Team
- Solihull Integrated Addiction Services (SIAS)
- Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust
- Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness (SCAH)
- Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations who will be made aware of the process through Solihull Sustain
- West Midlands Police

Any known or obvious details about the rough sleeper should be noted. This includes their gender, estimated age, any obvious vulnerabilities they might have, the location they were identified at or last seen in and whether it is thought that they are new to the street or a long term rough sleeper.

Please note – members of the public and partner organisations wanting to report rough sleepers are advised not to approach them directly. This will avoid risk to the individual making the report and will ensure that rough sleepers are not approached numerous times by different organisations and people asking them the same questions.

Stage 2 – Rough Sleeper Reported

A different response will be activated where a rough sleeper is under the age of 18. Where the age of the rough sleeper is known or can be reasonably accurately estimated reports should be made as follows:

**Know or estimate rough sleeper to be aged 18 or over** – Report to Solihull Community Housing (SCH) on 0121 717 1515 (an emergency out of hours service is also provided on this number).

**Know or estimate rough sleeper to be aged 16 or 17** – Report to SCH on 0121 717 1515 or to Solihull Council’s 16+ team on 0121 788 4200 (or out of hours 0121 605 6060). The young person will then be provided with emergency accommodation, where they have nowhere else safe to stay, and their longer term accommodation and support needs will be assessed as part of the ‘Joint Protocol for the Assessment of Homeless 16/17 Year Olds’.

**Know or estimate rough sleeper to be aged under 16** – Report to Children’s Social Work Services on 0121 788 4333 (or out of hours 0121 605 6060). Children’s Social Work Services will make arrangements for an initial assessment to be carried out so that the relevant team can determine what action will be taken.

**Where the age of the rough sleeper is unknown** the report should be made to SCH on 0121 717 1515. SCH will then determine the age and circumstances of the rough sleeper and either respond themselves or make a referral to the relevant service.
Stage 3 – Response to Rough Sleepers aged 18 or over

For reports to SCH made during office hours – the rough sleeper will be interviewed on the day of the report. Under certain circumstances and where it is established that they are eligible, sleeping rough and have nowhere safe to stay emergency temporary accommodation will be arranged.

For reports to SCH made out of office hours or late in the day – the needs of the rough sleeper will be assessed over the phone either by talking to the referral agency or where possible the rough sleeper directly. Where there is nowhere safe for them to stay and there is reason to believe that they are homeless and may be vulnerable the out of hours officer will either arrange emergency temporary accommodation over the phone or where there is a need to interview them will arrange to meet them within 1 hour for an interview at the nearest place of safety. In many cases the interview location is likely to be the nearest open Police Station. Where an interview is carried out at a Police Station the Police will assist the out of hour’s officer to assess and deal with any risks posed by the rough sleeper. The rough sleeper will be interviewed and where the need is identified will be placed in emergency temporary accommodation pending a full housing options interview which will be arranged for the next working day.

Stage 4 – Housing Options Assessment (HOA)

Where it has not been possible to carry out a HOA on the day the rough sleeper was identified the assessment will be carried out the next working day after they have been placed in emergency temporary accommodation. The HOA will establish the circumstances and support needs of the rough sleeper and will highlight the housing options that might be available to them.

Stage 5 – Role of Support Organisations

Where support needs are identified SCH will discuss with the rough sleeper the possibility of referring them to other services to receive the relevant assistance. The following organisations have agreed to receive and respond to referrals as part of the protocol:

Solihull Integrated Addiction Services (SIAS) – will provide support and treatment for any rough sleepers with drug or alcohol support needs through the daily drop in service. SIAS also has facilities to provide a shower and a change of clothes for rough sleepers with substance abuse issues through the drop in service at Middlewood House. Through SIAS rough sleepers can also access a housing related supports service for people with drug and alcohol support needs which is provided by Midland Heart.

Solihull Council’s Adult Social Care Services (Including Mental Health) – will respond to referrals of identified rough sleepers and carry out an assessment of their needs as a priority. Where necessary an assessment will be carried out on an outreach basis for rough sleepers. For adult social care assessments or to report safeguarding concerns referrals should go through the Adult Social Care Hotline on 0121 704 8007 (or 0121 605 6060 outside of office hours). For mental health assessments for working age adults a referral should either be made to the Mental Health Team at the Newington Centre which covers the North of the Borough on 0121 678 4950 or the Mental Health Team at the Lyndon Clinic which covers the South of the Borough on 0121 301 4800. For adults aged 65 and over a referral should be made to the Mental Health Team for Older People on 0121 704 8111. Where any assessment carried out identifies on-going support needs a package of support will be put in place to meet the needs of the rough sleeper and other support organisations working with them will be updated accordingly.
**Stage 5 – Role of Support Organisations**

Fry Housing Trust – will provide temporary accommodation, where there is an available bedspace or soon to be a vacancy, at their supported accommodation scheme to any rough sleeper who is male, aged 18 and over and an ex-offender or at risk of offending. Fry Housing will also provide floating support to anyone identified as sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough in Solihull. Fry Housing can be contacted on 0121 706 0900.

**Stage 6 – Long Term Accommodation Options**

The Council is not under a legal duty to provide accommodation for everyone who is sleeping rough and emergency temporary accommodation cannot therefore be provided to rough sleepers on an on-going basis. The length of time that a rough sleeper is able to stay in emergency accommodation once placed will be at the discretion of SCH and will depend upon the individual circumstances of each case.

SCH will do all that is possible to help anyone sleeping rough in Solihull to find accommodation and access appropriate support. This will include advice on applying to join the housing register or make a homelessness application, advice and support to find accommodation in the private rented sector and assistance to access hostel places in neighbouring areas.

Where a rough sleeper does not have a local connection and has come from another area of the UK or another Country SCH will make the relevant enquiries and attempt to reconnect them to their local community.
Contact Details

This leaflet provides a summary of the procedure guidelines included within the Solihull Rough Sleeper Protocol. For a full copy of the Rough Sleeper Protocol and related procedures please contact the Housing Strategy Team on 0121 704 8486 or via email on housingstrategy@solihull.gov.uk

Local Services

Housing:

Solihull Community Housing 0121 717 1515 (response available 24/7)
Solihull Community Housing will give advice on housing options and will seek to access temporary accommodation for a person sleeping rough

Fry Housing Trust 0121 706 0900
Provide temporary accommodation for men aged 18 or over who are at risk of offending (including Rough Sleepers). Will house rough sleepers on the day of referral if at all possible. Also able to provide floating support to anyone identified as sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough in Solihull.

Birmingham and Solihull Women’s Aid
0800 0732 606 (freephone) or 0121 685 8550 (local rate)
Provide specialist refuge accommodation and support for women fleeing domestic violence.

Solihull Council
– Children’s Social Work Services
0121 788 4333
(or out of office hours contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0121 605 6060)

Solihull Council
– 16+ Team 0121 788 4200
(or out of office hours contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0121 605 6060)

Solihull Integrated Addiction Services (SIAS) 0121 678 4730
Daily drop-in service for drug users provided from:
Middleware House
15 Larch Croft
Chelmsley Wood
Solihull B37 7UR

Solihull Council
– Adult Mental Health Social Work Teams
For Working Age Adults (18 – 65)
Mental Health Team – North Solihull 0121 678 4950
Mental Health Team – South Solihull 0121 301 4800
Mental Health Team for Older People (aged 65 and over) 0121 704 8111

Solihull Healthcare and Walk in Centre
0121 709 7711
Lode Lane
Solihull B91 2AE

West Midlands Police
Contact a Local Police Station via the switchboard on 0345 113 5000
If there is an emergency, always call 999.
For Police purposes an emergency is when:
• There is a danger to life
• There is a risk of serious injury
• A crime is in progress or about to happen
• An offender is still at the scene

Citizens Advice Solihull Borough
Chelmsley Wood Branch 0121 779 6707
Shirley Branch 0121 744 3238
Solihull Branch 0121 705 2212

National Helplines:
Shelter Housing Advice Helpline 0808 800 444
Women’s Aid & Refuge Helpline 0808 2000 247
Missing People Helpline 0500 700 700
Message Home Helpline 0800 700 740
Runaway Helpline 0808 800 7070
Childline 0800 1111
Samaritans 08457 909090