



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

SWEP 2023/24



Context

- There is no universal offer of accommodation mandated for people sleeping rough. The provision of shelter from the Council is not a statutory duty unless a person is considered homeless and in priority need of assistance, even during cold or severe weather when conditions may be life threatening.
- However, there is a widely recognised humanitarian obligation on Local Authorities to do all they can to prevent deaths and serious harm on the streets, and for their partners and the public to support these efforts.
- This has meant that for many years, Local Authorities and local partners, including faith and community groups, work together to provide emergency provision during periods of cold or severe weather.
- WNC have an established year-round commitment to ending rough sleeping in our area.
- During severe weather, either hot or cold, we implement additional measures (SWEP) to reduce weather related harm.
- In recent years, winter SWEP has dovetailed with a dedicated winter emergency accommodation provision.

Trigger

- WNC will trigger SWEP by monitoring the Meteorological Office's weather forecasts across our three key Unitary locations: Northampton, Daventry, Towcester
- Where, in any of these locations, the temperature is forecast to be 0°C or lower for three consecutive nights or more, SWEP will be activated across the whole of the WNC area
- A common-sense approach will review the impact of snow, wind chill, or excessive/prolonged rain, and SWEP may be activated even if the three-day forecast is not 0°C or lower, in order to minimise the risk of weather related harm
- When the temperature rises or general conditions improve, SWEP will end

Action

- On the implementation of SWEP, relevant groups are notified SWEP is operational and how to signpost someone potentially needing to access SWEP accommodation:
 - WNC internal teams - Housing Options, Customer Services, Out of Hours service, Environmental Health teams
 - Northamptonshire Police, faith/community groups, statutory and voluntary agencies and partners
 - Website is updated to show SWEP is operational, what support is available, and how to access it
- The forecast is kept under daily review
- The Street Services Team make every effort to contact all known rough sleepers to advise that SWEP is operational and how to access the SWEP emergency accommodation
- Internal teams and external partners are notified when SWEP ends

Who SWEP is for

- Individuals who are known to be rough sleeping within the WNC area and who do not have any form of accommodation available to them, or the means to secure that accommodation is not available to them
- SWEP operates outside usual eligibility and entitlement frameworks that govern access to housing. It should be accessible to everyone, including all those who may otherwise be excluded from services: people with no recourse to public funds, not in priority need, intentionally homeless or with no local connection, or those who may have previously been excluded from services
- If someone without a local connection approaches WNC, we will look to refer to the Local Authority where the local connection is, but we will accommodate under SWEP until the referral is accepted

Eligibility for SWEP

To be eligible for accommodation under SWEP, the rough sleeper must:

- Be at risk if he/she continues to sleep rough during the severe weather
- Have nowhere to sleep indoors during the severe weather (indoors does not include cars, sheds, or garages)
- Agrees to the assistance offered by WNC (and its partners/support providers)
- Abide by the rules of the SWEP accommodation provider
- Not be too high risk, where that risk cannot be appropriately managed

SWEP accommodation

Rough sleepers approved for accommodation under SWEP will be placed into 'Covid-Safe' accommodation at either:

- Specially sourced accommodation for SWEP provision (if applicable)
- B&Bs, hotels and hostels
- Units funded through the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme
- Placements across the supported housing pathway
- Self-contained temporary accommodation
- Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)

Historical SWEP activation

2022/23

- Actioned for 4 periods for a total of 31 nights
- 86 people accommodated under SWEP
- Nightly purchased rooms occupied 799 times over the 31 nights that SWEP operated, which cost approx. £52,000

2021/22

- Actioned for 11 periods for a total of 28 nights
- 38 people accommodated under SWEP
- Nightly purchased rooms occupied 96 times over the 28 nights that SWEP operated, which cost approx. £6,500

Historical SWEP outcomes – 2022/23

SWEP Winter 2022/23 Housing outcomes after all 4 SWEP Periods							
Where moved to	Daventry		Northampton		South Northants		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Family	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
HARRP	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
NAASH	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Sofa surfing	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
TA	0	0	6	0	0	0	6
Winter Shelter	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Streets	3	0	46	7	3	0	59
Streets (abandoned SWEP)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Streets (intentionally homeless)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Streets (no local connection)	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Streets (offered reconnection)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Streets (referred to Panel)	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Streets (referred to Homeless Team)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Streets (referred to Social Care)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Streets (TA referral)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unsuitable accommodation	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	4	0	67	11	3	1	86

**Total 14
(16%)
moved
off the
streets**

**Total 72
(84%)
returned
to the
streets**

Historical SWEP outcomes – 2021/22

SWEP Winter 2021/22 Housing outcomes after all 11 SWEP Periods							
Where moved to	Daventry		Northampton		South Northants		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Family/Friends	0	0	1	0	0	1	Total 31 (82%) moved off the streets
HARRP	0	0	7	0	0	0	
Midland Heart	0	0	2	0	0	0	
NAASH	0	0	0	1	0	0	
PRS	0	0	1	0	0	0	
Sofa surfing	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TA	2	2	0	0	0	0	
Winter Shelter	0	0	9	5	0	0	
Streets	0	0	7	0	0	0	Total 7 (18%) returned to the streets
Streets (abandoned SWEP)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Streets (intentionally homeless)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Streets (no local connection)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Streets (offered reconnection)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Streets (referred to Panel)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Streets (referred to Homeless Team)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Streets (referred to Social Care)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Streets (TA referral)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Unsuitable accommodation	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	2	2	27	6	0	1	38

Background

- Prior to Covid, WNC rural areas provided SWEP only emergency accommodation during the winter.
- In Northampton, an emergency Nightshelter was established in 2017, supplementing SWEP but reducing reliance on SWEP.
- Nationally, hotels were commissioned during the Covid 2020/21 period.
- During the 2021/22 and 2022/23 winters, Northampton secured the use of an accommodation block from the University of Northampton to provide winter-long emergency accommodation for particularly vulnerable rough sleepers; Funded by COMF, this was a preventative measure against further spread of Covid and other respiratory conditions amongst rough sleepers. This reduced reliance on SWEP, and increased rough sleepers' exposure to support options. Rural areas continued to use SWEP only accommodation.

Usage

2022/23

- Operational 03/01/2023 to 31/03/2023 (88 days)
- 29 people (non-SWEP)
- Average nightly occupancy 14
- Agreed COMF budget of £166,000, final cost to COMF £71,557 following allocation of some costs to other budgets

2021/22

- Operational 20/12/2021 to 31/03/2022 (102 days)
- 44 people (non-SWEP)
- Average nightly occupancy 17
- Agreed COMF budget of £168,000

Historical Winter Emergency Accommodation outcomes

2022/23

	Total	Housed	Abandoned	Excluded	Reconnected
Male	25	18	4	1	2
Female	4	3	0	1	0
Total	29	21	4	2	2
% of total		72.41%	13.79%	6.90%	6.90%

2021/22

	Total	Housed	Abandoned	Excluded	Reconnected
Male	32	26	2	0	4
Female	12	7	3	1	1
Total	44	33	5	1	5
% of total		75.00%	11.36%	2.27%	11.36%

SWEP

- Temperature and prevailing conditions will be monitored throughout the winter period, as previously described.
- Accommodation across WNC will predominantly be nightly purchased Temporary Accommodation.
- If a Winter Emergency Accommodation provision is set-up, a number of rooms will be ringfenced for SWEP, and known rough sleepers who may be particularly at risk from winter conditions will be offered the longer term winter provision whilst more suitable move-on accommodation is found.

Winter Emergency Accommodation

- The University Halls of Residence are not available to WNC for the 2023/24 winter.
- A range of alternative buildings are being investigated.
- If a suitable building is not able to be agreed, the WNC winter provision for 2023/24 will be SWEP only.