

Denbighshire County Council

Housing Solutions Service

Proposals for Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) 2016/17

This document outlines the measures that Denbighshire County Council and its partners will put into place in order to mitigate the effects of severe cold weather on rough sleepers. The plan for the cold weather period will complement the ongoing work which aims to work systematically to accommodate people by the early identification of those at risk and where possible avoiding crisis responses that exacerbate demand.

Client group – who does the SWEP apply to?

The principle aim of the SWEP is to prevent loss of life and the suffering attached to living in sub-zero temperatures to street homeless people.

The secondary aim is to enable partner organisations to make best use of the opportunity to engage with long-term rough sleepers, who are normally resistant to coming indoors.

The SWEP should assist with any person sleeping rough on the streets in the extreme cold. This includes those without recourse to public funds such as A10 nationals from the EU accession states.

For the purpose of this policy a rough sleeper will be taken to mean, an individual who has been identified as sleeping rough (bedded down, or due to bed down) by either the Outreach Team, North Wales Police or the Housing Solutions Teams

Cold Weather – what is exceptionally cold weather?

The trigger indicating severe cold weather provision is a weather forecast predicting three consecutive nights, or more, of a minimum temperature of zero degrees Celsius or lower. Denbighshire County Council will strive to accommodate rough sleepers when the weather forecast predicts a minimum temperature of zero degrees Celsius or lower regardless of the three night rule. The temperature prediction will be taken from the temperature data provided on a daily basis by the Met office. The data will be monitored by the Outreach Team who will also take responsibility for informing the Housing Solutions Teams/Emergency out of Hours duty Officer, and Ty Golau as to when a period of exceptionally cold weather is in force.

It's predicted that the cold weather plan will cover the months of November 2016 to March 2017 inclusive.

The Outreach Project, Housing Solutions and the relevant North Wales Police colleagues, will work at a street level to identify individuals who can then be prioritised for accommodation. When the Met Office indicates that there will be three consecutive nights of severe weather conditions The Outreach Project will visit identified hot-spots to make contact with anyone who is still on the streets. Housing

Solutions Teams will work in partnership with services to secure accommodation for any potential rough sleepers.

As far as possible identification of accommodation will occur in the working day. This will be within normal applicable housing legislation and utilising the standard available vacancies. Rough sleepers will be advised to present to Ty Golau - if there are no beds available, Ty Golau will contact Housing Solutions Out of Hours.

Access to emergency bed spaces

There are 7 emergency spaces in Denbighshire, Ty Golau No Second Night out Project. Unoccupied emergency beds may be pre-allocated to rough sleepers when SWEP is in place, this will be regardless of Local Connection and/or recourse to public funds but subject to a Risk Assessment. Conditions of access will be

- If a daytime SWEP identifies anyone in the day, they can be nominated for a bed space – subject to availability and Risk Assessment on presentation.
- Client must remain in accommodation overnight until an agreed time, and must agree to contact the Housing Solutions Team the following day for interview and assessment for referral to appropriate services including accommodation. Part of this process will include the application of the Ty Golau Reconnection Policy.
- No violence, abuse or intimidation of any other party within the building.
- Any reasonable request made the service provider to ensure they are able to manage any risks posed (for example a request not to misuse alcohol on the premises)

It is essential that best use is made of **all** available accommodation. It is important that all agencies work together to encourage clients to access available accommodation.

If a situation arises where there is absolutely no emergency access accommodation available B&B accommodation will be secured. However this is not a preferred option or a positive solution and should be avoided at all costs by ensuring that existing provision is used effectively.

If the above conditions have been adhered to and the individual has not been able to secure suitable accommodation, and is likely to continue to sleep rough whilst SWEP is in place then the individual may be permitted to spend more than a single night in the SWEP bed. This negates the need for repeat Risk Assessments, but is only permitted when SWEP remains in place, all options have been exhausted, and accommodation is likely to be secured in the short term.

Risk Assessments

All SWEP clients must have a risk assessment completed at the point of contact with The Outreach Team or Housing Solutions, the appended Risk Assessment (appendix 1) is the minimum Risk Assessment expected, however where other services have fully completed their own Risk, this will be accepted instead. If practical, information held by Housing Solutions or the Gateway coordinator should

be accessed and used to help complete the document. Services receiving SWEP Clients should also use their knowledge of an individual on making a final risk assessed based decision on accommodating or otherwise if a Police Officer makes a SWEP referral a PNC check will be carried out when necessary.

Reduce exclusions from supported accommodation during the cold weather period

It is acknowledged that supported housing providers need to ensure the health & safety of other residents and staff at all times, however during the cold weather period it is important that supported housing providers avoid evictions from provision and exclusions from accessing projects for non-serious matters (rent arrears or low level rule breaking).

All Supporting People services should work positively to encourage service users to engage with support and turn their lives around and it is essential that this good work continues over the cold weather period. All efforts should be made with service users who are at risk of losing their accommodation to prevent them from becoming homeless during this period. Supporting People providers should be working proactively with the Single Pathway and Housing Solutions Teams in order to ensure that evictions from supported accommodation are prevented where possible. Anybody who is at risk of eviction should be referred to the Single Pathway team to be discussed at a complex case meeting in order to consider alternatives to eviction. Officers and stakeholders involved will continue to review all evictions, and options for all those faced with eviction. It will be imperative to **prevent** people from becoming homeless from emergency access or supported accommodation.

Where it has not been possible to avoid an eviction all accommodation providers should continue to notify the Housing Solutions Teams and Single Pathway Team to advise of individual cases who have been evicted.

Ensuring that service users are moved on in a timely manner to create capacity in temporary accommodation

During the cold weather period it is essential that capacity is created within the supported housing sector and that there is a focus on moving service users who are ready for independence on from the provision in a planned way. Supported accommodation providers should focus support planning in an even more intensive way, on move on, (where appropriate) during this period, ensuring that the resettlement plans are effective and timely.

A referral should also be made to the Housing Solutions Team to consider other housing options such as access to the private rented sector through the Private Rented Sector Officer and the NACRO Rent Bond Scheme.

How other people can help

It is important that concerns about people sleeping rough are passed on to the Outreach Project as soon as possible via the Streetlink Cymru Hotline number. When the information is received all efforts will be made to contact the individual(s) in order to offer support and to be considered for suitable accommodation.

The Outreach project will ensure all SWEPP Participants are aware of intelligence on Rough Sleeping during the SWEPP period as these individuals may well present as SWEPP clients.

Procedure

This procedure is intended as a guideline for accommodation providers and referring agencies when the SWEPP is triggered, as outlined in the protocol.

- All Providers and agencies are responsible for monitoring the weather conditions and preparing their services accordingly.
- The Outreach project will lead on monitoring the weather conditions for rough sleepers as provided by the BBC weather service on a daily basis, to identify when the SWEPP should be implemented. The process to be triggered from 12 noon if necessary.
- The Outreach project will email Ty Golau and Housing Solutions to inform them of the SWEPP being triggered and confirm availability of beds. The SWEPP will then remain in place until a further email is sent to say it has ceased.
- Following a rough sleeper being identified as requiring accommodation that day, through **Housing Solutions**, or found on by **The Outreach Project/ Police**, a risk assessment will be completed (and/or a PNC check) bed space availability will be checked in Ty Golau. Communication between Ty Golau and the duty Housing Solutions Officer must take place to ensure accurate availability of bedspaces is known after 5pm.
- Please note if the nominated contact is not available please ensure appropriate arrangements are made (i.e. Auto forward of e-mails and alternative contact numbers)
- If someone is identified as rough sleeping out of hours, HST duty officer will call Ty Golau to check if there are bed spaces available before making other enquiries.
- The accommodation provider will again confirm if an emergency bed space is available and if they are willing to accept the client, based on the initial risk assessment. If the bed space is refused, the accommodation provider must provide reasons in writing, or email, to the referrer.
- The use of Taxis may be considered – Ty Golau have an arrangement with a taxi firm and will arrange taxis, if necessary, and will re-charge the Local Authority for journeys authorised by Housing Solutions or the Outreach Project as a result of SWEPP.
- The client should expect to receive the minimum service from the accommodation provider as outlined in the individual service standards documents (attached).

- Accommodation provider to complete a basic information form (appendix 2) for monitoring purposes, and email to Housing Solutions Team and the Outreach Team. (housing.solutions.team@denbighshire.gov.uk & emma.tudor@denbighshire.gov.uk)
- Housing Solutions Teams to feedback to Ty Golau/Outreach the outcome of Options interview.
- Only if no emergency bed space is available, then the Housing Solutions Team will be contacted and use of B&B may be offered as a last resort.
- When SWEP is triggered, Ty Golau will open from 6.30pm.

WEEKENDS & BANK HOLIDAYS

- **Outreach** staff to check temperature and trigger the process
- Follow process above
- Contact out of hours service (number below)
- Accommodation provider to keep client in accommodation until next working day.

USEFUL NUMBERS

- Denbighshire Housing - 01824 708367 or 03001 233068 (out of hours)
- Ty Golau Emergency Provision - 01745 345900
- Shelter Cymru - 03450 755005
- Street Link 0300 5000914

Ty Golau

Contact Tel: 01745 360868 / 345900

Location: Ty Golau, Dewi Sant Centre, Clwyd Street, Rhyl LL18 3LA

Number of emergency beds: 7

Waking Night Staff: yes

Sleeping Night Staff: yes

Support and Facilities Offered: Advice and support, tea, toast

Opening Times: Ty Golau 6.30pm (When SWEP is activated) – 8.00am

ARC communities Day Service

Monday – Friday 10am – 2.30pm

Monday, Wednesday, Friday – reopens 3pm – 4.45pm

Thursday – reopens 3pm – 5pm

Souper Sunday 1pm – 3pm (Local Connection policy will not apply if SWEP is triggered)

Appendix 1 – Risk Assessment

Ty Golau Admittance/ Needs and Risk Assessment (To be used each night)

Date:.....

Name of Service User:.....

DOB.....

How have you become homeless?

.....
.....

Do you have a tenancy elsewhere?

.....
.....

Are you new to the Denbighshire Area?

YES [] NO []

If yes, where are you from?

.....

How have you come to hear about the service in Rhyl

.....

(Is there a local connection explain to SU re priority being given to local service users)

Would you like support to return to your local area (**If yes follow up in support plan and contact local agencies this evening if possible, if service user doesn't wish to reconnect they are to be granted access on a nightly basis for up to 72 hours to complete SP assessment.**

.....
If service user is under threat of violence, staff to gather information and follow up to verify.

.....
.....

How long do you want to book in for 1, 2 or 3 nights?

(if 3 nights, please explain the person needs to return back on the second and third night by 7pm or their bed will be given to another service user. If Service user has no local connection but wishes to be reconnected they can book in for 1-3 nights whilst working towards

Do you have any immediate health issues? YES [] NO []

Do you have a dentist? YES [] NO []

Do you have a doctor? YES [] NO []

Are you taking any prescribed medication? YES [] NO []

If yes, what is it, why and how often do you take it?

.....

Have you taken your medication today? YES [] NO []

Have you any Mental Health Issues or Self Harm issues that we need to be aware of

.....
.....

Are you carrying any sharps or drug related paraphernalia? YES [] NO []

Have you ever been cautioned or convicted for arson? YES [] NO []

Have you ever been cautioned or convicted of a sex offence? YES [] NO []

Have you ever been cautioned or convicted of a violent offence? YES [] NO []

If yes to any of the above please complete separate risk management form

.....
.....

Are you accessing other agencies locally.....

Are you aware of other provisions for rough sleepers in the area during the day? YES [] NO []

Are you in receipt of any benefits/income? YES [] NO []

.....
.....

Staff signature:.....

Appendix 2 – Basic Information Form

Name	
DOB	
ID (take a copy of ID)	
Do you have a local connection	
Do you have any alcohol you need to hand to staff	
Do you have anything else that you feel may need handing in to staff for safekeeping	
Are you carrying any weapons/sharps If answered yes person is not to be admitted with these	
How many nights do you want to book in for if first night 1,2,3	