

Place Directorate
Housing and Community

August 2017
Version 1



Draft Rough Sleeping Reduction Strategy 2017-2020



Contents

Foreword	page 3
1. Introduction	page 4
2. Rough sleeping in MK	page 6
3. Partnership approach	page 8
4. Vision and aims	page 9

Foreword

Tackling the growing problem of homelessness is a top priority for Milton Keynes Council (MKC) as set out in the Council Plan 2016-2020.

MKC is committed to addressing the problems facing those households living in temporary accommodation and the needs of those sleeping rough in Milton Keynes to whom the Council often has a statutory duty.

In September 2016, the MK Homelessness Partnership was established to address the needs of non-statutory homeless people. In December 2016, following a gap analysis of services needed, Cabinet endorsed a report from the Partnership that proposed its priority objectives as:

- The provision of emergency short-term shelter for those in crisis and requiring immediate support.
- Emergency support for those without accommodation including sanitary facilities and an outreach assessment service.

In January 2017, the Council was successful in a bid for Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Rough Sleeper Grant Funding in partnership with Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton councils. This funding will help those new to the streets or at imminent risk of sleeping rough get rapid support. A rough sleeper outreach service, including mental health crisis intervention workers, has been created as a result.

Cabinet adopted the MK Homelessness (Statutory Need) Strategy in April 2017 following an independent assessment of the existing service and a Member-led review. This provides a vision for the future service underpinned by some broad key objectives and actions to deliver its objectives. It is hoped that this Strategy becomes a subsidiary plan of the Milton Keynes Homelessness Strategy 2017-2020.

The Homelessness Reduction Act was given Royal Assent in April 2017. This is the first major piece of homelessness legislation for 15 years and will be implemented in April 2018. The Act places a new duty on local authorities to help prevent the homelessness of all families and single people eligible for assistance and threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need or local connection.

This strategy aims to pull these work streams and new legislation together to provide a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach for delivering key objectives.

The issue of rough sleeping is complex and one the Council cannot tackle alone. Consequently it will work with partners to encourage them to invest time and expertise in delivering a multi-agency approach. The overarching ambition is to reduce the number of rough sleepers in MK and to address the harm it brings to individuals, the community and the economy.

Councillor Nigel Long
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Housing

1. Introduction

What is rough sleeping?

Rough sleeping is defined by the Government as:

People sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designated for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or 'bashes.' (A 'bash' is a makeshift shelter often comprised of cardboard boxes.)

Why do people sleep rough?

The reasons for becoming homeless and sleeping rough differ for each person. However, there are some common risk factors that make it more likely that a person could end up sleeping rough. These include:

- family conflict and/or relationship breakdown
- leaving institutions such as care homes, prison or the armed forces
- mental health problems
- substance misuse
- dual diagnosis (mental health problems combined with substance misuse)
- financial problems (e.g. losing employment and/or being evicted)
- having no recourse to public funds (including those who live in one area but travel to another area to work)
- refugees or people seeking asylum

Many people who sleep rough display multiple risk factors, which can mean their needs are more complex and difficult to resolve.

What impact does sleeping rough sleeping have?

Sleeping rough has a significant impact on the individual concerned, the wider community and local economy.

For the individual

- The health needs (and associated costs) of people who sleep rough are disproportionately high. Nationally it's estimated that rough sleepers are eight times more likely to use hospital inpatient facilities than the general population.

- There's a high prevalence of mental and physical ill-health and drug and alcohol dependency amongst rough sleepers. Other common problems include physical trauma (especially foot trauma), skin problems, respiratory illness and infections (including hepatitis).
- The average age of death for a homeless male nationally is estimated to be 47 years old (43 for women) compared to 77 for the general population.
- People who sleep rough are less likely to integrate with society and gain meaningful employment.

For the community

- Fear and perception of crime amongst the community is increased.
- An area can become less inviting and attractive.
- Rough sleeping is often associated with begging, although not all beggars are rough sleepers (and vice versa). However a high prevalence of rough sleeping can act as a magnet for professional beggars.

For the economy

- Many rough sleepers bed down close to town centres which can blight the retail offer and result in retailers moving out of the area and other businesses
- Local people may choose to go elsewhere for their shopping and leisure, taking business outside the area.
- MK as a destination affecting visitors to the local area who do not feel safe

2. Rough Sleeping in MK

What's the scale of rough sleeping in MK?

Figure 1: Statutory rough sleeper return figures (taken in November each year)

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Confirmed number of rough sleepers	6	8	18	29	38

The Council has established a Rough Sleeper Tasking Group that works with individuals who engage with mainstream services to address their reason for rough sleeping.

The table below provides additional data on the scale of rough sleeping in MK observed by the group.

Figure 2: Additional MK data from the Rough Sleeper Tasking Group (April 2017)

Category	Total	Active casework	No active casework	Non-compliant
Confirmed rough sleepers (meeting DCLG criteria)	39	9	25	5
Unconfirmed rough sleepers (no definitive location – not known to services, begging etc.)	38	4	31	3
Housed (in the last six months, monitored through the Group)	23	6	17	0
Out of area (known to services but have recently left MK)	7	2	5	0
Other (hospital, prison or in treatment)	6	2	3	1
New referrals (not yet assessed by partners)	17	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	130	23	81	9

The Rough Sleeper Tasking Group has identified six categories of rough sleeping -

Category	Description
1. Lifestyle A	People happy with their situation, e.g. a male who travels the country but predominantly bases himself in MK during autumn and winter.
2. Lifestyle B	Where alcohol and substance misuse makes rough sleeping a lifestyle choice. Unwilling and/or unable to engage with appropriate agencies to work with their addictions.
3. Conditional	Individuals who by day appear to be sleeping rough, but do have access to shelter via family, friends or own tenancy etc. during the night.
4. Migrant workers	Individuals who have jobs, but either not earning minimum wage or enough hours to pay for accommodation. Many of these individuals live in tents in small groups. Some do not have passports or identity to carry out further work with agencies.
5. Beggars	There has been an increase in begging activity across Central MK. The majority of people arrested for begging do have accommodation/tenancies.
6. Travelling beggars	A small number of individuals who travel to MK by train early each morning to capitalise on commuters' kindness in the Station Square area.

As part of its commitment to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, the Council is working in partnership with, Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton councils to deliver an outreach service to rough sleepers. The service provides a combination of outreach support and assessment hubs where people can access help.

The outreach team work with individuals to prevent or reduce the length of time spent on the street, while in more complex cases mental health crisis workers ensure more intensive support is provided. It is estimated that the service will work with around 700 people in the region over the next two years, targeting rough sleepers and those at risk of becoming rough sleepers to prevent them moving on to the streets.

The service has been set up following a successful bid by the councils for £623,000 of grant funding from the DCLG which enables it to run for two years. We will need to explore an outreach service provision to follow the current two year programme.

3. Partnership approach

The issue is complex and the Council cannot tackle rough sleeping alone. It will work with partners to encourage them to invest their time and expertise in delivering a multi-agency approach.

The MK Homelessness Partnership was established in 2016 to coordinate the needs of non-statutory homeless people.

The priority objectives of the group are:

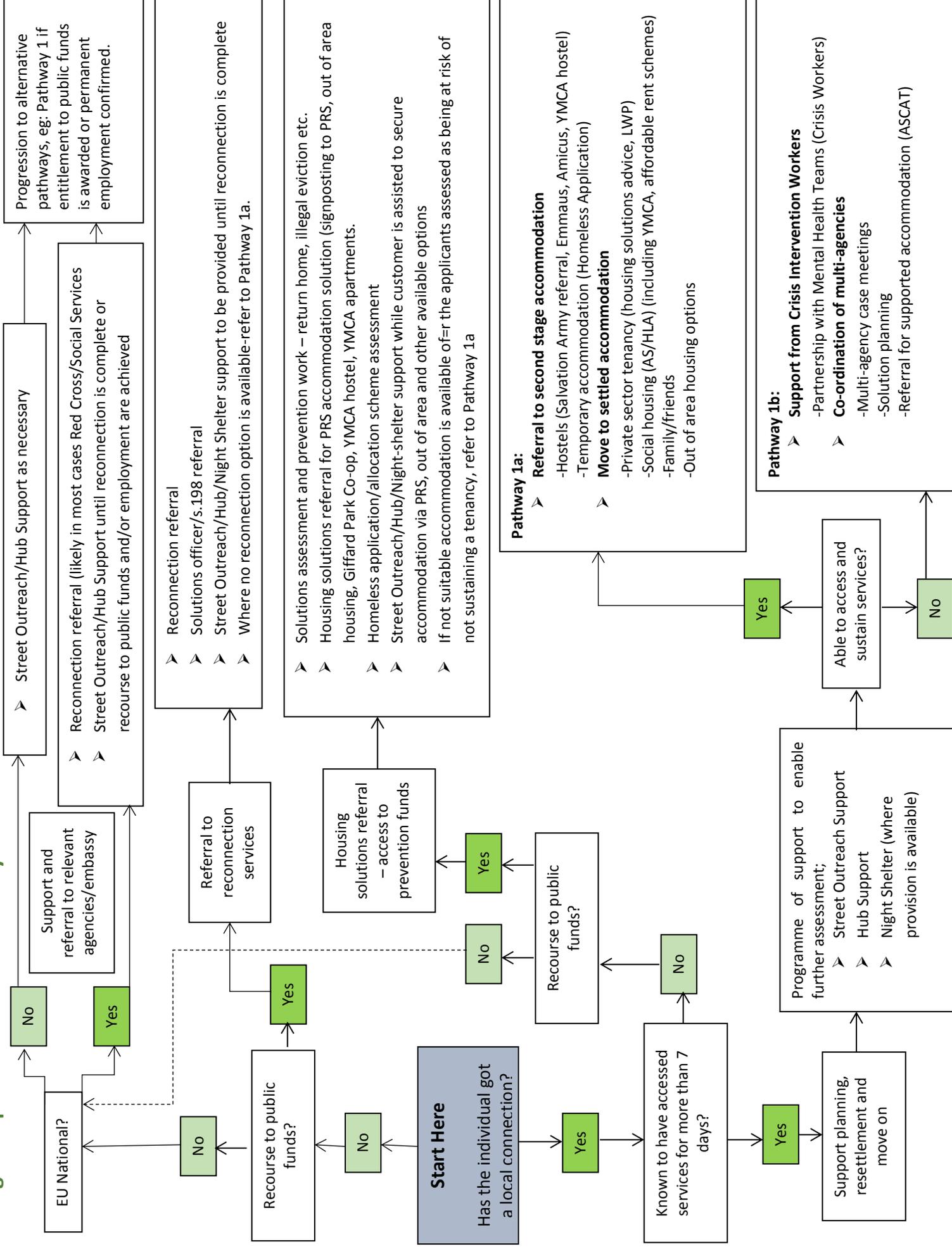
- The provision of emergency short-term shelter for those in crisis and requiring immediate support.
- Emergency support for those without accommodation including sanitary facilities and an outreach assessment service.

The Homelessness Partnership is represented by a wide range of services, agencies and the voluntary sector that support those at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping. The Partnership can offer a comprehensive framework of interlocking services, accommodation and support to prevent and reduce rough sleeping:

Settled accommodation	Volunteering, training and employment		Money advice
Education, skills and qualifications		Faith groups	Mental health services
	Substance addiction treatment and recovery	Street outreach	
Emergency accommodation	Health and wellbeing		Housing advice
Counselling and therapy	Welfare rights	Immigration	Drop-in services

This approach will only achieve its full potential if the agencies involved work together to achieve a shared vision. The diagram on the opposite page shows the Pathway to resettlement for rough sleepers in Milton Keynes.

Rough Sleeper Resettlement Pathways in MK



Vision and aims

What we want to achieve

The Councils overarching ambition is to reduce the number of rough sleepers in the borough to zero by 2020, and address the harm it brings to individuals, the community and the economy.

We have established five strategic priorities to help us deliver our ambition:



Achieving our ambition

Without moving from our ambition to end rough sleeping in MK, our approach will focus on key deliverables rather than absolute targets. What we'll do is set out in more detail below.

1. Work in partnership to prevent people sleeping rough in the first place

- Create a new, specialist frontline prevention service for single vulnerable people at risk of rough sleeping to assist them through intensive engagement and finding alternative housing solutions.
- Develop our awareness and understanding of the causes of rough sleeping in MK, those groups most at risk, and options to address this.

- Work with partners to develop a rapid assessment and intervention framework to identify and provide a range of alternative pathways to prevent people spending a night on the streets.
- Work with institutions such as prisons, young offender institutions, hospitals and the armed forces to ensure people have sustainable plans in place before they leave.
- Work with social and private sector landlords, advice providers and adult social care to help people to manage their tenancies and better improve their life skills.
- Develop a joined up approach to promoting the services that are available in MK, working closely with organisations such as the police, probation service, NHS, adult social care and other housing providers.
- Work with our partners to explore commissioning options for this work, and with local businesses to consider ways they can help.

2. Provide a joined up response when people do end up on the streets

- Work with individuals to develop and agree a personalised pathway plan as early as possible.
- Ensure that Care Act Assessments are carried out for older and frail people sleeping rough.
- Work with partners to explore options to commission a new assessment and support centre.
- Work with partners to develop a new information sharing protocol to simplify and streamline the process.

3. Provide a sustainable outreach service for those with complex or multiple needs

- Provide every individual who sleeps rough with a personalised support plan that helps them reconnect with society and build their lives.
- Work with health and social care partners to explore options for commissioning an integrated health model for homeless people.
- Provide support to those individuals with no connection to MK to help them reconnect where they have a local connection and it is safe to do so and where they have formal and informal support networks.
- Establish a homelessness one-stop shop/day centre for emergency support for those without accommodation including sanitary facilities.
- Explore an outreach service provision to follow the current two year programme.

- Explore the option of commissioning emergency accommodation for people over the age of 35 with low level support needs.

4. Enable the provision of sustainable housing solutions

- Work with YourMK to deliver MKC's regeneration, new build and modular home programme to provide additional homes of all tenures and bedroom sizes.
- Develop a strategic approach to work with our housing provider partners, specialist service providers and private landlords to increase the supply of homes available for single people.
- Work with the MKC's Planning team to deliver the objectives set out in Plan:MK.
- Ensure individuals who are housed are supported to manage and sustain their tenancy.

5. Tackle anti-social behaviour and crime to keep MK safe

- Engage with the street community to understand their impact on others.
- Work with the police to identify those causing risk and harm and, where individuals will not meaningfully engage, consider the use of appropriate legislation.
- Consider the use of a Public Space Protection Order once all avenues of support and engagement have been attempted in order to take action against anti-social behaviour associated with rough sleeping including begging.
- Promote alternatives to giving to beggars, with a focus on helping people move away from street life.
- Work with local traders and businesses to develop a strategy to effectively manage incidents of rough sleeping and begging near the main shopping areas and the central train station.