

North Devon Council's Enhanced Rough Sleeper Service

Flex Accommodation Specification

Rough Sleeper Definition:

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 streets, in tents (inappropriate use of tents), doorways, parks, bus shelters or in encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes").

Service Description

The Rough Sleeper Service has been delivered in North Devon District Council's (NDDC's) area since 2008. NDDC currently employs a full time Rough Sleeper Housing Specialist, a full time Anti-Social Behaviour Officer (ASB), a full time Community Safety Officer and a Service Lead, Housing Vulnerable Persons and Community Safety who oversees the Rough Sleeper Service.

Clients are usually those who are currently experiencing rough sleeping, have a history of periodic rough sleeping, those in rough sleeper temporary accommodation, or, those that are imminently facing rough sleeping. Last year, NDC provided services to 246 new rough sleeper cases. Those rough sleeping in NDDC on any one night are estimated to be 15, in accordance with our DCLG submission returns.

The majority of these individuals are single homeless individuals (over 18 years old). They can often have multiple issues and/or complex needs but may still fall outside statutory thresholds meaning they have not met statutory homeless definitions thus categorising them as 'non-statutory' individuals.

Accommodation needs are usually resolved initially with specialist rough sleeper temporary accommodation and following this access to the private rented sector, existing supported housing projects or social housing.

The Northern Devon Hub (a multi-agency group consisting of NDC, TDC, Together-Drug & Alcohol specialists), Probation, the Police, NHS Physical Health, DPT Mental Health, Devon & Cornwall Police, the voluntary sector and supported accommodation providers) coordinates access to specialist supported accommodation for those with multiple issues and/or complex needs. The range of accommodation provides a pathway to prevent or alleviate homelessness. There are currently 35 rooms over multiple houses across the two districts.

In addition to this there are other supported accommodation options available across Northern Devon but these fall out of the remit of any commissioned / ring-fenced / accommodation with nomination rights.

The main aims of the enhanced Rough Sleeper Service are:

1. To provide effective outreach services to prevent the flow of rough sleepers
2. To either be supporting or to quickly re engage with clients who are likely to lose their accommodation (returners)
3. To quickly identify accommodation solutions to those faced with rough sleeping (prevention)
4. To identify, mental ill-health, physical health needs and substance misuse and to either offer practical therapeutic support or signpost clients to effectively address this
5. To provide enhanced outreach services to street rough sleepers to enable access to specialist supported accommodation pathways or alternative appropriate accommodation
6. To provide enhanced multi-agency interventions in specialist rough sleeper accommodation to enable faster and more sustainable move on, offering accommodation to a greater number with less waiting time
7. To show a commitment to following any agendas set by MHCLG in relation to Rough Sleeper Prevention & Recovery (RSPRG) and flexing services to meet current service demands
8. To show a commitment to provide flexible specialist accommodation to meet current service demands for some of our most complex clients to

improve flow rate through the existing provision and prevent a revolving door scenario

9. To follow NDC's vision, which is to prevent rough sleeping, and where this is not possible reduce the length of time somebody spends on the streets and make it non recurrent.

This service specification includes the provision of RSAP accommodation previously known as NSAP. Additional Temporary Accommodation beds over and above the 8 funded by the NSTF Grant Programme and further bed spaces provided by Freedom Community Alliance ring fenced to meet the needs of the North Devon Enhanced Rough Sleeper Service.

Defining the Service Specification of this flex accommodation contract.

- To provide between 22-26 units of accommodation for the North Devon Rough Sleeper Service across a range of 2,3,4 or 5 bed properties in North Devon.
- To provide dedicated support to the residents acknowledging that the support needs are likely to be different across the various properties.
- To only accept referrals from North Devon Council and more specifically the North Devon Council Rough Sleeper Service.
- To ring fence a minimum of 8 bed spaces funded under the RSAP programme for people with longer term support needs as per the original NSAP funding application. Referrals for which are exclusively made by members of the Enhanced Rough Sleeper Team or agreed by them where a resident is moving from alternative accommodation.
- To continue to provide a minimum of 3 additional Temporary Accommodation beds either at Allen Bank or within other properties to meet local need. These are in addition to the 8 beds provided at 24 Pulchrass St and Wrentham House.
- To provide a range of additional non-specific flexible accommodation solutions that will accommodate rough sleepers who have a variety of support needs. Examples include but are not limited to: male, female,

substance users, offenders, prison leavers and those experiencing poor mental health.

- To deliver the supported housing service in accordance with regulations and best practice.
- To provide updates to the Enhanced Rough Sleeper Service on clients' progress or if with any issues affecting their accommodation.
- To update the Rough Sleeper Service Lead immediately should there be any issues such as an eviction being considered.
- To offer flexible support with the ability to respond quickly to the diverse range and changing needs as the client achieves goals and backward steps/relapse
- To build and maintain strong working relationships with key partners and stakeholders and share information as appropriate

Minimum Requirements of the Flex Accommodation within the Enhanced Rough Sleeper Service

The service will commence on the 1st April 2025. The minimum requirements of the service are:

- To be able to provide the service for a 12-month period (01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026). Should further funding be made available from Central Government a service delivery review will take place to determine whether it is appropriate and still relevant to extend service delivery
- To provide and deliver between 22-26 units of accommodation with support.
- To provide a range of accommodation options to prevent and reduce rough sleeping which include Temporary Accommodation, Female Only accommodation, Next Steps accommodation and Supported Accommodation. The desire is to meet local need and to exercise a flexible tolerance approach with residents whilst maintaining a strong focus on Staff and resident safety.
- The services are to be Trauma Informed and Person Centred in delivery.

- To work with an integrated approach with the enhanced rough sleeper team.
- A representative from Freedom to attend the Northern Devon Hub Meetings.

The Flex Accommodation:

- Must be maintained to a good standard
- Must provide varying levels of accommodation including temporary, short to mid-term and longer term supported housing.
- Must provide person centred accommodation options giving consideration to where best place somebody and who is best to support them recognising this may not always be in the same room and / or the same house
- Must consider eviction as a last resort and work towards enhancing support packages and making managed moves where possible
- Must be adaptable to presenting needs and level of support required
- Staff associated with the properties must have experience of dealing with moderate exposure to health and safety risks associated with meeting the client group
- Staff associated with the properties must have an enhanced DBS check

NDC's Support

1. NDC's Rough Sleeper Outreach workers will continue to assess new potential / actual rough sleepers using the Northern Devon Hub.

Recording Requirements

1. Capture baseline data via quarterly reports and such reports should include at minimum; clients name, date work started, , types of interventions used, progress, other agencies involved and level of engagement
2. Consider project impact and cost savings to inform future funding
3. Consider project approach to design future service deliver

Desired Outcomes of the Service:

- To prevent clients rough sleeping where possible
- To reduce the flow to rough sleeping through prevention activity
- To reduce revolving door clients through clear identification and client focused solutions
- To reduce the time rough sleepers spend on the street
- To improve access to appropriate accommodation
- To improve sustainable move on
- To improve waiting times to access appropriate accommodation
- To collectively look at personalised, person centred interventions for rough sleepers, those at risk of rough sleeping
- To respond to the changing needs of rough sleepers and those faced with rough sleeping
- To provide a range of accommodation options at varying levels of need to meet service demand and having flexibility to respond to changes in landscape
- To show a commitment to reducing evictions through enhancing support packages and making managed moves to avoid preventable evictions
- To improve the extended health outcomes of rough sleepers and, as a consequence, reduce access to A&E and wider health services
- To increase community safety by reducing criminal justice and other court costs
- To share knowledge and best practice surrounding work with rough sleepers.