

Liverpool Assessment Night Hub for Rough Sleepers – Winter 2023/24

Background

Liverpool City Council has a humanitarian duty to those rough sleeping during periods of severe weather. For winter 2023-24, we have worked with local partners to ensure there are a range of solutions in place during the worst of the winter in line our duties under Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). As part of our winter plan, we have secured additional hotel rooms and 'sit-up' spaces across our existing commissioned temporary accommodation services. This is in addition to over 60 units of dedicated 'First Step from the Street' accommodation for rough sleepers which are aligned to a SWEP response during periods of severe weather.

However, the Council and partners recognise that there is a need to have additional interim solutions in place this winter due to an increase in rough sleeping. Therefore, the Council will be supporting the Whitechapel Centre to open an overnight winter assessment hub for rough sleepers. This is a short-term measure between January and end of March 2024 while the broader plans to address homelessness are put in place.

Temporary Night Assessment Hub

- A temporary night assessment hub will open on 15th January to 31st March 2024. A suitable building has been identified close to the city centre, which is accessible with kitchen facilities, toilets etc.
- The Hub will provide a safe space for a maximum of 30 people at any one time, with separate spaces for males and females, from which to assess the housing and support needs of people who find themselves on the streets. It will deliver another opportunity for intensive work with people sleeping rough to find solutions that meets their needs and reduce rough sleeping in the city overall over the winter period.



- The Hub will be delivered by The Whitechapel Centre and will be staffed by a team of four people at any one time, including 1 senior and with access to management support, as required. The staff delivering the service will be highly skilled at dealing with the wide range of issues associated with homelessness, including drug/alcohol misuse, mental health issues etc.
- It is important to note that the Hub is not a night shelter, but people assessed as sleeping rough will be permitted to stay overnight (sit-up style provision) until accommodation or another solution is sourced. The aims are similar to that of a day centre in that refreshments will be provided and each person will have their other needs assessed while staying warm and safe.
- The Hub will operate from 8.00 PM to 7.30AM, 7 days a week. Access to the night hub (and SWEF when operational) will be for people rough sleeping only and will be co-ordinated by the Rough Sleeper Outreach Team which operates 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.
- Direct access to the Hub will not be permitted and it is not intended that this operates as response to wider homelessness issues. Services who are concerned about anyone rough sleeping should contact the Always Help Available helpline.
- The Hub may also not be suitable for everyone, for instance those with access to accommodation they can safely return to and risk will need to be considered on a case by case basis. The Outreach Service and other agencies will continue working with these individuals to access alternative solutions.
- The Council will be working closely with the Whitechapel Centre over the course of the operation of the Hub and will be keeping demand, outcomes and lessons learned under close review.

Key Contacts:
Always Help Available – 0300 123 2041