

SEVERE WEATHER FACT SHEET 2016

What is severe weather provision (SWP)?

During particularly cold (when temperatures are 0°C or below for three consecutive nights) or severe weather that could increase the risk of harm to people sleeping rough, South Cambridgeshire District Council will provide accommodation to rough sleepers.

Who can access severe weather provision?

Provision is only for known rough sleepers who have been discovered to be or would otherwise be sleeping out if provision was not available.

These arrangements are to ensure there is a humanitarian response to prevent rough sleepers dying from the cold while there is severe weather. It is expected that all rough sleepers, including those who would normally have no recourse to public funds, are made an emergency offer and these arrangements will often be made outside the usual eligibility/entitlement framework that governs access to housing. As such the quality of the accommodation might be of a lower standard than that offered ordinarily.

It is not the Council's duty to force people to access the SWP however, we will strive to encourage those who are rough sleeping to use this provision.

In all other instances of suspected homelessness, applicants should contact the Housing Advice and Homelessness team in the usual way.

How to access severe weather provision?

A referral can be made to the Housing Advice and Homelessness team who will complete an assessment form (one form).

As part of the assessment, the Housing Advice and Homelessness Team will ascertain the precise location of the sleep site and evaluate the accessibility of accommodation with family members.

Depending on the outcome of the assessment, the Housing Advice and Homelessness Team will determine whether it is necessary to provide emergency accommodation. Consideration will be given to utilising beds within the Council's hostel accommodation. If this is unsuitable, or no bed spaces are available an emergency referral to a B&B will be made by a member of the Housing Advice and Options service.

If a rough sleeper is identified out of office hours, please telephone the Contact Centre for information on how to contact the Emergency out of hours Officer.

Outside of office hours, if it is not possible to verify a rough sleeper, officers will give clients the benefit of the doubt for one night only and an assessment will be carried out on the next working day, before agreeing provision for a second night.

When will accommodation be available?

Emergency severe weather provision will be available to rough sleepers where temperatures of 0°C or below are predicted for 3 nights or more, or where severe weather, such as extreme wind or rain, is anticipated for this period of time. The Housing Advice and Homelessness Assistant (HAHA) is responsible for monitoring the anticipated

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temperatures during the period October 2016 – March 2017 and advising the team when severe weather provision is likely to be required (When the HAAH is not in they should pass this responsibility to another officer).

When SWP is not currently available we will predict as follows:

Monday: predict temperature for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

Tuesday: predict temperature for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

Wednesday: predict temperature for Thursday, Friday and Saturday

Thursday: predict temperature for Friday, Saturday and Sunday

Friday: predict temperature for Saturday, Sunday and Monday nights

Once SWP is operating, the forecast will be checked 24 hours before it is due to close. A decision will be made whether to keep it available on a daily basis. It will not be extended for three days if it is continued. After the first 3-day block has expired SWP will be extended 1 day at a time if necessary.

Once the SWP has been started we will keep it open for 3 nights even if the predicted temperature for any of those three nights rises above Zero.

Dogs

Some rough sleepers may have dogs. Dogs will not be accepted into the Councils hostel accommodation or B&B placements. Therefore in order to help encourage the rough sleeper to come in from the severe or cold weather, when SWP is available, we will attempt to place the dog(s) in an animal rescue centre/ kennels, however, we cannot guarantee finding a placement for the dog.

Useful Contact Information

Housing Advice and Homelessness Team

Office opening times: 8.30am - 5.00pm Monday – Friday

Contact Centre:

Telephone: 03450 450 051

Emergency out of hours:

Telephone: 0845 609 5438