

Appendix 2: policy Statement

City of London Corporation - Tackling the detrimental impacts of rough sleeping

Supporting those who sleep rough

The City of London Corporation is committed to assisting individuals who sleep rough in the Square Mile by providing tailored routes off the streets that address their specific needs and circumstances. The City Corporation resources a range of specialised services including outreach services, specialist hostel accommodations, a dedicated social worker, health and substance misuse services, and a newly established assessment centre offering emergency beds and a secure assessment space away from the streets.

Sleeping rough poses significant risks to the health, wellbeing, and safety of those experiencing homelessness. Street homelessness is hazardous, distressing, and isolating. Individuals sleeping rough are more susceptible to violence and serious health issues.

The City Corporation's services, along with those provided by its partners, prioritise the urgent need to support individuals in transitioning away from street homelessness and mitigating the harms associated with long-term rough sleeping.

Supporting our communities

Rough sleeping can also be associated with activities like begging, street drinking, substance misuse and other antisocial behaviour. Encampments of tents can block pavements or deter people from using them.

For those who live, work or learn in the City, these behaviours can be intimidating or have detrimental impact. Where they persist, they can cause distress and alarm.

Where there are specific concerns of crime and anti-social behaviour linked to rough sleeping the City Corporation and its partners in the City of London Police, have a responsibility to act.

We will always take a welfare first approach. Identification and consideration of a person's specific circumstances, including their safeguarding and support needs, are an integral part of the City Corporation's approach. However, where detrimental issues persist or are likely to persist, we will consider the use of legal powers and tools to intervene.

We will never use such powers on somebody just because they are sleeping rough or are homeless.

Antisocial behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is defined as conduct that has caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm, or distress to one or more persons not of the same household.

Where anti-social behaviour is associated with rough sleeping our specialist homeless outreach teams, and our community officers from the City of London Police will work with individuals to try and address the behaviour and reduce the harm being caused.

If anti-social behaviours persist or escalate, we will consider the use of legal powers where there is evidence that the behaviour is unreasonable, persistent, and has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of numerous people and businesses in the locality.

Powers such as a Community Protection Notice – or others – will only be used where the behaviours experienced are well evidenced and meet the legal test required.

Where any power is used, the City Corporation will always continue to support those sleeping rough to end their homelessness.

Abandoned belongings

Sometimes belongings are abandoned in the Square Mile, including sleeping bags, clothes and other personal possessions. We will only remove these if they appear obviously abandoned, if there is a public health risk, if they are causing an obstruction or if the owner tells us they no longer want them.

If belongings are left in the street and are not being cared for – for instance, they are strewn around rather than placed together – or are placed against a bin, we will treat them as litter and dispose of them. We also treat soaked and ruined bedding as litter.

Removal of sharps and needles

We will always remove sharps and dispose of them safely.

Storage of abandoned belongings

Unless there is an immediate public health risk or items are identified as litter, we will monitor abandoned items for 48 hours before removing them. We will store them for 28 days before disposing of them, and notify the police and outreach teams of their location.

Removal of tents or other personal possessions

Confiscation and destruction of tents or other personal possessions is not and never will be part of our approach for reducing rough sleeping.

However, there are circumstances under which we are required to act to remove items. Environmental protection legislation means we have a duty to investigate what are known as “statutory nuisances”. These are activities which are – or are likely to be – a nuisance which poses a threat to health.

In cases of statutory nuisance, we speak to people first. If the behaviour continues, or no-one can be found, we have a duty to issue abatement notices. An abatement notice requires

whoever is responsible to stop or limit an activity to avoid causing a nuisance. It can include specific actions to reduce the problem.

Where tents are no longer being used as sleep sites and that were being used as somewhere to take class-A drugs. We have done this where a tent does not contain bedding and there are sharps inside or in the immediate area. We will also remove tents that have been left in clearly abandoned encampments.

If tents are on highways and causing an obstruction, they can be removed under section 149 of the Highways Act.

For tents causing nuisance on the highway e.g., uncontained/discarded belongings, noise, ASB related issues, a 28-day Notice of intention to remove can be served under the Highway Act 1980. This will be enforced with police in attendance if necessary and removed by City Clean / a contractor.

More information and how to help

Find out more about our support and services for those sleeping rough [here](#).

If you are concerned about a rough sleeper, or sleeping rough yourself, you can report this online using the [Streetlink\(external link\)](#) website

You, or the individual you are concerned about, may also be able to use:

- [Providence Row\(external link\)](#) Day Centre
82 Wentworth Street
[E1 7SA\(external link\)](#)

If you see someone sleeping rough and you think they are suffering the effects of exposure to cold or extreme hot weather, please contact emergency services on **999**

Email the City Corporation's [Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Service](#)