Appendix 1 – CHAIN Cohort Terminology

The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) database is managed by Homeless Link, and CHAIN reports are published via the Greater London Authority (GLA) Datastore.

CHAIN reporting makes use of specific terminology and models to describe cohorts of rough sleepers, and to make a distinction between the frequency of rough sleeping experienced by each cohort.

Flow
People who have never been seen rough sleeping prior to the year of reporting (i.e., new rough sleepers). Those within this category are further subdivided as follows:

- Unidentified – those new rough sleepers recorded without a name, and with only one contact.

- Identified – those new rough sleepers recorded with a name, and/or with more than one contact.

Stock
People who were also seen rough sleeping in the previous year of reporting (i.e. those seen across a minimum of two consecutive years).

Returner
People who were first seen rough sleeping prior to the year of reporting, but were not seen during the annual reporting period immediately preceding it (i.e. those who have had a gap in their rough sleeping histories).

For quarterly CHAIN reporting, the following shorter timeframe categories and descriptions apply:

New rough sleepers
Those rough sleeping who had not been contacted by Outreach teams before the quarterly reporting period.

Living on the street
Those who have had a high number of contacts over three weeks or more, which suggests that they are living on the streets.

Intermittent rough sleepers
People who were seen rough sleeping at some point before the period began, and contacted by the Outreach team in the quarterly reporting period – but not regularly enough to be 'living on the streets'.