

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol 2010/11 (SWEP)

1. Introduction

Within its duties as a local authority, Brighton & Hove City Council aims to ensure that vulnerable people are protected and provided for during the winter cold season, when extreme cold temperatures for extended spells can threaten the safety and wellbeing of some people living in the city.

This document sets out the mechanism by which rough sleepers in Brighton & Hove can access accommodation and support during periods of exceptionally cold weather when a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is activated.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) advise that SWEPs should be activated by a weather forecast predicting three consecutive nights, or more, of a temperature of zero degrees Celsius or lower.

BHT is the organisation responsible for co-ordinating SWEP on behalf of the Brighton & Hove City Council and the Single Homeless Strategy Partnership. The delivery of SWEP is the responsibility of RSSSRT (CRI) and other partner organisations working within the partnership.

2. Aims:

1. To prevent loss of life
2. To reduce rough sleeping to as near zero as possible by:
 - i. Using SWEP to engage with entrenched rough sleepers with a local connection who would normally be resistant to coming inside
 - ii. Using SWEP to engage rough sleepers who do not have a local connection with relocation services

The priority of the above aims in any case supporting any decision making is to prevent loss of life over the intent to verify rough sleeping, local connection status or engage with reconnection and relocation policies.

3. Activation / Deactivation:

The RSSSRT will be responsible for checking the five day forecast every day before 10:00. The measurement must be taken from the BBC Weather Website (fed directly from the MET Office). This is the link: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/weather/forecast/2132>

The RSSSRT are responsible for making the decision to activate SWEP. Once a decision has been taken it will stand until the following day's check. The service will be reviewed on a daily basis with a commitment made every morning to open for a further three nights based on the forecast. SWEP should be de-activated by a forecast predicting two or more consecutive nights of a temperature of one degree Celsius or higher.

The following people outside of RSSSRT may authorise a decision to activate or de-activate SWEP outside of the protocol:

- BHCC Single Homeless Manager: Richard Denyer-Bewick
- BHCC Head of Housing Needs & Social Inclusion: Steve Bulbeck

4. Notification:

When SWEP is activated or deactivated by RSSSRT, the following people will be notified before 11am:

Name	Designation	Org	Email	Phone
<i>Placeholder</i>	Duty Manager Housing Options	BHCC	<i>Placeholder</i>	<i>Placeholder</i>
<i>Placeholder</i>	Emergency Placement Team	BHCC	<i>Placeholder</i>	<i>Placeholder</i>
<i>Placeholder</i>	Housing Options Manager	BHCC	<i>Placeholder</i>	<i>Placeholder</i>
<i>Placeholder</i>	Senior Emergency Placement Officer	BHCC	<i>Placeholder</i>	<i>Placeholder</i>
<i>Placeholder</i>	Credit Control & Emergency Placement Manager	BHCC	<i>Placeholder</i>	<i>Placeholder</i>
<i>Placeholder</i>	Single Homeless, QA & Risk Manager	BHCC	<i>Placeholder</i>	<i>Placeholder</i>
<i>Placeholder</i>	First Base Manager	BHT	<i>Placeholder</i>	<i>Placeholder</i>
<i>Placeholder</i>	Director Homelessness and Complex Needs	BHT	<i>Placeholder</i>	<i>Placeholder</i>
<i>Placeholder</i>	Housing Services Development Manager	Sussex Central YMCA	<i>Placeholder</i>	<i>Placeholder</i>
<i>Placeholder</i>	Deputy Chief Executive	Brighton YMCA	<i>Placeholder</i>	<i>Placeholder</i>
<i>Placeholder</i>	Street Community NPT	Sussex Police	<i>Placeholder</i>	<i>Placeholder</i>
<i>Placeholder</i>	Hospital Social Work Discharge Team	BHCC	<i>Placeholder</i>	<i>Placeholder</i>
<i>Placeholder</i>	Urban Rangers / Park Warden	BHCC	<i>Placeholder</i>	<i>Placeholder</i>
<i>Placeholder</i>	Cityclean	BHCC	<i>Placeholder</i>	<i>Placeholder</i>

5. Assertive Outreach & Assessment

- Once SWEP has been triggered RSSSRT workers will work assertively to track down known rough sleepers and initiate allocations to accommodation.
- Assertive outreach may be suspended or re-scheduled if the weather conditions are so severe that RSSSRT staff would be put at risk if they undertook the activity. This decision is to be taken by the RSSSRT Manager and the BHCC Single Homeless Manager to be informed.
- RSSSRT workers will undertake rough sleeper verification and assess their local connection status. The RSSSRT and First Base will work together, endeavouring to ensure that the service user has identification wherever possible.
- RSSSRT should ensure that every service user referred has a risk assessment; this will either be newly completed or an existing assessment e.g. one from First Base.
- RSSSRT will make a preliminary decision regarding appropriate placement for each service user (this will be either to an Emergency Shelter or Temporary Accommodation. All referrals using SWEP must go through RSSSRT.
- RSSSRT will ensure that any person who is refuses or disengages with the provision of accommodation under SWEP be the subject of a safeguarding adult alert and referral to the 'Safeguarding Hub'.
- The Single Homeless Manager must also be informed of any case where a service user puts his or her self at significant increased risk during SWEP through refusal or disengagement with support.

6. Relocation

- Most service users accommodated under SWEP will not have a local connection to Brighton & Hove. The service provides an opportunity to link them in with relocation services provided by YAC and CRI.
- RSSSRT workers will support Service Users to attend appointments with relocation services, which will work assertively within clients staying at First Base.
- Where RAF's are completed for referral to B&B, RSSSRT should also refer to CRI relocation team at the earliest opportunity to enable these services to plan for an increased workload during cold weather provision.

7. A8/A10 Nationals

- A8/A10 Nationals - should be only be referred to the Emergency Shelter, and targeted for assertive relocation.
- The RSSSRT will continue work with this group to inform them of their housing options and to link them in with relocation and potential sources of support.

8. Emergency Shelter Provision

- Rough sleepers may be offered Emergency Shelter accommodation regardless of their Local Connection status.
- Access to any Emergency Shelter will be limited to up to 20 rough sleepers who have been verified as currently sleeping rough by the RSSSRT. The limit is to ensure that an Emergency Shelter is manageable safely for a staff team of two people.
- The shelter will open at 8.30pm and close at 7.30am the following morning.
- The shelter will only admit people who are referred by RSSSRT. There will be no direct access to the shelter.
- RSSSRT will email an updated list of service users to a named contact at the Emergency Shelter every day that SWEP is activated. Names must not exceed 20 at any one time.
- Any changes to the daily list of referrals need to be agreed between the managers of the Emergency Shelter and RSSSRT.
- The Emergency Shelter staff will complete a summary sheet detailing all service users using the centre and outcomes, and circulate to the RSSSRT, Single Homeless Manager and BHT's Director of Homelessness and Complex Needs.
- The RSSSRT will maintain a full list of people who have been accommodated via SWEP and will forward this to the Single Homeless Manager at the end of each SWEP period. This list will detail the name of each person accommodated and their length of stay.
- The RSSSRT will provide support to service users. An initial assessment of risk and needs will be undertaken to enable the RSSSRT worker to develop a short term support plan for the individual and access suitable accommodation.
- Service users that are placed at the Severe Weather Emergency Shelter will receive support from shelter staff while the provision is open (8pm-7.30am). The RSSSRT and the relocation team will continue to work with this group until they are resettled or relocated.
- It is recognised that coming inside can be a difficult experience for entrenched rough sleepers. RSSSRT workers will use their skills and knowledge to ensure that service users are able to sustain their accommodation while the SWEP is in place.
- RSSSRT workers will also aim to ensure that non-locally connected service users attend appointments with relocation service.
- Workers will automatically be referring SWEP clients to the relocation team which should be assertively working with these clients.

9. *Temporary Accommodation (B&B) Provision*

- Where appropriate or if the Emergency Shelter is at capacity, referrals may be made to Emergency Temporary Accommodation. A service user may be unsuitable for referral to the Emergency Shelter if they are too vulnerable or have been barred from the shelter.
- In any case where a referral to Temporary Accommodation is to be made, RSSSRT will ensure that full referral documentation is completed using the Wellbeing Powers Referral procedures.
- RSSSRT are authorised to sign off referrals under Wellbeing Powers with delegated authority from Brighton & Hove City Council.
- Referrals under SWEP **need not** take account of a person's **Local Connection** status but **will** take account of a person's eligibility under No Recourse to Public Funds status.
- In normal working hours the RSSSRT will ensure the documentation is sent by email to the BHCC Housing Options Team for allocation and that the team are contacted by phone. Out of hours, the Duty Homeless Officer can be contacted on **01273 680065**
- Staff must ensure that the terms of this agreement are made clear to the service user, providing information verbally and in writing. Most importantly the service user must be made aware that this accommodation will only be provided during the extreme weather conditions.
- Upon completion of the assessment and sign-off, the BHCC Housing Options Team will pass the referral to the Emergency Placement Team who will then complete all the paperwork – license agreement, housing benefit claim and confidentiality waiver
- The Emergency Placement Team should ensure letters inform clients that their placement is temporary and could end at short notice, if the weather goes above zero / gets warmer.
- The Emergency Placement Team will **cancel** SWEP placements in B&B accommodation, and send out cancellation letters to placements, including contact details such as RSSSRT, Housing Advice etc, and notify the RSSSRT.
- RSSSRT workers will engage with potential Service Users prior to the implementation of any period of SWEP to ensure that the necessary identification and benefits claim are in place to enable timely payment of housing benefit.
- RSSSRT and the Emergency Placement Team/Credit Control will continue to communicate regularly to share information about placements, barred Service Users, problems with housing benefit claims, and exits from B&B.
- If housing benefit does not go into payment during the SWEP period, the Credit Control Team will inform the Single Homeless and Work & Learning Manager, for a decision on payment.

10. Dec / Jan 2010/11 Xmas & New Year Operating Hours

RSSSRT / CRI
Placeholder for information
Placeholder for information

BHT Offices
Placeholder for information
Placeholder for information

First Base Day Centre	
December 20 th - 24 th	Placeholder
December 25 th - 28 th	Placeholder
December 29 th	Placeholder
December 30 th	Placeholder
December 31 st	Placeholder
January 1 st - 3 rd	Placeholder
January 4 th	Placeholder

BHCC Housing Options (Barts) and HN&SI (Palace Place)			
	Notes	Barts Contact	Palace Place Contact
December 20 th - 24 th	Placeholder	Placeholder	Placeholder
December 25 th - 28 th	Placeholder	Placeholder	Placeholder
December 29 th	Placeholder	Placeholder	Placeholder
December 30 th	Placeholder	Placeholder	Placeholder
December 31 st	Placeholder	Placeholder	Placeholder
January 1 st - 3 rd	Placeholder	Placeholder	Placeholder
January 4 th	Placeholder	Placeholder	Placeholder