

Rough sleeping services review

Report for City of London

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Overview

This report includes findings and recommendations from an independent review of rough sleeping services in City of London. The work has been commissioned by City of London as part of its ongoing commitment to developing operational service delivery and to inform short and longer-term strategic decision making for the rough sleeping service.

The report is intended for presentation to City of London Members, its Senior Leadership Team and Departmental Leadership Team. Key lines of enquiry for the work have included:

- The ability of existing interventions to meet near future demand.
- How effectively available grant funding has been used.
- The extent to which rough sleeping workstreams are integrated into the wider homelessness service – including interactions with City of London’s supported accommodation pathway and statutory homelessness services.
- Exploration of potential gaps in existing service delivery.
- Strengths and weakness of partnership arrangements, including with health and statutory services and the commissioned substance use service (Turning Point).
- The extent to which services can demonstrate their impact in reducing rough sleeping.

Work for the review has included a review of available documents and data relating to rough sleeping, and engagement with stakeholders working with people experiencing rough sleeping in City of London and other London boroughs, City of London’s chair of its Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee, other London boroughs, London governmental, and sub-regional organisations.

The review also takes into account objectives and priorities contained in City of London’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. These include providing rapid, effective, and tailored interventions for people experiencing rough sleeping, ensuring access to suitable, affordable accommodation, increased collaboration and partnership working with statutory and voluntary sector services, and offering support beyond accommodation, to improve outcomes, enhance employability, support recovery, and prevent experiences of repeat homelessness.

Executive summary and recommendations

The review indicates that City of London has a comprehensive service offer, which is likely to meet the needs of most of the people experiencing rough sleeping in the near future. Discussions indicate that the Snow Hill Court assessment centre, accommodation offer for people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), the specialist rough sleeper social worker, homeless health offer, and the private rented sector (PRS)

access scheme are highly valued. There are also effective partnerships between statutory and voluntary sector services. City of London commissioners are viewed as highly knowledgeable around rough sleeping and homelessness, committed to partnership working and a coproduction approach with stakeholders, and being willing to try new approaches to meet emerging rough sleeper needs and to tackle barriers to engagement and successful outcomes.

Continuing high demand and transience in City of London's rough sleeper population, significant numbers of non-UK nationals, including people with NRPF and increasingly complex needs, signal the need for City of London to enhance its offer in some areas and/or develop new interventions. The planned shift away from verification as the gateway to accessing rough sleeper services within GLA-funded services by 2028 and proposed expansion of Ending Homelessness Hubs across London, both as set out in the Mayor's Rough Sleeping Plan of Action 2025, may help reduce demand for City of London rough sleeper services in the medium term. Sub-regional funding and services provide additional opportunities for accommodation and support, including people with unclear accommodation status and people with additional support needs but who are below the priority need threshold. However, medium-term funding for sub-regions has not yet been confirmed.

Summary of findings relating to existing services' ability to meet future service demand and potential service delivery gaps

The review identifies several factors which will make it challenging for City of London services to achieve successful outcomes with all rough sleeper groups in the near future within its current service configuration. Key factors relate to high overall service demand, the profile of City of London rough sleepers, and changes within this. This includes:

- Continuing high flow and high transience.
- A high proportion of people experiencing rough sleeping with mental health needs, increasing number of people with complex needs, and shift to a younger age group.
- A higher than London average of stock rough sleepers.
- A continuing significant proportion of non-UK nationals, including those with NRPF.
- Significant numbers of people sleeping rough in encampments.

Continuing high flow and transience makes it challenging for outreach staff to assess all individuals coming on to the streets. Large caseloads and expectation to respond to all Streetlink reports may restrict capacity for casework with people who have multiple and complex needs. Transience also makes it challenging for rough sleepers to maintain engagement in structured substance use treatment. Good practice within Westminster City Council services may offer a way forward around outreach practice.

The assessment centre's acceptance of people experiencing entrenched rough sleeping and people without an active welfare benefits claim reduces immediate rough sleeping but increases concentration of support needs within the resident group, and this is associated with housing management challenges and some negative accommodation outcomes. It is challenging to source move-on accommodation and support move-in within current staffing capacity at Snow Hill Court, especially as many service users require reconnection to other local authority areas.

City of London's accommodation pathway works effectively and offers regular voids. The upward trend in people experiencing rough sleeping aged 35 and under has implications for move-on pathways. Some stakeholders see a need to expand City of London's accommodation pathway in the near future to meet increasing demand, whilst others have highlighted the need to make best use of current City of London provision at The Lodges, to ensure that the MIST service has sufficient capacity for effective work with complex needs clients and to maximise move-on into the private rented sector.

The high number of non-UK national rough sleepers, including people with NRPF and lack of capacity within the commissioned immigration advice provider (Praxis), signals the need for additional access to immigration advice. There is a need to consider if evidence around immigration status and advice needs can be gathered by outreach workers whilst people are still on the streets, and how to make best use of NRPF bedspaces at Snow Hill Court. Approaches utilised by the London Borough Lambeth may be of assistance in this area.

City of London is developing an approach to working with rough sleepers involved in anti-social behaviour (ASB) and people living in encampments, which balances support and enforcement activities. To date, this includes recruitment of additional Community Safety Team staff, additional policy and procedures, and monthly operations. The review confirms the need to upskill outreach workers around carrying out needs assessments with people in encampments and to review current restrictions on the Parkguard's current functions around ASB caused by people experiencing rough sleeping. Current practice in Westminster and Lambeth may offer ways forward in these areas.

There are a small number of gaps in City of London's rough sleeper services where it may be useful to consider additional commissioning. Details of these are set out in the recommendations below.

Summary of findings around effective use of grant funding

The review has highlighted some areas of service delivery where City of London may wish to review current services and/or policies, to increase funding effectiveness. These include:

- **The outreach health van:** This is viewed as working more effectively with people who have already left the streets than current population experiencing rough sleeping. Discussions indicate that service uptake could be increased by reviewing the current location of van sessions and seeking an associated building for the service.
- **Homeless Health Coordinator:** Discussions highlight the need to clarify this role going forward and the benefits of a focus on developing hospital discharge pathways and supporting outreach staff around data recording of health issues for people experiencing rough sleeping.
- **Rough Sleeper Navigators:** Discussions highlight it would be useful to review the team's approach to engaging with transient and high-risk rough sleepers and coordinating their multi-agency support.

Summary of findings relating to partnerships and integration with wider homelessness services

There are many areas of effective collaboration and partnership working, including between accommodation pathway providers, outreach, commissioned substance use providers in City of London (Turning Point) and CGL (London Borough of Southwark), in-reach at Snow Hill Court, and the alternative giving campaign with BEAM.

Data review indicates a very low incidence of people with rough sleeping experience being accepted by City of London for a homelessness prevention or relief duty in recent years. This suggests that people experiencing rough sleeping are not approaching Housing Options services for support with their housing needs. Discussions suggest that on-going high demand for statutory homelessness and adult social care support can sometimes result in a reluctance to investigate statutory homelessness and/or care duties. Some stakeholders perceive that more consideration of risks is needed in these cases.

Whilst highly welcomed, the rough sleeper social worker role is viewed as not yet having achieved all envisaged benefits, in terms of increasing Care Act assessments and access to social care for vulnerable people experiencing rough sleeping. Discussions suggest it may be unrealistic for a single role holder to enact culture change within Adult Social Care around responding to people experiencing rough sleepings lifestyle and engagement issues, and that more consideration is needed of how to achieve this in future.

There is an ongoing issue around the respective expectations of statutory and voluntary sector services in terms of capacity for evidence-gathering around social care needs. Discussions also highlighted lack of knowledge and confidence around legal frameworks relating to homelessness and care and people experiencing rough sleepings needs and lifestyles, and that this can act as a barrier to service engagement.

As outlined above, there is a need to develop a multi-agency response to anti-social behaviour by people experiencing rough sleeping and work in encampments. Discussions also suggest there is scope to develop joint working with City of London businesses.

The review has identified there is scope for closer work with the wider homelessness service, to develop homelessness prevention approaches for City of London residents who may be at risk of future rough sleeping. This would include low-income households struggling to manage debt and people who have lost social tenancies. The proposed merger of Homelessness Prevention Grant and RSI funding from 2026/27 may offer greater flexibility around to achieve this.

Summary findings around demonstrating service impact

Service specifications and KPI information provided for this review indicates there are comprehensive outputs, outcomes, and targets in place, including around demonstrating the effectiveness of partnerships. The profile of people experiencing rough sleeping in the City of London is recognised as impacting on data collection by outreach, with many current data gaps – particularly around health needs. Suggestions for increased monitoring and reporting are set out in the recommendations below.

Recommendations

In relation to additional service commissioning:

1. Allocating specific resources within the outreach team, to respond to Streetlink reports and work with other flow rough sleepers.
2. Setting up a staging post, to increase throughput and move on from Snow Hill Court. Estimated need is a 10-bed unit, with a three-month target length of stay. The staging post could be located within or outside City of London. Priority might be given to people awaiting move-on to PRS tenancies in other local authority areas and people with NRPF considered likely to receive a 'no merit' decision following immigration advice.
3. Additional funding for immigration advice and casework support. Given the current sector-wide lack of staffing and other capacity within specialist immigration advice services, this should consider direct delivery by City of London.
4. Commissioning a separate team to support move-on from Snow Hill Court and other City of London accommodation pathway projects. This could draw on

learning from the recent move-on team pilot run by Thames Reach, which has been successful in addressing common barriers to move-on, such as rent arrears.

5. Establishing a dedicated health data role based in the outreach team.
6. Monitor the impact of work by the North East London Sub-Regional Rough Sleeper Coordinator to increase acceptances of statutory homelessness applications in other local authorities from the assessment centre, depending on outcomes, exploring the value of funding a specialist caseworker role.

In relation to service development and effectiveness:

1. Establish an expectation that as near to 100% as possible City of London rough sleepers have a needs assessment, including around immigration advice needs, to accurately assess service eligibility.
2. Review current residents at the Lodges, to assess the extent of match with the current profile of City of London's wider rough sleeping population.
3. Introduce a 28-day review process at Snow Hill Court and consider piloting an approach which would allow eviction for residents who repeatedly refuse to engage with the move-on process.
4. Explore with St. Mungo's if they can increase access into their supported accommodation projects for people experiencing rough sleeping moving on from City of London emergency accommodation.
5. Ensure that the re-commissioned PRS access scheme includes enhanced incentives for landlords, to encourage their involvement and increase availability of units and sufficient access to shared accommodation for under 35s.
6. Consider remodelling the current navigator service, drawing on learning from City and Hackney's STEPS (Supporting Transitions and Empowering People Service), which offers intensive outreach, integrated health and social support within a relational model, and has demonstrated positive outcomes for people with multiple and complex needs.
7. Reviewing the rough sleeper social worker role – considering additional steps to increase social care assessments and access into social care services.
8. Review how the Homeless Health Coordinator role can support safe hospital discharge arrangements hospital and an enhanced offer for outreach health van.
9. Review the NRPF accommodation pathway. This should consider if additional options to Snow Hill Court should be made available, including for those with complex immigration issues and could draw on learning from Lambeth's specialist Shelter project, which works with people with restricted eligibility for local authority services.
10. Explore if outreach staff can gather information around immigration advice needs whilst people are on the streets.

11. Explore the potential for joint work with City of London's tenancy support service to extend support to people at future risk of homelessness and rough sleeping.
12. To reduce rough sleeping and ASB within encampments:
 - a. Continue to explore development of a specialist encampment sub-team within the outreach service.
 - b. Work with colleagues in the Community Safety Team, other City of London services, commissioned services, and City Police to develop a multi-agency approach for people experiencing rough sleeping in encampments.
 - c. Develop multi-agency strategies for individual encampments.
 - d. Develop a communications strategy for voluntary and community sector services and the public around the risks for rough sleepers of living in tented encampments.
 - e. Liaise with the Community Safety Team and City Police around new operational protocols and the proposed new coordinating role around reducing crime and ASB amongst the street population, including how this will operate within encampments, rough sleeping and begging hotspots, and use of enforcement actions.
 - f. Consider the value of recruiting a Public Protection Officer to further support outreach workers and partnership working.
13. Develop relationships with BIDS and as a potential source of funding to address rough sleeping in City of London.
14. Monitor the progress of the Toward Ending Homelessness Accelerator Programme, run by London Councils, the GLA, and Centre for Homelessness Impact, and opportunities for City of London to participate in shaping service delivery and resource allocation for homelessness prevention and reducing rough sleeping at pan-London and sub-regional levels.

In relation to workforce development:

1. Developing clearer messages for frontline staff about the positive impacts of reconnection for some City of London rough sleepers.
2. Refresher training for all relevant frontline staff around statutory homelessness and social care frameworks and safeguarding applications.
3. Specialist training for outreach staff around working with people experiencing rough sleeping in encampments, including giving tailored messages.
4. Regular training for City Police around rough sleepers' support needs and how to effectively engage them with offers of accommodation and support.
5. Discussions including relevant statutory and voluntary sector staff around recent statutory homelessness and Care Act assessment referrals – exploring how decisions have been reached, creative approaches to gathering relevant information, and interpreting care thresholds for very vulnerable rough sleepers.

In relation to additional data collection and reporting:

1. Monitor the proportion of people experiencing rough sleeping in the City of London who receive a needs assessment, including people with NRPF and those living in encampments. This would enable outreach workers to focus on engagement tactics with the non-needs assessed group.
2. Collect data on Snow Hill Court residents with immigration issues, to understand what proportion require referral to Praxis.
3. Report on the proportion of people experiencing rough sleeping referred to City of London Housing Options or Adult Social Care for assessment.
4. Collect data on the number/proportion of people experiencing rough sleeping not made an accommodation offer or who refuse accommodation offer(s) and how this relates to individuals' support needs and immigration advice needs.

Findings from the document review

A review of relevant documents provided by City of London managers was undertaken, to build understanding of the strategic and operational context for rough sleeping in City of London and draw out learning around key lines of enquiry for the work. The review indicated the following key points:

- A recent shift within City of London's rough sleeper population towards a younger, more complex cohort with higher support needs.
- A high level of transience – with almost all City of London rough sleepers having previously bedded down in another London borough or elsewhere in the UK.
- Many entrenched experiences of rough sleeping with complex needs - many of whom have refused several offers of support, accommodation, and other welfare interventions.
- A significant number of people experiencing rough sleeping with NRPF, who are eligible only for a limited service from City of London.
- Recent funding and service growth within City of London rough sleeper services, including expansion of the commissioned street outreach service, a new Rough Sleeping Assessment Centre (opened spring 2024), dedicated homelessness social worker role, enhanced tenancy sustainment and Housing First accommodation, and a Homeless Health and Rough Sleeping Mental Health programme.
- Existing strong partnerships with neighbouring London boroughs, City and Hackney Health and Care Board, City of London Police and VCSE organisations, though also a need to increase collective action and cross-sector working to address current and emerging needs.
- Ongoing challenges around reducing rough sleeping, relating to high transience across City of London and service boundaries, the involvement of some rough sleepers in anti-social behaviour and as victims or perpetrators of crime, lack of secure, affordable housing – which also hampers timely move-on from City of

London hostel and interim accommodation – and restricted access to primary care, due to the location of current provision.

- A need to increase focus around developing rapid ‘off the street’ options; developing a consistent approach to managing ASB and criminality amongst people experiencing rough sleeping; stronger engagement with health partners and improving hospital discharge arrangements, closer work with commissioned drug and alcohol services, City Advice, and psychological services; improving pathways for non-UK nationals with NRPF and employability and developing sub-regional and pan-borough solutions.
- Previous work with The Bridge project in Walthamstow highlights the value of dedicated lead worker roles, collocating bedspaces and waiving the requirement for Housing Benefit claims for people with NRPF – which has enabled people with complex/immigration cases to leaving rough sleeping and enter stable housing.
- There are challenges involved in delivering credible service offers within target timeframes in emergency/interim accommodation (including discretionary temporary accommodation and staging post accommodation), with longer-term rough sleepers and those with complex needs and in supporting staff to carry out international reconnections.
- Coordinated action by City of London managers and City Police around ASB and criminal activity within encampments and rough sleeping “hotspots” can increase acceptance of accommodation offers, regularisation of immigration status and/or support to return to country of origin. Discretionary temporary accommodation can facilitate action to remove unoccupied tents and clean areas. However, lack of a clear policy position around available legal actions is hampering efforts by City of London officers and resource allocation for more sustained interventions. A dedicated role is likely to be needed to enhance planning and coordination of interventions between partners.
- Operation Luscombe’s staged intervention system involving warnings and police ticketing and support via an ‘intervention hub’, highlighted the complexity of begging and has driven a shared response from City of London and its commissioned providers. However, the limited number of Hub attendees eligible for City of London support reduced impact. This could be increased through creating a dedicated role interfacing between police, Community Safety (CST), homelessness and rough sleeping services, co-locating the clinical welfare van to physical premises, increasing CST’s work around complex clients and police, and by targeting individuals begging in City of London who do not have legitimate access to support there.

Data review

This has included a comprehensive review of available data relating to City of London rough sleepers for 2022/23 and 2023/24, including CHAIN reports, snapshot surveys of rough sleeping, H-CLIC quarterly returns, and other data contained within City of London documents reviewed for this work.¹ Analysis of CHAIN data included a group of comparator boroughs (Lambeth, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, and Hackney), selected on the basis of their similar levels of rough sleeping to City of London.

A detailed version of the data review/analysis is at the Appendix. Main findings from the review are set out here. These indicate:

- **Distribution:** A wide spatial distribution of rough sleepers across the City of London in both years (periods).
- **Total rough sleepers:** There has been an upward trend in recent years. Total rough sleepers increased by 30% in 2021/22 - 2022/23 and by 36% in 2022/23 - 2023/24. These totals were higher than London averages (21% in 2022/23 and 19% in 2023/24). The total of 656 individual people experiencing rough sleeping in 2023/24 was the fifth largest in London. Figures from annual rough sleeping snapshots also indicate recent year on year increases. The November 2024 total of 86 individuals was a 41% increase on 2023.²
- **Flow:** Flow rough sleepers increased significantly between 2022/23 and 2023/24, both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of total rough sleepers. However, the proportion of flow rough sleepers in these two periods was lower than London averages (63.6% in 2022/23 and 66.5% in 2023/24) and for the comparator boroughs in 2023/24 (Lambeth 64%, Southwark 66% and Tower Hamlets 63%).
- **Stock and returners:** The number of stock rough sleepers increased from 2022/23 to 2023/24, though decreased as a proportion of total rough sleepers. Total returner rough sleepers and proportion of returners within the population both decreased slightly over the same period. City of London's proportion of returner rough sleepers is similar to London averages (15.7% in 2022/23 and 13.6% in 2023/24). However, its proportion of stock rough sleepers during this period was significantly higher than London averages (20.7% in 2022/23 and 19.9% in 2023/24).
- **Transience:** In 2022/23, 27% of total City of London rough sleepers were seen only once and 43% of flow rough sleepers were seen only once. Corresponding data for 2023/24 indicates figures of 38% and 56% respectively. This highlights an increasingly transient rough sleeper population and possibly also that some people are finding their own accommodation solutions after coming onto the streets for a single night.

¹ Greater London Authority (2025) Rough sleeping in London (CHAIN reports). Available [here](#).

² City of London (2025) City of London Corporation Committee Report. Available [here](#).

- **Last settled base:** In 2022/23 and 2023/24, more new rough sleepers had their last settled base in long-term accommodation. In 2023/24, almost 10% of new rough sleepers had left asylum support accommodation (0% in 2022/23) – this is likely to reflect the impact of Government policy change in this area. In both periods, a significant proportion of people had no previous settled base in the UK (19.4% in 2022/23 and 10.6% in 2023/24). Lack of data for returning rough sleepers means it is difficult to identify trends in this area.
- **Demographics:** City of London rough sleepers are overwhelmingly male (89% in 2022/23 and 91.6% in 2023/24). This is somewhat higher than the pan-London average (83.2% in 2022/23 and 84.0% in 2023/24). There was a slight increase (around 7%) in the proportion of rough sleepers aged 35 and under between 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- **Nationality:** City of London has a higher proportion of UK national rough sleepers than London as a whole – approximately two thirds in 2022/23 and 2023/24, compared to London averages of 48.6% in 2022/23 and 45.5% in 2023/24.
- **Support needs:** Mental health issues were the most commonly reported support need in both 2022/23 and 2023/24 – experienced by around two thirds of rough sleepers. Around half of rough sleepers in both periods had an identified drugs need. Around half of rough sleepers had two or more support needs – significantly higher than London averages for 2022/23 and 2023/24 and the three comparator boroughs. A higher proportion of City of London rough sleepers had experience of prison than the London average (47% in 2022/23 and 46% in 2023/24, compared to 29% and 25%).
- **Accommodation outcomes:** The largest proportion of accommodation outcomes in 2022/23 and 2023/24 were in temporary accommodation. In 2022/23, this totalled 158 placements (including 69 B&B, 36 assessment centre, and 28 local authority temporary accommodation). In 2023/24, there were 150 placements (including 53 B&B, 38 assessment centre, and 32 local authority temporary accommodation). The most common emergency accommodation outcome in both periods was SWEP (24% of total in 2022/23 and 21.2% of total in 2023/24). Less than five percent of placements in both periods were (directly into long-term accommodation).
- **Reconnection:** In 2022/23, five City of London rough sleepers were reconnected, four within the UK and one internationally. Information on reconnection was not recorded on CHAIN in 2023/24.³

³ This data was discontinued due to the lower than previous number of services facilitating reconnections and lack of consensus between services as to what constitutes a reconnection, making it challenging to ensure a consistent and reliable dataset in this area.

- **Leaving institutions:** The Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government Rough Sleeper Data Framework data for 2023/24⁴ indicates that 12 people came onto the streets after leaving hospital and 10 people after leaving prison. The monthly total of people coming from hospital reduced over the period.
- **Local authority approaches:** H-CLIC data indicates that in 2022/23 City of London owed 29 households a homelessness prevention or relief duty. Of these, one applicant had a history of rough sleeping. H-CLIC data for 2023/24 indicates that 33 households were owed a prevention or relief duty; this included one applicant with a history of rough sleeping. This compares to the national average of 5.5%.

The data review identifies that overall demand for City of London rough sleeper services is likely to increase in the near future and that there will be a need to focus work around flow and stock rough sleepers, rough sleepers with mental health issues, and complex needs. The continuing high level of transience within City of London's rough sleeper population makes it challenging to assess all individuals coming on to the streets. CHAIN does not record the proportion of rough sleepers who receive a needs assessment. The number of people without a local connection to City of London increases the importance of offering effective reconnections.

The significant ongoing number of non-UK nationals within the rough sleeper population, including people with NRPF, signals the need for access to immigration advice and effective accommodation pathways for this group. The upward trend in rough sleepers aged 35 and under has implications for move-on pathways. The very low incidence of people with rough sleeping experience being accepted for a homelessness prevention or relief duty suggests that rough sleepers are not approaching Housing Options services for support with their housing needs.

Funding and resources for rough sleeping services

Funding

City of London currently spends around £3.3m per annum on its work around homelessness and rough sleeping, within a total budget of £5.8m managed by the Head of Homelessness, Prevention, and Rough Sleeping. The £3.3m total includes a three-year RSI (Rough Sleeping Initiative) grant, averaging £1.4m. In 2024/25, this grant was £1.2m. The Rough Sleeper Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant allocation for 2024/25 is £1,161,329 for City of London and London Borough of Hackney.

⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (2025) Rough Sleeping Data Framework Dashboard. Available [here](#).

Services

Funding has been allocated to a range of services and interventions, including those listed below.

City of London Outreach Team. The service operates seven days a week and focuses equally on work with new and long-term rough sleepers. Accommodation options include City of London emergency and pathway accommodation, statutory temporary accommodation, B&Bs, Housing First and PRS access schemes, safe domestic and international reconnections. The team also supports rough sleepers with NPRF, working with advice agencies, Home Office and migrant support organisations and has funding for personalised solutions, a rapid response off the streets or into employment, B&B placements and travel expenses for reconnection. The current contract ends in July 2025.

Snow Hill Court Assessment Centre. This opened in early 2024 and provides 14 units of emergency accommodation. All referrals are via outreach. The target duration of stay is 28 days.

B&B bookings and discretionary temporary accommodation are utilised as a short-term solution to prevent the need for individuals to continue rough sleeping.

City of London Accommodation Pathway includes access to Grange Road hostel for people with high support needs and Crimscott Street for people with lower support needs). These projects are located in LB Southwark.

The **City & Hackney Housing First project** provides accommodation and long-term trauma-informed support to people with complex needs.

Two Lodge projects. These sit outside City of London's accommodation pathway and provide a total of 57 bedspaces.

Private Rented Sector Move On & Support Pilot. This runs from January 2025 for 12 months. It seeks to provide pre-tenancy support, property procurement and 12 months sustainment support to five households identified by City of London Pathways Team. The service provides personalised support for people with a range of support needs, and supports client and landlords to work together, preparing for a longer-term relationship after support ends. The service has four stages

Rough Sleeper Navigator team. This service provides additional support for long-term City of London rough sleepers to move into and maintain stable housing. At the time of the review, the service was run jointly with/in Tower Hamlets. The service has recently been recommissioned as a City of London-only service provided by Thames Reach.

MIST. This offers specialist case management, practical assistance and other peripatetic support for City of London rough sleepers living in temporary accommodation across London, including within unsupported TA, hotels, SWEP and independent accommodation. One worker focuses on supporting women. Referrals come from City of London's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Team and commissioned services and LB Hackney's Greenhouse. Many service users have complex needs, including around drug/alcohol needs, street-attached lifestyles and mental health. Move-on support includes moves into and within the City of London accommodation pathway. The current contract runs until August 2025.

SWEP provision is provided within the accommodation pathway. Hot Weather SWEP is provided to help rough sleepers into cool daytime spaces.

City of London previously had access to 19 beds at a **staging post** based at City Inn Express in Hackney. This subsequently reduced to seven beds, when the staging post became a tri-borough service with LB Hackney and LB Tower Hamlets.

Additional outreach support and work with the street population is provided via Parkguard. The current contract runs until June 2027. The team shares intelligence about rough sleepers and people in the street population and identifies accommodation options for vulnerable rough sleepers. The team is involved in joint shifts with outreach staff and substance misuse outreach workers and patrols with City Police, City Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Team Officers or City Cleansing Officers, and managing ASB and crime within the rough sleeping population, including via patrols on estates and in parks and supporting enforcement action with the Community Safety Team (CST) and City of London Rough Sleeping Team.

Physical and mental health: City of London has a commissioned Homeless Health Coordinator role which aims to improve rough sleeper health. A commissioned inclusion health in-reach to Grange Road hostel is delivered by Guy's and St Thomas' hospital.

The Health Community Wellbeing Van (launched February 2023) is a partnership between City of London, City and Hackney Public Health, North East London Integrated Care Board and East London Foundation Trust. The service supports people who are less likely to access traditional healthcare sessions, including through GP-led primary care interventions, health and wellbeing interventions, substance misuse support and signposting. City of London coordinates weekly sessions at Liverpool Street.

Mental health support is provided via the Rough Sleeping Mental Health Programme (RAMHP), delivered in partnership with East London Foundation Trust.

Substance misuse. The commissioned provider is Turning Point. The service carries out weekly joint patrols with street homelessness services, a weekly drop in Portsoken Community Centre and weekly attendance at the outreach health van service. There is also an extended substance misuse offer for ex-rough sleepers now accommodated outside City of London.

Social care. A specialist social worker embedded in City of London's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Service (RSSW) carries out all statutory social work functions for City of London rough sleepers. The role supports eligible individuals to receive appropriate care and support and case coordination around their additional needs and line with Care Act duties. This involves building a relationship-based approach to managing risk and safeguarding vulnerable people. A Strengths-Based Practitioner role supports the work of the RSSW.

The **Homelessness Pathways Co-Production Service** works to increase service user involvement and coproduction across all City of London accommodation pathway projects.

An advisory panel works with City of London commissioners. There are regular events to encourage involvement and work with City of London managers to embed lived experience and coproduction. Work is on-going to develop a network of co-production champions, to act as link between co-production services and City of London pathway services and to design a peer-led outreach service, to deliver health-focused engagement and support.

City of London additionally has access into a number of initiatives funded via the North East London sub-region. These include:

- **Private rented accommodation and support scheme.** This is funded via the Winter Pressures Fund. It supports rough sleepers with diagnosed mental and/or physical health issue or who have been recently released from prison, but who are unlikely to have a priority need for housing. Funding covers initial placement into B&B, landlord incentives and there is six months tenancy sustainment support.
- **Psychotherapy service.** This now operates in five London boroughs (City of London, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Redbridge).
- **SIAS extension support.** This offers up to 16 weeks accommodation for people requiring additional time to resolve their UK immigration status, after pan-London provision has ended. Funding enables use of B&B and floating support and is targeted at London boroughs with less access to supported accommodation.
- **Personalised health budgets.** These support target prevention group rough sleepers with up to £5,000 per individual, with funding being utilised for a range of

items, including private Care Act assessment, accommodation for NRPF rough sleepers and gym membership.

The North East Sub-Regional Rough Sleeping Coordinator is currently involved in work with Snow Hill Court to support statutory homelessness applications with other London boroughs.

KPIs relating to City of London commissioned services for rough sleepers

Service specifications and KPI information were available for the street outreach, MIST and Navigator services. Review of this information indicates:

- Partnership working is supported via an expectation to attend all relevant City of London multi-agency meetings.
- Outreach SLAs with key partners, including, assessment centre, Parkguard, Praxis, RAMHP, the outreach health van and Navigators.
- A range of appropriate outputs, outcomes and targets in place to support the work of these teams. These include moves into and sustaining accommodation (avoiding repeat homelessness); outreach targets to reduce the annual headline street count figure, people spending a second night on the streets and becoming long-term rough sleepers.
- Use of street audits to track rough sleepers and forecast demand for outreach services.

Comments

Given the current and anticipated profile of rough sleepers in City of London, it would be useful to increase monitoring/reporting around the following:

- The proportion of City of London rough sleepers who receive a needs assessment, including those living in encampments. This would enable outreach to focus on engagement tactics with the non-needs assessed group. The proportion of rough sleepers whose immigration status/needs have been discussed (assessed) with an outreach worker whilst they are on the streets.
- The proportion/number of rough sleepers who have been referred to City of London Housing Options or Adult Social Care for assessment.
- The number/proportion of rough sleepers who are not made an accommodation offer or who refuse accommodation offer(s) and how this relates to support needs (including complex needs) and immigration advice needs.

Stakeholder engagement

Meetings were held with a total of 16 stakeholders within City of London, its commissioned services and other London and sub-regional government representatives. The full list of stakeholders is contained at the Appendix.

Discussions were semi-structured, utilising a pre-agreed topic guide. Discussion areas were drawn from findings from the document review, data analysis and key lines of enquiry. Key findings/summary findings are set out below.

Impacts of national and London regional policy and economic conditions

Discussions indicated the near future policy focus will be on ensuring an effective crisis response and homelessness prevention approaches.

To this end, there are envisaged changes in funding arrangements for local authorities around rough sleeping and homelessness from 2026/27. These will involve the merger of Homelessness Prevention Grant and RSI funding streams and replacement of bidding by funding formulas. It is understood that more three-year funding settlements are likely. A separate consultation is being undertaken around future arrangements for funding of local authority TA.

The London Mayor's Rough Sleeping Plan of Action 2025 indicates a shift away from verification as the access route into rough sleeper services, to support provided on the basis of people's needs. The programme will include scaling up a network of 24/7 assessment and support Ending Homelessness Hubs across London and, following successful testing within the Rough Sleeping Prevention Project, a recommendation that local authorities utilise the ERSAT (Ending Rough Sleeping Assessment Tool) to screen for the most vulnerable rough sleepers and remove the incentive to bed down in order to receive a service.

The Toward Ending Homelessness accelerator programme, being run by London Councils, the GLA, and the Centre for Homelessness Impact, aims to prevent homelessness through focusing on systemic transformation, including data-driven and evidence-based solutions, scaling up innovative solutions and coordinated governance. Key priorities include: homelessness and ending rough sleeping, improving temporary accommodation, investment in affordable housing and supported accommodation (capital and revenue). Implementation is taking place in 2025, with phased delivery the next several years.

Other possible developments include a re-launch of the Inter-Borough Accommodation Agreement, which manages procurement and rates for TA by London boroughs and expansion of the PRS Tenancy Sustainment Team.

Whilst sub-regional initiatives are acknowledged as having benefits for rough sleepers and producing some economies of scale, future dedicated sub-regional funding for rough sleepers has not yet been confirmed. Clarification is expected following this year's Autumn Statement.

Comments

The new funding arrangements offer more flexibility for local authorities around how they approach homelessness prevention and reducing rough sleeping. Existing integration between City of London services and its commitment to rough sleeper services means there is unlikely to be any challenge involved in fully linking the two areas of work.

The reduced focus on verification may free up resource within outreach teams to focus on long-term and entrenched rough sleepers.

The Accelerator programme may involve a number of pan-London and sub-regional test and learn pilots. This would offer City of London opportunities to become involved in shaping service delivery and resource allocation for rough sleeper services at these levels.

Configuration of current advice, emergency and long-term accommodation and support services in and gaps in supply

Discussions indicated that City of London's current emergency accommodation and supported accommodation pathway and commissioned support services are (perceived as) able to effectively support most rough sleepers in the borough.

Discussions highlighted the following as particular strengths in the current service configuration include:

- Snow Hill Court – including its policy of accepting rough sleepers without a City of London local connection.
- Accommodation and support for NRPF rough sleepers, including two allocated bedspaces at Snow Hill Court and funding for other short-term placements, which allows additional time for comprehensive assessment and evidence gathering.
- The specialist rough sleeper social worker role.
- The commissioned PRS Access service.
- The outreach health van – which has increased access to primary health care for some people with a history of rough sleeping.
- A range of opportunities to engage with substance misuse services, including via the assessment centre, outreach, the outreach health van and GP at Greenhouse.

Discussions identified a small number of specific gaps in current services:

- A rapid response for rough sleepers, for reports of rough sleepers via Streetlink. This resource could free up avoid City of London Outreach to focus on complex needs rough sleepers.
- A staging post to provide move-on from the assessment centre. This would increase capacity and improve assessment centre throughput, without inferring a City of London local connection for service users. Estimated need for this provision

is ten beds, with a target three month stay. Consideration would be needed to agree which service users would be prioritised, such as people seeking PRS move-on and residents with NRPF, who are considered likely to receive a 'no merit' decision following immigration advice.

The effectiveness of current rough sleeping services in addressing rough sleeping, access barriers, and how these might be addressed

A summary of issues highlighted in this area is set out below.

Outreach

Discussions highlighted that increasing overall demand, high flow and transience and more rough sleepers with complex needs make it very challenging for outreach workers to offer an accommodation option to all individuals. Discussion also highlighted many gaps in assessments of rough sleepers in encampments, although these individuals often have low support needs.

Current expectations on outreach to respond to all Streetlink calls, the current shift rota and high caseloads are all viewed as negatively impacting outreach workers' capacity for casework for people with multiple and complex needs. The profile of City of London rough sleepers is also recognised as impacting on data collection by outreach, with many current data gaps.

Assessment centre

Whilst throughput has improved recently, it is challenging to achieve the assessment centre's 28-day target length of stay, for both UK and non-UK nationals. It is also understood that the assessment centre has a high level of abandonments and evictions.

Discussions suggest there is currently insufficient capacity to support move-on from the assessment centre. As most residents lack a local connection to City of London, they require reconnection to other local authority areas. Additional resources are required to develop relationships and referral routes with local authorities and landlords and also to facilitate the move-on process, though attending viewings with residents and to accompany people to their reconnection areas. MIST is viewed as having very limited capacity to support assessment centre residents.

Whilst the assessment centre's willingness to accept residents and entrenched rough sleepers without an active welfare benefits claim helps these people come off the street, this also increases the concentration of people with complex needs. This is associated with housing management challenges and risk of negative accommodation outcomes. Entrenched rough sleepers are perceived by assessment centre staff as typically less committed to engaging with longer-term move-on plans. Overstaying by

these residents is reducing the availability of voids at the centre and reducing access for other rough sleepers.

There is consistent over-demand for the NRPF bedspaces at the assessment centre. Silt up within these beds is increased by the typically slow progress of immigration cases and recently lack of capacity within the commissioned immigration advice provider, Praxis, for new cases.

Move-on accommodation

Access into City of London's accommodation pathway is considered straightforward and offering regular voids. Discussions highlighted some 'churn' and negative accommodation outcomes, within the accommodation pathway, especially at Grange Road, where there has been high turnover within the team and loss of experienced staff.

Several stakeholders considered it likely that increasing demand means that City of London will need to expand its accommodation pathway in the near future. However, it was also suggested that a review of the current resident population at the Lodges could be undertaken, to assess its match with City of London's current rough sleeper profile and ensure best use of this provision. Discussions also suggested that it would be valuable for City of London's PRS Access Scheme to develop direct relationships with landlords, as well as managing agents.

There is a perception that the Navigator service could engage more effectively with high-risk service users and coordinate multi-agency support, including for transient rough sleepers.

Health interventions

The current primary healthcare offer via the outreach health van is viewed as working well with people who have already left the streets, but less effectively with current rough sleepers. It is considered that the current location of van sessions is not encouraging uptake by all potential service users. Stakeholders linked this to continuing unplanned use of health services, such as A&E and lapsed scripts by current rough sleepers.

Stakeholders raised the effective partnership development work undertaken by the Homeless Health Coordinator, including with Turning Point and the Hackney Greenhouse. However, discussions raised the need for greater clarity about the remit of this role going forward.

Discussions also highlighted that there is scope to improve hospital discharge pathways, to avoid repeat homelessness and to provide support and capacity to outreach staff to improve data recording around rough sleeper health issues.

Other issues

It was raised that more work could be done to support groups of people with a City of London local connection, such as low-income families struggling with debt and those who have lost social tenancies, could help build understanding of flows into homelessness and rough sleeping and contribute to homelessness prevention.

The current patrol only function of Parkguard means there is insufficient resources to deal with ASB by rough sleepers and the street population and that this has negative impacts on City of London businesses and residents.

Suggestions for addressing these issues

These included:

- Establishing a commitment to ensure that as near to 100% as possible City of London rough sleepers have a needs assessment, including around immigration advice, to accurately assess service eligibility.
- Reviewing Snow Hill Court policy and procedure around service users who consistently refuse to engage with a move-on offer (Credible Service Offer) and the possibility of piloting an arrangement where stays for such individuals end after 28 days.
- Developing a separate team to support move-on for Snow Hill Court and other accommodation pathway service users. One potential model for this is the recent move-on team pilot by Thames Reach, which has been successful in addressing common barriers to move-on, such as rent arrears and managing 'difficult discussions' around move-on between service users and keyworkers.
- Developing clearer messages about the positive impacts of reconnection for some City of London rough sleepers.
- Exploring if St Mungo's are able to offer additional move-on into their supported accommodation projects.
- Ensuring the contractor of the re-commissioned PRS Access Service has sufficient expertise around working with rough sleepers.
- Developing incentives for PRS landlords to encourage their involvement (understood that this is currently being explored by City of London officers).
- Assessing how many City of London rough sleepers with NRPF are actually met by outreach/other City of London services and what proportion of these are in encampments.

- Increasing expectations on outreach workers around information-gathering and ID checking for rough sleepers with NRPF, so that more information is available at the point of move-in to Snow Hill Court.
- Carrying out data analysis relating to assessment centre residents with immigration issues, to understand if all require referral to Praxis, or if some could be moved on into the proposed staging post or other interim accommodation.
- Considering additional City of London funding for purchasing immigration casework support – either directly or via a voluntary sector service.
- Exploring remodelling the current Navigator service model, drawing on the approach offered by STEPS (Supporting Transitions and Empowering People Service), funded by City and Hackney Public Health team. STEPS offers intensive outreach and integrated health, therapeutic and social support and focuses on ‘long-term and relational’ support, which is effective for people with multiple and complex needs. The estimated need for this provision in City of London is 15–20 people.
- Reviewing locations and times of the outreach van and seek an associated building for the service.
- Considering a dedicated health data role based in outreach team.
- Work via the Homeless Health Coordinator to develop hospital discharge arrangements with the Pathways team at Homerton hospital – including understanding rough sleepers’ needs, signposting and joint needs assessments.
- Exploring the possibility of joint work with City of London’s tenancy support service to extend support to people at possible future risk of homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Exploring a SWEP stay as sufficient basis for a statutory homelessness application, as is the practice in LB Hackney and LB Tower Hamlets.

Internal and external partnerships and collaborative working and how these might be improved

City of London commissioners are viewed as knowledgeable around rough sleeping and homelessness issues and as committed to effective partnership working. Examples given of this included service investment, such as the Snow Hill Court and the previous tri-borough staging post, a willingness to trial new approaches, such as keyworking at The Lodge and a ‘coproduction culture, which includes regular coproduction workshops, networking and information-sharing around services.

There are effective relationships between outreach and accommodation pathway providers and good access into City of London’s accommodation pathway. Mental and physical health in-reach support at Snow Hill Court is working well. Stakeholders also drew attention to the effectiveness of City of London’s partnership with BEAM, which

uses an alternative giving campaign to raise money for rough sleepers and other homeless people.⁵

Whilst some stakeholders consider there is effective partnership working between City of London's Housing, Adult Social Care and homelessness services, others highlighted the challenges statutory services face in managing demand and that this can produce reluctance to investigate homelessness and/or care duties. Some stakeholders perceive there is occasional 'shunting' of cases between Housing, Homelessness and Adult Social Care services and that risk management in these cases could be strengthened.

Some stakeholders consider that statutory homelessness applications are not encouraged in City of London and highlighted low numbers of statutory homelessness acceptances compared to other London boroughs.

The rough sleeper social worker role is viewed as not having achieved all envisaged benefits, in terms of increasing Care Act assessments and access into social care services. Some stakeholders perceive that care thresholds continue to be applied inflexibly, though it was also recognised that significant resource challenges are likely to affect this. Some stakeholders considered it may be unrealistic for a single role holder to enact the culture change needed within the Adult Social Care service around responding to rough sleepers' lifestyle and engagement issues.

Some stakeholders perceive that City of London Homelessness staff lack good understanding of rough sleepers' support needs and lifestyles and what is realistic in terms of providing evidence of need and engagement in structured assessments. However, other stakeholders highlighted that some voluntary sector staff lack understanding of legal frameworks, what statutory services are able to provide and what constitutes health rather than social care needs. This situation is viewed as being exacerbated by high staff turnover in VCSE services, with new staff lacking relevant knowledge and expertise. There is a view that VCSE staff can make referrals to Adult Social Care, the Homelessness Team and Navigator service as a 'default', rather than as a result of issues identified on an individual's needs assessment.

It is acknowledged that City of London does not currently have an effective response to working with rough sleepers in encampments. There is a need to develop an approach which balances the needs of service users and City of London residents – including being proactive around ASB and highway obstructions – and coordinating activities between teams/services. There is also a recognition that encampments are outside of

⁵ [New contactless donation points to help Square Mile's rough sleepers.](#)

traditional outreach expertise and that staff need additional support around delivering tailored messages for this group of rough sleepers.

Some stakeholders consider that City Police lack understanding of rough sleepers' support needs and lifestyles, especially around mental health and domestic abuse and that this can act as a barrier to service engagement. It is understood that work is in progress to scope out increased collaboration between CST and City Police. This will include improved operational protocols and a new role coordinating work to reduce crime and ASB amongst the street population, including within encampments, rough sleeping and begging hotspots and involving enforcement, where needed. It is intended that this work will provide data and evidence for one or more permanent roles.

High transience makes cross-borough working more challenging for rough sleepers with substance misuse needs. There is scope to improve the experience of cross-borough transfers for service users. An arrangement has been introduced by Turning Point to improve handover and on-going support for this group. This is understood to be improving trust and engagement with the service.

Discussions also suggest there is scope to develop joint working with City of London businesses.

Suggestions for addressing these issues

These included:

- Exploring development of an encampment sub-team. It is understood that City of London has started work in this area.
- Offering refresher training to all relevant frontline staff around statutory homelessness and social care frameworks and Safeguarding applications.
- Supporting City Police through regular training around rough sleepers' support needs and how to effectively engage them with offers of accommodation and support.
- Developing clear messages for all frontline staff working in homelessness services about likely eligibility for statutory housing and care services.
- Exploring if additional information can be gathered by outreach and other non-statutory services to support Adult Social Care needs assessment.
- Reviewing recent statutory homelessness and Care Act assessment referrals, to explore how care thresholds have been applied and if there are more creative approaches to gathering relevant information and interpreting care thresholds. This would help ensure that very vulnerable rough sleepers have access to care and support, that the assessment process is not onerous for service users and frontline staff and to build consistency and transparency around decision-making.

- Developing relationships with BIDS and as a potential source of funding to address rough sleeping in City of London.

Good practice review

This section includes good practice from two other London boroughs (Lambeth and Westminster) which may be of benefit to preventing and reducing rough sleeping in City of London.

Working with NRPF rough sleepers

LB Lambeth does not operate a staging post, with all rough sleepers moving directly into high support or shared supported accommodation within the borough's pathway.

LB Lambeth operates 'safe seats' at its assessment centre, which are accessible to people with NRPF. In addition, it runs 'The Shelter'. This is a former night shelter which accommodates people with restricted eligibility for LB Lambeth services, due to lack of local connection or unclear immigration status and people who engage sporadically with LB Lambeth services. The service is RSI-funded, and rooms are shared to maximise use of this funding. This project is utilised by many people with NRPF and is a more cost-effective arrangement than using hotels.

Access to effective immigration advice is recognised as essential. LB Lambeth expects outreach workers to gather initial information to support referral to immigration advice whilst people are still on the street.

In Westminster, there is some evidence-gathering around immigration status and advice needs by outreach workers on the streets.

Westminster City Council utilises two immigration advice providers (RAMFEL and Street Legal). However, both currently lack capacity to take on new cases. There is a recognised sector-wide lack of capacity and qualified staff, which causes delays in decision making.

Westminster City Council is planning to refurbish a former assessment centre for NRPF rough sleepers with low support needs. The service will be Housing Benefit funded, and residents will be offered shared rooms to reduce costs. It is recognised there is very little for NRPF rough sleepers with higher support needs. Access via the Adult Social Care route is difficult, due to very high thresholds for care, reluctance to carry out full Care Act assessments on the streets and lack of understanding of rough sleepers' mental health and substance misuse needs and lifestyles.

Working with people in encampments

LB Lambeth's overall approach is to utilise enforcement as a 'change mechanism', which backs up the support offer from outreach workers.

The borough employs a Public Protection Officer, funded via RSI. The role holder is seconded from the Community Safety Team but has a good understanding of rough sleeping issues. The role has enabled partnership development, including estate managers, messaging and reassurance to councillors and members of the public via attendance at ward meetings and improved police engagement and input.

The Public Protection Officer role has been particularly useful for rough sleepers with multiple and complex needs and in working with people in encampments. The PPO always works in joint shifts with outreach workers. Their knowledge of relevant legislation means it is possible to take further steps with people who are repeatedly not engaging with offers of support, including serving notices and coordination of action with police and street cleansing services.

Westminster has several longstanding rough sleeper encampments and emerging hotspots. Encampments are often highly visible and attract political attention, though may not be easily accessible if not on land which is not owned by Westminster City Council.

Westminster does not operate a specialist encampment team. All outreach workers are responsible for monitoring encampments and rough sleeping hotspots, be creative in their engagement techniques (such as varying times of engagement and joint work with police and other Westminster City Council teams), to carry out on-going risk assessments and to develop support plans for all rough sleepers. There are also weekly multi-agency meetings including landowners, to discuss risks, actions and safeguarding concerns.

Westminster has a team of Neighbourhood Coordinators, who coordinate work with police, ASB and outreach staff to reduce rough sleeping. Coordinators are able to use a slightly more assertive approach, to 'nudge' rough sleepers into accepting support. There is not a current police liaison role, though this is considered a useful resource.

Westminster City Council considers it important that support and enforcement roles are clearly separated. For example, when Coordinators issue orders to vacate an area, outreach staff are not present. Successful outcomes also require a change of the encampment landscape, to prevent people from returning.

The Council has experienced challenges in sustaining political support for enforcement actions and buy-in from other agencies, such as British Transport Police and Transport

for London (as landowners). There is also an aim to develop messages with VCSE services and the public around the risks of giving out tents to rough sleepers and the risks for people living in tenants, associated with reduced visibility and increased risk of overdose and domestic abuse.

Providing a rapid response

All Westminster City Council commissioned outreach teams are expected to respond to all Streetlink calls. However, it is considering setting up a small team to work solely with flow rough sleepers and having a separate team working with complex needs/entrenched rough sleepers.

Appendix 1

Full list of documents reviewed

- City of London Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023–2027.
- Credible Service Offer policy (report to Cabinet, dated Oct 2020).
- Draft policy and protocol to tackle the negative impacts of rough sleeping – report to Committee (January 2025).
- Review of The Bridge.
- Review of Operation Luscombe.
- Service specifications and KPIs relating to City of London Outreach team, MIST and Navigator services.

Full list of stakeholders who participated in the review

Table 1: Participating stakeholders

Name	Organisation
Rowan Wyllie Kirsty Lowe Nisha Backory Nana Choak	City of London rough sleeping services
Simon Cribbens	City of London Community and Children's Services
Eamonn Mullally	City of London Corporation
Emma Casey	LB Lambeth
Christine Venn-Brown Becky Woodman	Westminster City Council
Bethan Adams Beth Winter	Thames Reach area managers
Charley Matthews	Thames Reach MIST
Gemma Topham	Thames Reach/Snow Hill Court
St Mungo's Navigator Team	
Sonia Mills	Turning Point
Valeria Cadena	City of London Community Safety Team
Amy Withey	London Councils
Sarah Whale	North East London Sub-Region Rough Sleeper Coordinator
Emma Casey	LB Lambeth
Ish Camp	St Mungo's Navigator service

Data tables and commentary

Flow, stock and returner rough sleepers

Data indicates a wide spatial distribution of rough sleepers across the City of London in 2022/23 and 2023/24. Since 2021/22, there has been an upward trend in total rough sleepers in City of London. The total number of rough sleepers increased by 30% between 2021/22 - 2022/23 and by 36% between 2022/23 - 2023/24. This increase is higher than the London average of 21% in 2022/23 and 19% in 2023/24. The 2023/24 total of 656 individual rough sleepers was the fifth largest in London.

Table 2: Flow, stock and returner rough sleepers, 2022/23 and 2023/24

Year	Flow	Stock	Returner	Total
2022/23	226 (47%)	173 (36%)	83 (17%)	482 (100%)
2023/24	373 (57%)	207 (32%)	76 (12%)	656 (100%)

Source: CHAIN data reports

Flow. In 2023/24, flow rough sleepers increased significantly between 2022/23 and 2023/24, both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of total rough sleepers. However, the proportion of flow rough sleepers in these two periods was lower than London averages (63.6% in 2022/23 and 66.5% in 2023/24) and for similar boroughs in 2023/24 (Lambeth 64%, Southwark 66% and Tower Hamlets 63%).⁶

Stock and returners. In 2023/24, the number of stock rough sleepers increased on 2022/23, though decreased as a proportion of the total rough sleeper figure. The number of returner rough sleepers decreased slightly between 2022/23 and 2023/24, in total numbers and proportion of total rough sleepers decreased.

City of London's proportion of returner rough sleepers is similar to London averages (15.7% in 2022/23 and 13.6% in 2023/24). However, its proportion of stock rough sleepers during this period was significantly higher than London averages (20.7% in 2022/23 and 19.9% in 2023/24).

In 2022/23, 27% of total rough sleepers in City of London were seen only once and 43% of flow rough sleepers were seen only once. Corresponding data for 2023/24 indicates that 38% of total City rough sleepers were seen only once and 56% of flow rough sleepers were seen only once. This data highlights an increasingly transient rough sleeper population and possibly also that some people are finding their own accommodation solutions after coming onto the streets for a single night.

⁶ Data comparison was carried out with these boroughs on the basis of their similarities with City of London in terms of high rough sleeper numbers.

Table 3: Last settled base (new rough sleepers)⁷

Accommodation type	2022/23	2023/24
Long-term accommodation		
PRS	16.7%	20.0%
Friends/family/partner	13.9%	29.4%
Other	8.4%	9.1%
Short and medium-term accommodation		
Hostel/supported accommodation	8.3%	3.5%
Squat	2.8%	0.0%
LA TA	0.0%	2.4%
Institution		
NASS and other asylum support	0.0%	9.4%
Prison	5.6%	2.4%
Hospital	0.0%	1.2%
Probation	0.0%	1.2%
No settled base in UK	19.4%	10.6%
Other	5.6%	4.7%
Not known	19.4%	8.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Source: CHAIN data reports

This data indicates:

- In 2022/23 and 2023/24, a larger proportion of new rough sleepers came from long-term than short and medium-term accommodation.
- Almost 10% of new rough sleepers had left asylum support accommodation in 2023/24, whilst this figure was 0% for 2022/23 – this is likely to reflect the impact of Government policy change in this area.
- A significant proportion of people had no previous settled base in the UK (19.4% in 2022/23 and 10.6% in 2023/24).

Pan-London data for 2022/23 and 2023/24 indicates that living with friends/family/partner and PRS accommodation were the two most common previous accommodation types for settled bases and that departures from long-term accommodation were more common than other types of accommodation.

Pan-London data for indicates a slightly smaller proportion of people with no settled base in the UK (7.8% in 2022/23 and 10.6% in 2023/24) than in City of London.

⁷ Base 2022/23 = 112 (76 not recorded, so actually 36); 2023/24 = 85 (308 not recorded).

Pan-London data for 2023/24 indicates a higher total of people (17.0%) leaving asylum seeker support than in City of London.

Table 4: Reason for leaving last settled base (new rough sleepers)⁸

Reason	2022/23	2023/24
Evicted	19.4%	10.6%
Left of own accord	8.3%	23.5%
Asked to leave	5.6%	16.5%
End of time-limited stay	5.6%	9.4%
Other	8.3%	12.9%
No settled base since arriving in UK	19.4%	10.6%
Not known	33.0%	16.5%
Total:	100.0%	100.0%

Source: CHAIN data reports

In 2022/23, the most common reasons for new rough sleepers leaving their previous settled accommodation (where data is recorded) were: eviction and the person leaving accommodation of their own accord. In 2023/24, the most common reasons related to leaving of own accord and being asked to leave.

In comparison, pan-London data for 2022/23 indicates the top three reasons for people leaving their last settled base were: eviction, being asked to leave accommodation and leaving of their own accord. Pan-London data for 2023/24 indicates the top three reasons were being asked to leave, eviction and end of time-limited stay in accommodation.

Table 5: Last settled base (returning rough sleepers)⁹

Accommodation type	2022/23	2023/24
Long-term accommodation		
PRS	40.0%	20.8%
Friends/family/partner	0.0%	13.2%
LA accommodation	20.0%	1.9%
HA accommodation	20.0%	7.5%
Other	0.0%	5.7%
Short and medium-term accommodation		
Hostel	20.0%	17.0%
LA TA	0.0%	5.7%

⁸ Base = 2022/23 = 36 recorded; 2023/24 = 85 recorded.

⁹ Base = 5 (2022/23), = 53 (2023/24)

Accommodation type	2022/23	2023/24
Institution		
Prison	0.0%	5.7%
Asylum seeker support	0.0%	5.7%
No settled base in UK since arrival	0.0%	3.8%
Employment-related accommodation	0.0%	3.8%
Not known	0.0%	7.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Source: CHAIN data reports

The very low base in 2022/23 makes it difficult to identify trends between the two periods for this cohort. In 2023/24, there was an increase in the number of people who had left accommodation with friends/family or partner and a small rise in people coming from asylum seeker support, prison and employment-related accommodation.

In common with the new rough sleeper cohort, a greater proportion of people had left long-term accommodation than short and medium-term accommodation.

Pan-London data for 2022/23 and 2023/24 also indicates that PRS accommodation and living with friends/family or partner were the most common last settled base and that long-term accommodation departures made up the largest proportion of departures. In both periods, hostels were the most common short/medium-term accommodation and prison was the most common institutional accommodation.

Pan-London data for 2023/24 also indicates an increase (to 8.7%) of people with no previous settled base in the UK.

Reason for leaving last settled base (returning rough sleepers)¹⁰

Reason for leaving	2022/23	2023/24
Asked to leave	40.0%	7.5%
Left of own accord	40.0%	32.1%
Evicted	0.0%	20.8%
End of time-limited stay	0.0%	7.5%
No settled base since UK arrival	0.0%	3.8%
Other	20.0%	15.1%
No departure – still in accommodation	0.0%	3.8%

¹⁰ Base = 5 (2022/23), base = 53 (2023/24).

Reason for leaving	2022/23	2023/24
Not known	0.0%	9.4%
Total:	100.0%	100.0%

Source: CHAIN data reports

This data indicates reduction in people being asked to leave their accommodation and an increase in people being evicted. Pan-London data for 2022/23 and 2023/24 indicates the main reasons for leaving last settled base related to eviction, followed by people leaving accommodation of their own accord and end of time-limited stay.

Gender

The gender of 469 City of London rough sleepers was recorded on CHAIN in 2022/23. A significant majority of these rough sleepers (89%) were male. In 2023/24, gender was recorded for 604 rough sleepers, of which 91.6% were male. The proportion of male rough sleepers in City of London was somewhat higher than the pan-London average (83.2% in 2022/23 and 84.0% in 2023/24).

Nationality

Table 6: Nationality¹¹

Nationality group	2022/23	2023/24
UK	64.9%	66.4%
EEA (main groups Romania and Poland)	25.5%	20.0%
Non-EEA	1.4%	0.8%
European not known	1.0%	0.6%
Africa	3.1%	6.6%
Asia	2.4%	3.8%
Americas	1.2%	1.7%
Australasia	0.5%	0.2%
Total:	100.0%	100.0%

Source: CHAIN data reports

City of London's rough sleeping population is less diverse than London as a whole. In 2022/23 and 2023/24, approximately two thirds of City rough sleepers were UK nationals - significantly higher than pan-London averages (48.6% in 2022/23 and 45.5% in 2023/24).

City of London had a slightly lower proportion of EEA national rough sleepers than London averages (25.5%, compared to 29.5% in 2022/23 and 20.0% compared to 23.3% in 2023/24). City of London also had a lower proportion of rough sleepers from African

¹¹ Base = 416 (2022/23), = 529 (2023/24)

countries than the London average (2.4% in 2022/23 and 3.8% in 2023/24, compared to 9.8% and 16.7% respectively) and from Asia – where the London average was 8.1% in 2022/23 and 10.5% in 2023/24.

In relation to comparator boroughs in 2023/24, City of London's proportion of UK nationals is higher than Lambeth, Southwark and Tower Hamlets. City of London's proportions of rough sleepers from African and Asian countries and the Americas are also lower than all three boroughs.

Age

Table 7: Age¹²

	2022/23	2023/24
Under 18	0.2%	0.0%
18 – 25	4.1%	4.4%
26 – 35	22.2%	28.7%
36 – 45	37.6%	37.2%
46 – 55	22.8%	21.2%
55+	13.1%	8.5%

Source: CHAIN data reports

The majority of City of London rough sleepers in both periods (around 83%) were aged between 26 and 55. There was a slight increase in the number of 26 – 35 year olds in 2023/24, matched with a slightly lower number of people aged over 55. Pan-London data for 2022/23 and 2023/24 did not indicate any significant differences in this area.

Support needs

Table 8: Support needs¹³

	2022/23		2023/24	
	City of London	London average	City of London	London average
Alcohol	43%	31%	38%	28%
Drugs	49%	32%	45%	29%
Mental health	61%	51%	66%	48%
2+ support needs	50%	35%	49%	30%
No support needs	16%	28%	15%	34%

Source: CHAIN data reports

¹² Base = 482 (2022/23); 656 (2023/24)

¹³ Base = 309 (2022/23), = 352 (2023/24).

CHAIN records self-reported substance misuse, mental and physical ill health, rather than clinically defined needs. CHAIN records also do not indicate the severity of need.

The most common support need amongst City of London rough sleepers in both 2022/23 and 2023/24 was around mental health, with around two thirds of rough sleepers experiencing issues in this area. Around half of rough sleepers in both periods had an identified drugs need and half of rough sleepers had two or more support needs.

The proportion of City of London rough sleepers with needs around alcohol, drugs and mental health are all higher than London averages for 2022/23 and 2023/24. The proportion of City of London rough sleepers with two or more support needs is also significantly higher than the London average and higher than the three comparator boroughs.

Amongst City of London rough sleepers whose institutional history is known, 47% in 2022/23 and 46% in 2023/24 had experience of prison. This is also significantly higher than the pan-London average of 29% in 2022/23 and 25% in 2023/24.

Accommodation outcomes

Table 9: Accommodation outcomes

Accommodation category	2022/23	2023/24
Hubs, shelters and emergency accommodation	78 placements (32% of total)	88 placements, (35.9% of total) (mainly SWEP, some night shelter)
Temporary accommodation	158 placements (64% of total)	150 placements (61.2% of total)
Long-term accommodation	9 placements (4% of total)	7 placements (2.9% of total)
Total:	245	245

Source: CHAIN data reports

Data indicates the biggest number of accommodation outcomes in 2022/23 and 2023/24 were in temporary accommodation. In 2022/23, this accounted for 158 placements, including 69 placements in B&B, 36 assessment centre placements in TA (28% of total) and 28 placements in local authority TA. In 2023/24, 53 stayed in B&B, there were 38 placements at the assessment centre and 32 placements in local authority TA.

Within the emergency accommodation category, the most common outcome in both periods was into local SWEP accommodation (24% of total in 2022/23 and 21.2% of total

in 2023/24). Only a very small proportion of people in both periods (3% - 4%) went directly into long-term accommodation.

In 2022/23, a small number of people (five) were reconnected. Four of these were reconnected within the UK. Information on reconnection is not available for 2023/24.

In comparison, pan-London data for 2022/23 indicates 37% of placements were in emergency accommodation, 51% of accommodation outcomes were in temporary accommodation and 12% of outcomes were within long-term accommodation – including into PRS and Clearing House tenancies. Figures for 2023/24 indicate similar proportions of outcomes split across the three categories.

CHAIN data in this area does not indicate how many housing outcomes relate to flow/stock and returner rough sleepers and rough sleepers' support needs.

Rough sleeping snapshot surveys

Data from the annual rough sleeping snapshot in November 2023 (the most recent currently available) indicates a total of 61 rough sleepers in City of London. This represented an increase of 18 people (42%) on the corresponding 2022 figure and was the third highest in London. The corresponding figure for November 2024 was 86 people, an increase of 41% on the 2023 total.

Table 10: Rough Sleeping Data Framework, July 2023 – June 2024¹⁴

Data is available for the period July 2023 – June 2024.

Period	New rough sleepers in the month	New rough sleepers on a single night	Leaving an institution
July 2023	22	5	3 (all hospital)
August 2023	17	0	2 (all hospital)
September 2023	22	8	1 (hospital)
October 2023	40	11	1 (hospital)
November 2023	51	20	1 (hospital)
December 2023	51	6	3 (1 each of prison, hospital, asylum support)
January 2024	30	11	1 (hospital)
February 2024	35	10	6 (2 prison, 2 hospital, 2 asylum support)

¹⁴ [Microsoft Power BI](#). Accessed January 2025. And checked for updates June 2025.

Period	New rough sleepers in the month	New rough sleepers on a single night	Leaving an institution
March 2024	63	10	5 (1 prison, 4 asylum support)
April 2024	68	10	4 (2 prison, 2 asylum support)
May 2024	42	7	3 (all prison)
June 2024	40	13	2 (1 prison, 1 asylum support)

Source: MHCLG

This data indicates an overall upward trend in flow rough sleepers over the course of a month between July 2023 – June 2024, with peaks in November/December 2023 and March/April 2024. The number of new rough sleepers on a single night varied significantly over the period, from 0 in August 2023 to 20 in November 2023.

Of departures of institutions during the period, 12 people are recorded as coming from hospitals, 10 people are recorded as coming from prison and 10 people are recorded as coming from asylum support services.

The number of people coming onto the streets after leaving hospital reduced over the period, whilst the number of people coming onto the streets from asylum seeker support services increased over the period.

H-CLIC data¹⁵

H-CLIC records the support needs of households owed a prevention or relief duty from a local authority. This includes a history of rough sleeping.

England-wide data for 2022/23 and 2023/24 indicates that 5.5% of households owed a prevention or relief duty had a history of rough sleeping.

H-CLIC data for City of London indicates that in 2022/23 there were a total of 29 households owed a prevention or relief duty. Of these, one applicant had a history of rough sleeping. H-CLIC data for 2023/24 indicates there were a total of 33 households owed a prevention or relief duty. Of these, one applicant had a history of rough sleeping. Data indicates that the proportion of people owed a homelessness duty and having a history of rough sleeping is lower in City of London than national averages.

¹⁵ [Tables on homelessness - GOV.UK](#). Accessed January and June 2025.

About Homeless Link

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for organisations working with people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in England. We aim to develop, inspire, support, and sustain a movement of organisations working together to achieve positive futures for people who are homeless or vulnerably housed.

Representing over 900 organisations across England, we are in a unique position to see both the scale and nature of the tragedy of homelessness. We see the data gaps; the national policy barriers; the constraints of both funding and expertise; the system blocks and attitudinal obstacles. But crucially, we also see – and are instrumental in developing – the positive practice and ‘what works’ solutions.

As an organisation we believe that things can and should be better: not because we are naïve or cut off from reality, but because we have seen and experienced radical positive change in the way systems and services are delivered – and that gives us hope for a different future.

We support our members through research, guidance, and learning, and to promote policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

What we do

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for frontline homelessness services. We work to improve services through research, guidance and learning, and campaign for policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

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Let's End Homelessness Together

