

Our plan for reducing rough sleeping and increasing social inclusion in Basingstoke and Deane 2020-2023

Background

Why do we need a plan to reduce rough sleeping and increase social inclusion?

The level of rough sleeping in Basingstoke and Deane has reduced in recent years and may be attributable to effective and coordinated partnership work; however there is still more work to do.

The purpose of this plan is to identify the key priorities to reduce rough sleeping and increase social inclusion in the borough.

Rough sleeping is harmful to both individuals and society. It is important to have a plan that sets out how we will intervene early to reduce the risk of the individual sleeping rough or to coordinate support around the person when they are rough sleeping so that they can exit rough sleeping quickly and safely.

Through the work of the plan we will generate more information about people who are on the edges of sleeping rough. By broadening our thinking and resource to include people who are vulnerable to rough sleeping because they are sofa surfing, living in hostels, HMOs (houses of multiple occupation) or temporarily housed we are more likely to be able to intervene earlier.

Having somewhere to live is not the only protective factor against rough sleeping. Feeling socially isolated, living with addiction, having long term physical health conditions, and poor mental health issues without support increases the risk of rough sleeping. This plan needs to consider both our response to rough sleeping to reduce it, and also what can be done to prevent it. We also need more information to be able to measure how effective our collective efforts are in reducing rough sleeping.

This plan has been developed by a range of organisations, agencies and individuals, who form the Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP); the borough council is a key partner in the SIP. The borough council has a statutory duty to develop a homelessness prevention strategy, the most fundamental element of which is rooted in preventing rough sleeping. The SIP partners are fundamental in meeting this duty.

This plan complements the council's Homelessness and Housing Strategy and aims to ensure that Basingstoke and Deane has a coordinated response to prevent the harm and risk

associated with rough sleeping. This plan describes some of the opportunities and services available to support and facilitate recovery from rough sleeping.

What is the Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP)?

The Social Inclusion Partnership is a strategic partnership of stakeholders interested in reducing the harmful effects of homelessness and rough sleeping and advancing social inclusion in the borough of Basingstoke and Deane. It generates ideas, provides leadership and coordination and enables insights from people with lived and living experience of homelessness and rough sleeping to inform and drive our work.

What is the government definition of rough sleeping?

The government definition criteria for the term “rough sleeping” is as follows for the purposes of rough sleeping street counts, evidence-based estimates, and estimates informed by a spotlight street count:

- *People sleeping, about to bed down* (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments).*
- *People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or “bashes” which are makeshift shelters, often comprised of cardboard boxes).*

The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters (such as May Place House or the Winter Night Shelter), people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or travellers.

*The term “bedded down” is taken to mean either lying down or sleeping. About to bed down includes people who are sitting in/on or near a sleeping bag or other bedding.

When we talk about the official number of people sleeping rough, taken at a count or estimate, we are required use this definition and criteria.

The Social Inclusion Partnership understands that rough sleeping figures can vary greatly from one night to the next and that the definition above excluded people who may be on the edges of sleeping rough, like people who are sofa-surfing.

What is it about rough sleeping that is harmful to individuals and society?

It is hard to keep warm, safe, clean, dry and healthy without somewhere safe to sleep and facilities to use. Sleeping rough is rarely a “lifestyle” choice; it is more often than not dangerous, frightening, lonely and risky. Both sleep and comfort are hard to find. There is constant tiredness, hyper-vigilance and body ache. To cope with this, people sleeping rough may in effect connect with others to find and build a common community and be creative

with sharing resources and ways of coping. One of the common ways that people sleeping rough cope is increased drug and alcohol use.

According to recent ONS figures, men and women sleeping rough are much more likely to die early, with the average age for men being 44 years (compared with 74) and women being 42 years (compared with 80).

People sleeping rough often have highly unique and interwoven needs. They are more likely to experience mental ill health, addiction and issues arising from complex trauma and adverse childhood experiences.

Mainstream services are rarely designed to respond to a multitude of complex and overlapping issues at once such as depression, epilepsy, diabetes and alcoholism. People who are rough sleeping and living with multiple issues are more likely to have to access emergency rather than planned services (e.g. going to accident and emergency rather than the GP). Treatment compliance may be poor for example remaining in hospital to receive treatment until ready for discharge or managing completion of a course of treatment or prescribed medication whilst living on the streets. They are also more likely to become a victim of crime and have sustained contact with police and criminal justice services.

Not having a permanent fixed address means that people sleeping rough are less likely to be able to access online services or have available supporting ID to be able to claim benefits, open bank accounts, secure employment which can help rebuild their lives.

Since 2010, the numbers of people sleeping rough across the UK has risen by 261%. Against the national and local trend, Basingstoke and Deane's November rough sleeping estimate figures (using the definition above) have decreased from its peak in 2016 of 26 people to 15 in 2017, 8 in 2018 and 5 in 2019. We acknowledge that this is a "one night" figure which can fluctuate greatly, and we are committed to continue to reduce this figure year on year.

The SIP members' work and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's Plan and Housing and Homelessness Strategies have clear strategic priorities to prevent homelessness and support vulnerable people. These priorities are at the very essence of this rough sleeping plan.

What has been achieved since the 2017-2020 plan?

Since the Social Inclusion Partnership's (SIP) 2017-2020 Tackling Rough Sleeping Plan was co-created from a partnership event in November 2016, there has been considerable collaboration and achievement between a wide range of partners, which may be attributable to the reduction in Basingstoke and Deane's rough sleeping numbers. Here are some of the headlines:

Timeline / Date	Milestone
December 2016	Basingstoke's first 5-day winter night shelter opened for 3 months, operating from 3 different church venues, coordinated entirely by volunteers.
December 2016	The SIP launched its Real Change Campaign and to date has generated in excess of £40,000 paying for a new wet room at Camrose, a Belongings Project run through Julian House, contributed to the running of the winter night shelter and secured a 3 rd day of opening at Camrose Day Centre, exclusively for people sleeping rough.
January 2017	Basingstoke and Deane were awarded a 2-year Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Rough Sleeping Grant and from April 2017 began an "engagement in change" project. This project, based on the Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) principles, was co-delivered between Dr Nick Maguire's psychology team from Southampton University, Social Enterprise Outcome Home and Julian House, and introduced peer support, trauma informed ways of working and reflective practice as mainstream.
April 2017	Through a tendering process Two Saints began delivery of emergency access hostel, May Place House and Julian House began assertively outreaching and have since secured funding for women's early intervention and prevention of rough sleeping outreach work.
June 2017	Basingstoke and Deane were confirmed as one of first Big Lottery funded Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach areas
October 2017	SIP partners raised awareness in the community of the risks of homelessness and rough sleeping on World Mental Health and Homelessness Day.
Summer – Autumn 2017	The findings of the independent Street Audit conducted by John Isserlis were presented to the SIP.
December 2017	The first 7-day pop up winter night shelter, supported by in excess of 250 volunteers and 5 churches.
For 3 months, from December 2018	Key House opened its doors to provide a 7-day fixed winter night shelter. This was only made possible thanks to the tireless efforts of the churches and community accompanied by the array of agencies committed to working partnership to alleviate rough sleeping.
December 2018	At least 60 people from Social Inclusion Partnership gathered to consider what needs to be in the focus of the next plan to reduce rough sleeping, based on what we know is working and where the gaps are.
Early 2019	Basingstoke and Deane were awarded 1 year's funding from MHCLG for 2 rough sleeping navigator roles and from April 2019 led the sub-regional Rough Sleeping initiative (RSI) funded one-year project with partners from Winchester, Hart and Rushmoor.
Throughout March and April 2019	Partners were invited to co-create a specification for a new community-based service which began in August 2019

What is there still to do?

In spite of these phenomenal community efforts and achievements, there is still much to do and much to think about. We have revised our plan to re-set our strategic direction to address this.

The flow of new people to the streets continues steadily, with an average of 15 people being connected to Outreach each month. The majority are single men aged between 21-45 who are locally connected. Many have spent time in prison, general and psychiatric hospital and in care. They are arriving on the streets through a range of interlocking and complex factors which might include relationship breakdown, poverty, social/familial isolation, mental ill health, bereavement and addiction. We are seeing an increasing need to provide a suitable response for couples and people with dogs.

We need to remain focused and dedicate the necessary time and resource needed to further a range of work streams which include:

- continued public awareness campaigns,
- increased interface and coordination with health colleagues to reduce inequalities,
- analysing the need and benefits of a “one stop shop”,
- developing a mechanism to gather effective data on trends, needs, gaps, outcomes
- establishing a method to conduct serious case reviews in the event of a death on the streets.

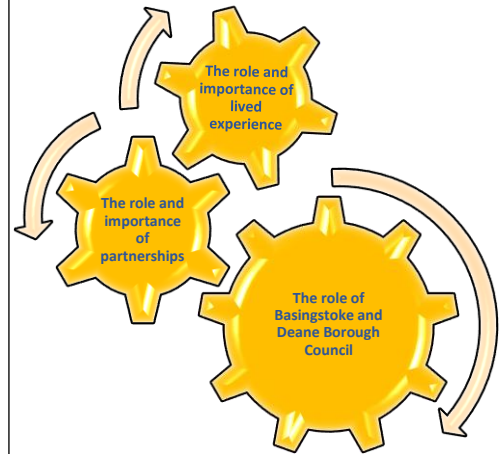
What exists in Basingstoke and Deane for people who are rough sleeping?

There are a range of services delivered by a variety of agencies. Some are commissioned, some grant-funded and other fundraised. They are specifically aimed at alleviating rough sleeping and include:

- A Social Inclusion Team embedded within the council’s Housing Team, coordinating MEAM-related work and overseeing the commissioned services.
- MEAM – a multi-agency partnership working with 10-15 people who appear most distant and disengaged from services and at the same time are having a high impact.
- Julian House Outreach Service
- Two Saints May Place House Emergency Access hostel (20 beds)
- Home Group Mary Rose Court and a variety of group and individual homes (45 beds)
- Camrose Day Centre open Tues, Thursday (all comers) and Friday (homeless women and men only)
- Winter Churches (Night Light Shelter)
- Outcome Home – Clinical Psychologists providing clinics for group and individual therapy, resilience training, reflective practice.
- Peer Mentoring & Lived Experience Specialists Team, supported by Outcome Home.
- Basingstoke Foodbank who can provide 3-day emergency supplies for people with access to cooking facilities and/or 1 day packs for people needing food and drink when places like Camrose are not open.
- Back up support from agencies and services such as Citizen’s Advice, Money Lifeline, NHS, Timebank etc

What do we want to achieve with our 2020-2023 plan to reduce rough sleeping and increase social inclusion?

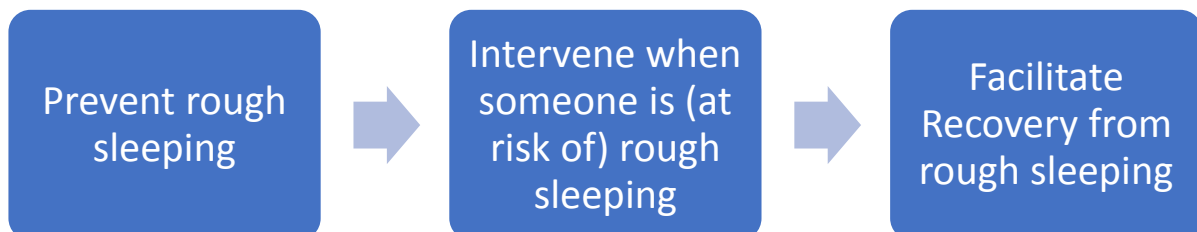
The Social Inclusion Partnership and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council want to ensure a sustainable route away from living on the streets. We are committed to working together, as equals with differing roles and responsibilities, to increase social inclusion. We believe this vision can become much more of a reality when people (at risk of) sleeping rough have access to services which have been co-designed with people who have had experience of them and value people as individuals with strengths. We recognise that more information and better responses are needed to help anticipate and respond early to risk factors which, unresolved, could lead people towards sleeping rough.



Our Vision Statement

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, in conjunction with the Social Inclusion Partnership, is committed to address the harm caused by rough sleeping and to identify and work on the causes of rough sleeping.

Our Objectives

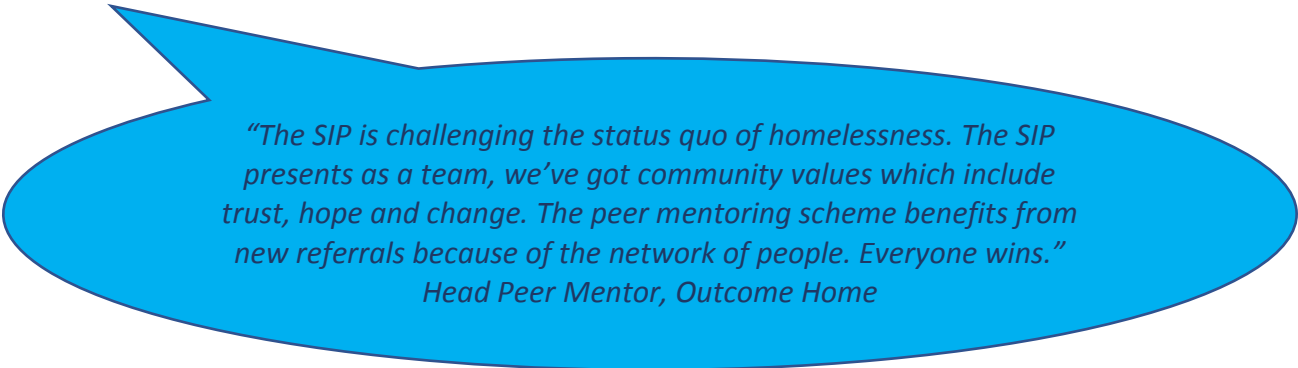


Our Priorities, Actions and Outcomes

The following priorities, which have been divided under the headings of Prevention, Intervention and Recovery, have been collected following our Social Inclusion Partnership's event to review the rough sleeping plan in December 2018. There will be task and finish groups focusing on these priority areas and carrying forward the associated work. Some priority actions are already in train, within commissioned work streams and contracts. The Social Inclusion Partnership, together with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, will monitor progress of the actions and check on the effectiveness of the outcomes.

“It cannot be a one size fits all approach – it must be personal to the individual” – voice of one of the attendees from the Transitions and Margins Workshop at the December 18 SIP event

Conclusion and Next Steps



“The SIP is challenging the status quo of homelessness. The SIP presents as a team, we’ve got community values which include trust, hope and change. The peer mentoring scheme benefits from new referrals because of the network of people. Everyone wins.”
Head Peer Mentor, Outcome Home

This is an ambitious partnership plan. For us to continue with seeing the ongoing reduction in numbers of people sleeping rough on the streets on any given night, there is still much work to do. We must collectively commit to ensuring that the length of time spent on the street is kept to a minimum and where prevention has not been possible that the average length of time on the street is monitored with a focus on reducing the numbers of nights spent rough sleeping. Where rough sleeping has occurred, we will focus our energies to limit this experience to a single and not repeated episode wherever possible.

For many of the priorities in this plan to be taken forwards there is heavy reliance on partners sharing their time, intelligence and resources with others. This plan and its priorities will be reviewed at the Social Inclusion Partnership annually. It will also be reviewed as and when there are changes in funding, or there is new data, evidence or policy which requires us to do so.

We are grateful for the ongoing dedication of all of the members of the Social Inclusion Partnership, without whom, much of the achievement to date would not have been possible.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council commits to continue to support and facilitate the Social Inclusion Partnership in its work to reduce rough sleeping and increase social inclusion.