

Rough Sleeping in Newham: Frequently Asked Questions for Members

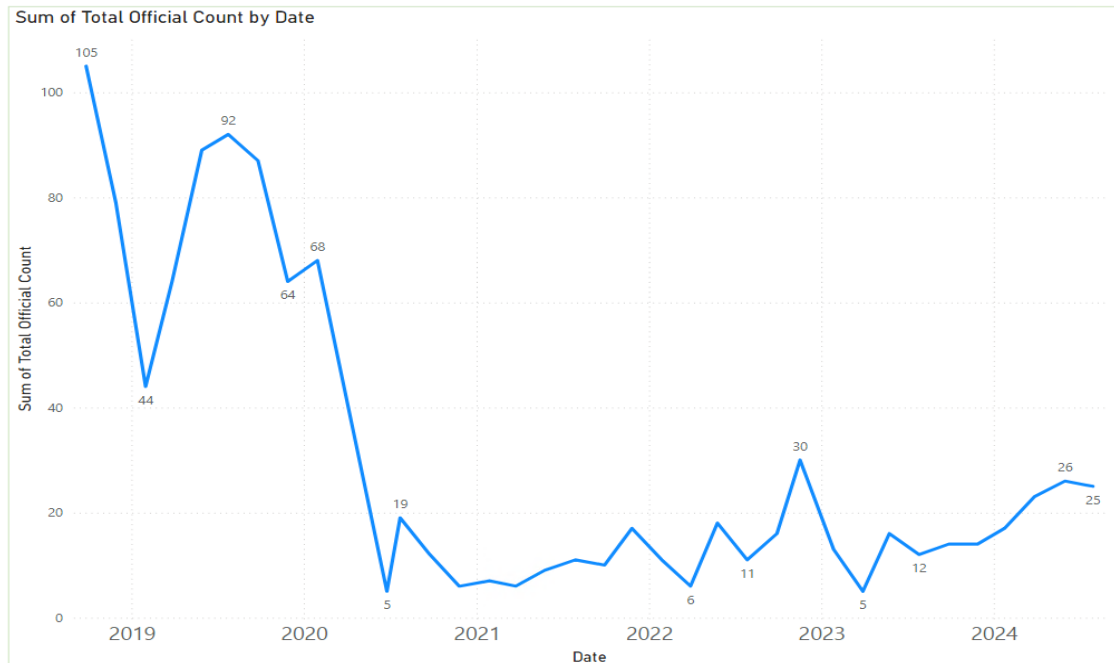
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Rough sleeping is a complex issue, and we understand that Newham residents will have questions and concerns relating to rough sleepers.
- 1.2 This set of FAQ is designed as a resource for members of the public, council officials, and anyone interested in learning more about rough sleeping services in Newham.
- 1.3 Here you will find answers to frequently asked questions, such as what to do if you see someone sleeping rough, what resources are available, and how you can get involved.
- 1.4 Whether you are a resident wanting to help, or a councillor seeking detailed information, this set of FAQ aims to provide clear and concise answers.

2 Context

- 2.1 In early 2020, Newham had the second highest rough sleeping population in London. Whilst there has been a significant amount of work to successfully and dramatically address and reduce rough sleeping in Newham, the council remains committed to continuing to address and ultimately end rough sleeping in the borough.
- 2.2 The council's approach and commitments in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping are underpinned by the five-year [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-26](#). The strategy focuses on a public health approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping, aiming for long-term solutions and an ultimate goal of ensuring no resident in Newham is forced to sleep rough.
- 2.3 We have recently experienced an increase in rough sleeping in the borough. As of July 2024, the number of people identified as rough sleeping in Newham was **40**, an increase of 23 from the previous period (July 2023). See overleaf data as to how this compares to numbers historically and over time.



2.4 Whilst increases at this time of year can be anticipated as the weather improves and access to the “gig economy” increases, the bi-monthly July (2024) night time street count figure of 25 was markedly higher than that of July 2023, when it was 12. We are additionally seeing a shift in the kinds of individuals rough sleeping.

2.5 We want the public to understand the issue of rough sleeping in Newham, the resources available, and what the council is doing to address it. This transparency fosters trust and allows residents to feel informed and involved.

2.6 This FAQ aims to equip people with the knowledge to act. Whether reporting someone sleeping rough through StreetLink, donating time to charities, or volunteering at shelters, these actions can make a real difference.

3 FAQs

3.1 What is rough sleeping?

Rough sleeping refers to someone sleeping on the streets, in doorways, or other places not intended for habitation. This can include all open-air spaces such as:

- Parks
- Tents and makeshift encampments
- Bus shelters
- Beach
- All public transport
- Hospitals/A&E wards – both inside as well as in the grounds
- Fast food restaurants
- Libraries
- Police stations

- Derelict buildings with no running water or amenities, no lockable door, and a roof that doesn't cover the whole building

It is important to understand a distinction between the terms “rough sleeping” and “homelessness”.

Homelessness is a broader term that encompasses anyone without a permanent place to live. Rough sleeping is a specific form of homelessness, but not everyone who is homeless sleeps rough. Some people may stay with friends or family on a temporary basis, or live in temporary accommodation like hostels or shelters.

3.2 What can I do if I see someone sleeping rough in Newham?

If you see someone sleeping rough in Newham, the best course of action is to report to **StreetLink** which is a national referral system that connects rough sleepers with local rough sleeping support services.

Here is how you can report someone sleeping rough:

Online: Reporting is only accepted by members of the public via the website. So please do visit the StreetLink website <https://thestreetlink.org.uk/> and follow the prompts.

When reporting, try to include as much detail as possible, including:

Location: the specific location where you saw the person sleeping rough (e.g. street name, nearby landmarks).

Description: a brief description of the individual's appearance (e.g. age, gender, clothing).

Additional details: any further information that may be helpful (e.g. if the individual appears injured or unwell).

If reporting an individual to <https://thestreetlink.org.uk/> here are some additional things to keep in mind:

Unless there is a medical emergency, avoid waking the person if they are asleep. This can be disruptive or frightening. If you suspect any medical issues, please do call 999.

If you feel comfortable, offer the person some food or a drink. Do ask what they would like due to any allergies and dietary preference. These gestures are meaningful and make a difference.

Feedback – when making the referral, you can request an update from StreetLink.

By reporting someone sleeping rough through StreetLink, residents can take a crucial step in connecting them with the support they need.

Please note that only rough sleepers can report themselves for assistance via the phone line.

3.3 How does the council know who is sleeping rough?

Newham Council uses a range of approaches to identify rough sleepers, with a focus on data accuracy. These include:

Street outreach: trained outreach workers target areas known for rough sleeping seven days a week, making contact with individuals and offering support and referrals to other support services to help them get away from the streets. Outreach shifts commence at 5.30am every day apart from Sunday which is 9am to 5pm. Out of hours shifts are carried out by the Rapid Response Team who pick up the StreetLink referrals for Newham.

Public reports: residents play a crucial role by reporting rough sleeping through StreetLink. Referrals to StreetLink allow outreach teams to locate individuals and assess their needs. Outreach teams may not always see new people sleeping rough so your help will be essential to the team.

Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN): Newham works alongside other London boroughs in contributing its information to CHAIN, a centralised database that enables the outreach workers to follow an individual's journey, location and support in place.

In addition to these methods, Newham conducts **bi-monthly street counts**. These counts involve outreach teams, other commissioned services, drug and alcohol services, volunteers, Councillors and Senior Managers conducting a co-ordinated headcount of people sleeping rough across the borough on a specific night every two months. This helps to:

Gather real time data: street counts provide a snapshot of the number of people bedded down on a specific night, offering valuable data for strategic planning and resource allocation.

Identify trends: regular counts allow local authorities to track changes in the number of rough sleepers over time, helping to measure the effectiveness of interventions and planning for projected spikes. The information gathered will also help the council to assess new people sleeping rough.

An important aspect of the council's support for rough sleepers is the **verification process**. This is vital in ensuring accuracy and ensuring that support reaches

those who need it most, as quickly and efficiently as possible. The verification process works in two stages:

Initial report: when a rough sleeper is reported through the outreach team, StreetLink or identified during a street count, the individual is logged on CHAIN as an 'unverified sighting'.

Verification process: following an initial sighting, outreach teams attempt to make contact with the individual. If contact is successful and details are confirmed, the sighting becomes 'verified' on CHAIN. CHAIN verification is a vital aspect of the provision of support for rough sleepers in London. This gives the individual a unique CHAIN number.

Verification is important in tracking the support offered to individuals over time, allowing local authorities to monitor how effectively services are reaching rough sleepers. This also avoids duplication, preventing multiple support agencies from approaching the same individual.

It is important to acknowledge that the processes the council has in place to understand its rough sleeping population are not always conclusive. This is because some rough sleepers may be difficult to locate, or hesitant to engage with outreach teams often making up the cohort of 'hidden homeless'.

3.4 Is rough sleeping an issue in Newham?

Yes, rough sleeping is an issue across the UK, including in Newham.

Newham has excellent transport links and enables easy access into Stratford and Westfield shopping centre where people do choose to beg and/or sleep out for at least one night. Newham is also a very transient borough with 35% poverty rate ranking us as the fourth highest borough across London.

Drawing on data from the November 2023 official rough sleeper count, the DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up Housing and Community), now known as the MHCLG (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government), announced that people sleeping rough and seeking help to leave the streets behind increased to the highest level since 2018 across the country.

The largest increase in the number of people estimated to be sleeping rough was in London, where there were 1,132 people in November 2023, compared to 858 people in November 2022, which is an increase of 274 people or 32%.

When compared to all 32 London councils and the City of London Corporation, Newham for the first year was not in the top 10 councils for having the most people sleeping rough.

When compared to the North East London (NEL) boroughs which are Newham,

Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge and City of London, Newham is ranked in the top half for having the highest number of people sleeping rough.

3.5 What does Newham do about rough sleeping?

Newham Council works alongside charities and support services to help rough sleepers. This work includes:

The Integrated Rough Sleeping Service (IRSS): this partnership provides a range of support services to rough sleepers to help people move off the street and rebuild their lives.

Outreach: the council commissions a dedicated rough sleeping outreach service through the IRSS. The role of the service is to engage with any rough sleeper and attempt to source appropriate accommodation and/or offer the various support commissioned by Newham that will meet their needs. Outreach shifts are as required in partnership with CGL drug and alcohol service, CGL Navigator, St Mungos PAN London Navigators, Newham Senior Social Worker, RAMHP (Rough Sleeping and Mental Health Provision) GP from the transitional practice and so forth.

Newham Integrated Rough Sleeper Service proactively opens tents in the borough to conduct welfare checks and continue engagement. However, tents will not be opened if there are any visible threats to staff i.e. dangerous dogs or violent outbursts from the occupant. There are various partners, policies and processes in place to support those sleeping rough in tents and with support needs.

Accommodation: Newham also commissions a range of accommodation services through the IRSS to address the immediate housing needs of rough sleepers. These bed spaces and properties provide a wide range of services tailored to the individual needs of people experiencing rough sleeping. The purpose of these accommodation services is to equip its residents with the skills and confidence to live independently.

Day centres: these centres offer essential services like hot meals, showers, laundry facilities and access to a range of support services that work in partnership with day centres to provide outreach such as to claim welfare benefits, immigration advice, ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) classes and job searches.

Emergency shelter:

Pan-London services: there are currently 3 PAN London emergency shelters across London that Newham can also use for those who are newly sleeping on the streets. The spaces are on a first come first served basis and offers basic off the streets accommodation.

SWEP – During the Severe Weather, be it harsh winters or hot summers, the SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency protocol) is activated i.e. above 30 degrees Celsius in the summer and zero degrees Celsius and below in the winter for at least three continuous days. Therefore, according to the temperatures, outreach teams will hand out water, sun protection, hats, fruit and offer cooling points in our libraries and accommodation if required. During the winter months, the libraries become warm havens and Newham opens SWEP centres for off the streets emergency accommodation. PAN London accommodation is also utilised during this time. If you do see someone sleeping rough and in need of assistance, please do make a referral via StreetLink where help can reach them much quicker. If you suspect any medical emergency, please do call 999.

Emergency pop up services – The first all North East London borough intervention was set up in Newham from November 2023 to 29th April 2024. This service successfully supported around 60 people found sleeping rough over five months and 36 people were helped to move on into more settled accommodation. This provision helped save lives over the winter months. We anticipate that future government funding will be available to set up another similar provision in Newham.

3.6 Support with underlying issues: Rough sleeping can be caused by complex problems like mental health difficulties, addiction, end of sofa surfing arrangements, job loss, no fault eviction or relationship breakdown. A range of services in Newham provide support to address these issues.

Why are there still people rough sleeping if there are services available to help them?

People who sleep rough often present with a number of complex needs including diagnosed or undiagnosed mental and/or physical health issues, substance misuse needs, complex trauma, lack of trust and self-neglect.

With a collaborative approach and comprehensive needs assessments, the council endeavours to meet the needs with support, especially accommodation-based support, wherever possible.

There is a significant group of people who sleep rough due to the restriction of public funds available to them. These individuals have no recourse to public funds, and face significant challenges securing stable housing. Professionals call individuals who fall into this category “NRPF”.

3.7 What is NRPF?

NRPF stands for No Recourse to Public Fund which is now better illustrated as restricted eligibility to public funds. This is a policy that restricts access to certain government benefits and support for some immigrants. This can have a significant impact on rough sleeping in several ways, including:

- 3.7.1 **Limited access to support:** people with NRPF are often ineligible for benefits like housing support or income-based support. This makes it difficult for them to afford accommodation, increasing the risk of rough sleeping. There remains no statutory obligation to Newham to provide a prevention or relief duty as determined by Housing Legislation.
- 3.7.2 **Difficulties leaving homelessness:** Without access to specific benefits, it can be very challenging for someone with NRPF to find and maintain stable housing. This can trap them in a cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping.
- 3.7.3 **Increased vulnerability:** People with NRPF may be hesitant to access support services due to immigration concerns. This leaves them more vulnerable on the streets.

It is vital to note that NRPF does not apply to everyone who has immigrated to the UK. It depends on the specific circumstances surrounding each individual's immigration status.

There are ways in which Newham offers support to people sleeping rough and are facing destitution due to their NRPF status.

Praxis – Immigration advice and case work to resolve their immigration status.

Accommodation - time limited emergency temporary accommodation via the IRSS pathway during investigation and case work with dedicated officers .

Access to NewDay day services and charities - People can access the commissioned Day Service, five days a week for food, shower, laundry, clothes, ESOL (English Classes for Speakers of Other Languages) classes, GP registration, Immigration advice, welfare rights, money advice, access to a nurse, dentist etc.

Referral to all commissioned services such as – CGL Newham Rise drug and alcohol provision, Mental health Support, Housing Advice, Social workers and food banks.

3.8 What is the council doing to prevent rough sleeping?

The council takes a proactive approach to prevent rough sleeping before this even takes place. Our Homeless Prevention Advice Service (HPAS) offers support and advice to those facing the threat of homelessness and take the necessary steps to prevent this. This could be by linking into Welcome Newham or one of our commissioning floating support services.

Our dedicated outreach team targets known hot spots on a daily basis and offers advice and support to get those rough sleeping into accommodation.

3.9 Is rough sleeping the same as begging or anti-social behaviour?

No. There is a cohort of people who choose to beg at train stations or areas that could generate income, this could be for several different reasons. There are also those who street drink and possibly cause anti-social behaviour (ASB). The council have a dedicated ASB team to address behaviours such as this, if rough sleeping is also identified by these officers our outreach team would support.

4 Newham's partnership approach to support those sleeping on the streets and in tents/encampments:

- CGL Newham Rise delivers drug and alcohol support services within the borough and carries out weekly joint visits with the outreach team, to engage with those on their caseload and to assertively target those who may need additional support to engage.
- Praxis provides immigration advice and support to regularise an individual's stay where possible.
- RhEST, commissioned as part of a Pan London Pathway, work to 'improve access to drug and alcohol treatment and in particular inpatient treatment for people who sleep rough.'
- Change Communication provides clinical communication assessment, support, and advice to the outreach team and "T1000" clients. They 'focus on improving engagement, increasing access to appropriate services, addressing health matters, and supporting effective resettlement. All services are delivered by a qualified Speech and Language Therapist with extensive experience in homelessness settings.'
- Adult Social Care – LBN has a dedicated Senior Social Work Practitioner to work solely with people sleeping rough in Newham who have suspected care and support needs. This enables services to be accelerated as and when required. The role enables the social worker to make rapid visits to rough sleepers, carry out joint outreach sessions and complete Care Act Assessments from the streets.
- Newham Transitional Practice - this is a dedicated GP service working with people sleeping rough in Newham. The Doctor and Nurse from the practice conducts outreach shifts with the outreach team as and when required.
- Rough Sleeping and Mental Health Programme (RAMHP) - the service is based in the Royal London Hospital and they work directly with those sleeping rough through the outreach workers to help improve their mental health. They will develop a model of care following full assessment of their mental health and/or psychological needs. They will work mainly with primary care and third sector organisations to get mental health needs met but also support secondary mental health services.
- Welcome Newham - this service proactively works directly with National Asylum Support Service (Home Office Hotels) hotel managers and people evicted from hotels in Newham including support via outreach and the bespoke one stop shop to make homeless applications to the council, apply for Universal Credit, housing benefit, employment etc.

4.1 How else can I help?

Beyond reporting rough sleepers through StreetLink, there are several ways that concerned members of the public can help in the fight against rough sleeping in Newham.

These include:

- Donating your time to work with charities such as Crisis and Shelter
- Help in local smaller charities and faith groups
- Help charities to fundraise for events such as sports and trips to the seaside
- Donate unwanted clothes, shoes and other essentials in good condition to local charities and food banks
- Donate non-perishable food to local food banks

Some of these have been listed below:

Sphere Support

Every Tuesday/Thursday/Friday 10am-4pm

Gerry Raffles, Square, E15 1BG

Help and advice are available for living costs, immigration, the supply of milk, and information on where to find and get food from food banks or food clubs.

Hot food is available

To sign up - nicole.bello@spheresupport.org.uk

Carpenters and Docklands

Every Monday/Wednesday/Friday 9am-1pm

98 Gibbins Road, E15 2HU

Help and advice about health and wellbeing.

Access to showers, shower gels, razors, shampoos, clean towels, acupuncture, internet, charging devices such as laptops and mobile phones.

Hot and cold food are available

To sign up - samantha.white@docklandsettlements.org.uk | 02085344121

Highway Vineyard Church

Every Tuesday 11.30am-3pm

Highway Vineyard Church, 88a Romford Road, E15 4EH

Help and advice with immigration. Access to free WiFi, games, English conversational classes,

To sign up - lunch@highwayvineyard.org 02085344019

Bonny Downs Community Association

Food Banks: Every Wednesday, 11.30am-2pm

The WeLLcome Hub, 35 Vicarage Lane, E6 6DQ

Help and support with debt, household money managing, benefits, energy, help with applications, housing and support for over 65s.

Hot food available

To sign up - bonnydowns.org 02085867070

Nutrition Kitchen

Every Friday 9am-1pm

East Ham Leisure Centre, 324 Barking Road, E6 2RT

Access to a kitchen to cook on site when booked, washing of laundry, food parcels and classes on diet and exercise.

To sign up - sandeep@nutrition-kitchen.co.uk | 07931 786697

Crisis

Support Services – Receive practical one-to-one support to help people access benefits, healthcare services, employment opportunities, and more.

Call free on 0300 636 1967 Monday to Friday, 9am-8pm, Saturday to Sunday, 11am-5pm.

Or visit 66 Commercial Street, London E1 6LT.

Crisis homelessness charity - Together we will end homelessness

The Renewal Programme

395 High Street North, Manor Park, London E12

Support Services – Immigration advice and advocacy, Housing enquiries, Volunteering opportunities, ESOL classes, Food Bank

Contact – 0208 471 6954

For more information, email Info@renewalprogramme.org.uk

Ascension Community Trust

Ascension Church Centre, Baxter Road, Custom House, E16, 3HJ

Support Services- activities and groups for adults with complex needs, various activities, Food Bank

Tel 0207 511 1232

Royal Docks Learning and Advice Centre

268 Albert Road, London, E16 2JB

Support Services – front line services to improve wellbeing, prevent against loneliness and isolation, friendship groups, mental health support Food Bank and much more

Tel 0207 476 1666

Email- admin@rdlac.org.uk

Bridges

Memorial Community Church, 395 Barking Road, Plaistow, E13 8AL

Services- two main events each week and occasional special events for homeless and vulnerably placed people in Newham.

Saturday cooked full English Breakfast served from 9.00am to 11.00am. Cold Breakfast is available all morning

Monday drop in – 10am to 2.00pm for shower, clothes, laundry facility, help with benefits, NHS Nurse, group activities to help self-esteem and confidence.

Special Christmas event on Saturday closest to Christmas day from 9.00am to 3.00pm including breakfast, Christmas lunch, presents and games.

Contact- info@bridgeshomelesssupport.org.uk

St Fidelis Friary

Killip Close, Canning Town, London, E15 1LX

Services - Provide material and spiritual care to the homeless and those who are destitute three times a week. Clothes for men and woman along with food are available.

Tel 0207 474 0766

Shelter England

This charity helps millions of people every year struggling with bad housing or homelessness.

They are located at:

43 Lakedale Road
Plumstead
London SE18 1PR.

Homeless Link Membership Organisation

This is the national membership charity for organisations working directly with people who become homeless in England. They are located at Homeless Link's Office based at:

Minorities House
2-5 Minorities
London EC3N 1BJ

Your Place

This service provides short to long-term accommodation and support through their homelessness services in Newham. Your Place @ Anchor House is located at:

81 Barking Road

London

E16 4HB

Tel: 020 7476 6062.

www.your-place.org.uk, hello@your-place.org.uk,

NewDay

The Councils commissioned Day Services situated at The Bobby Moore Pavilion, 118 Napier Road, East Ham E6 2SG from 8.30 to 2.30pm Monday to Friday. The service is pivotal to the Community and provides much needed support to those who are homeless, at threat of homelessness and/or rough sleeping. NewDay are a one stop shop hub for partners to provide advice around areas including Health, welfare benefits, immigration and much more. NewDay works in close partnership with Bonny Downs Community Association who provides the food bank and food club support. Outside of the commissioned services, NewWay provide the Churches winter night shelter.

[This link](#) shows a map of services in and around Newham aiding those requiring support with homelessness.