

Extreme cold weather rough sleepers provision

The council may not have a statutory responsibility to accommodate most rough sleepers, however, it does have a statutory responsibility to provide them with advice and assistance.

When a rough sleeper approaches the Housing Advice Team for assistance they will be assessed to determine if a statutory duty is owed. If no duty is owed the rough sleeper will be given advice and assistance in finding accommodation. However it may take some time to secure accommodation and during that time they may have to continue sleeping rough.

During periods of severe weather in the winter months (November to February) the Housing Advice Team will offer overnight emergency accommodation for rough sleepers subject to the rough sleeper meeting the stated criteria and the availability of suitable accommodation.

1. Trigger for 'severe weather procedure' to be put in place

For provision of emergency accommodation to be considered by the Housing Advice Team, the Met Office forecast must predict that for the next three consecutive nights or more, temperatures are expected to be at a minimum of zero degrees celsius or lower.

2. Eligibility for assistance under the extreme cold weather provision

Anyone sleeping rough will need to contact the Housing Advice Team or the Salvation Army. Referrals made by the Salvation Army to the Housing Advice Team will be accompanied by a letter

The Housing Advice Team will determine whether the Council has a statutory duty to accommodate that person. If no housing duty is owed as the rough sleeper is deemed not to be in priority need (as defined in the homelessness legislation), the Housing Advice Officer will then establish:

- a) Whether the person has anywhere to sleep that night other than outside ("outside" includes cars, sheds, or garages). A person who can stay on a friend's floor or sofa is not considered to be street homeless, and will not be considered for this scheme;
- b) Whether the person has a local connection with Warwick District Council (as defined in the homelessness legislation); and
- c) Whether they are likely to be deemed intentionally homeless (as defined in the homelessness legislation).

If the person is eligible for assistance, has nowhere to sleep that night and has a local connection, they will be offered emergency accommodation during the period of severe weather. However it should be noted that:

- Those rough sleepers who would be ineligible for assistance under the homelessness legislation, e.g. those without recourse to public funds such as

A10 nationals from EU Accession States will be considered under the extreme cold weather provisions.

- For those rough sleepers who are deemed to be high risk following a risk assessment and the council cannot secure accommodation due to this reason, accommodation will not be provided.
- Rough sleepers who are deemed to be intentionally homeless may not be accommodated depending on the reasons for intentionality.

The Housing Advice Manager reserves the right to offer emergency accommodation where extenuating circumstances exist.

If the rough sleeper has somewhere to stay for one or two nights during the period of severe weather, but not the other night(s) they should contact the Housing Advice Team each day they will be street homeless to check whether the severe weather procedure is in place for that night.

3. Number of nights a rough sleeper will be provided with emergency accommodation

There is no minimum or maximum number of nights a rough sleeper can be provided with emergency accommodation.

The weather forecast for the Warwick District will be checked daily at www.metoffice.gov.uk and once the minimum temperature predicted has risen above zero degrees celsius, emergency accommodation will no longer be provided for the rough sleeper, and they will be notified of this before midday on the day they are expected to leave the emergency accommodation.

4. Finding move-on accommodation whilst being provided with emergency accommodation

Whilst a rough sleeper is being provided with emergency accommodation during severe weather, they will be offered advice and assistance by the Housing Advice Team in finding their own accommodation. This could include referrals to supported accommodation, registration on the appropriate Council's Housing Register(s), private rented accommodation, and signposting to other agencies and organisations who may be able to assist. However, it should be noted that it may not be possible to find move-on accommodation before the provision of severe weather emergency accommodation ceases.