



Homeless Link

Principles for Rough Sleeping Outreach

Friday 26th January 2024



Development of the principles

- The design and delivery of rough sleeping outreach services varies greatly across the country.
- The principles are to encourage more consistency across the sector.
- Development included conducting focus groups with people who currently work in outreach as well as with people with direct experience of homelessness.





Principles for rough sleeping outreach

Core principles required for designing and delivering rough sleeping outreach services in England.




What is rough sleeping outreach?

It is a voluntary service that seeks to help people who are sleeping rough and support them to find a place to live. Outreach workers go to where people are sleeping rough and offer them support and advice. Outreach workers can help people to find a place to live, find a job, get help with their health, and get help with their mental health.



Visit <https://homeless.org.uk/knowledge-hub/> to access the principles document.

More detailed guidance detailing how to put the principles into practice coming soon.

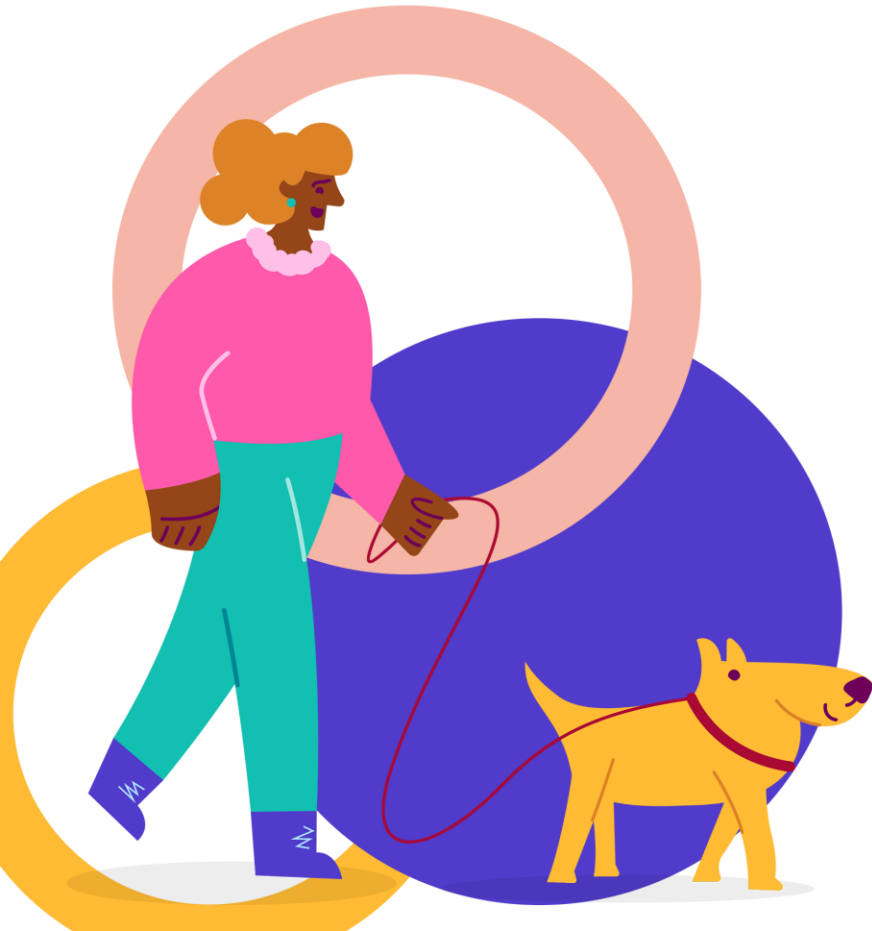


Designing Outreach Services

When designing outreach services for rough sleeping, it is critical to focus on creating a well-planned and well-judged service, ensuring access to discrete services, and having resources based on local need and capacity.



Outreach resources/events



- The full [principles document](#) is available to download on our Knowledge Hub.
- More detailed guidance will be created alongside the principles.
- [Community of Practice series](#) will be hosted in February for outreach workers, managers and commissioners.



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Outreach Principles

Zsafia Imre

Rough Sleeping Adviser – Department for Levelling Up,
Housing and Communities

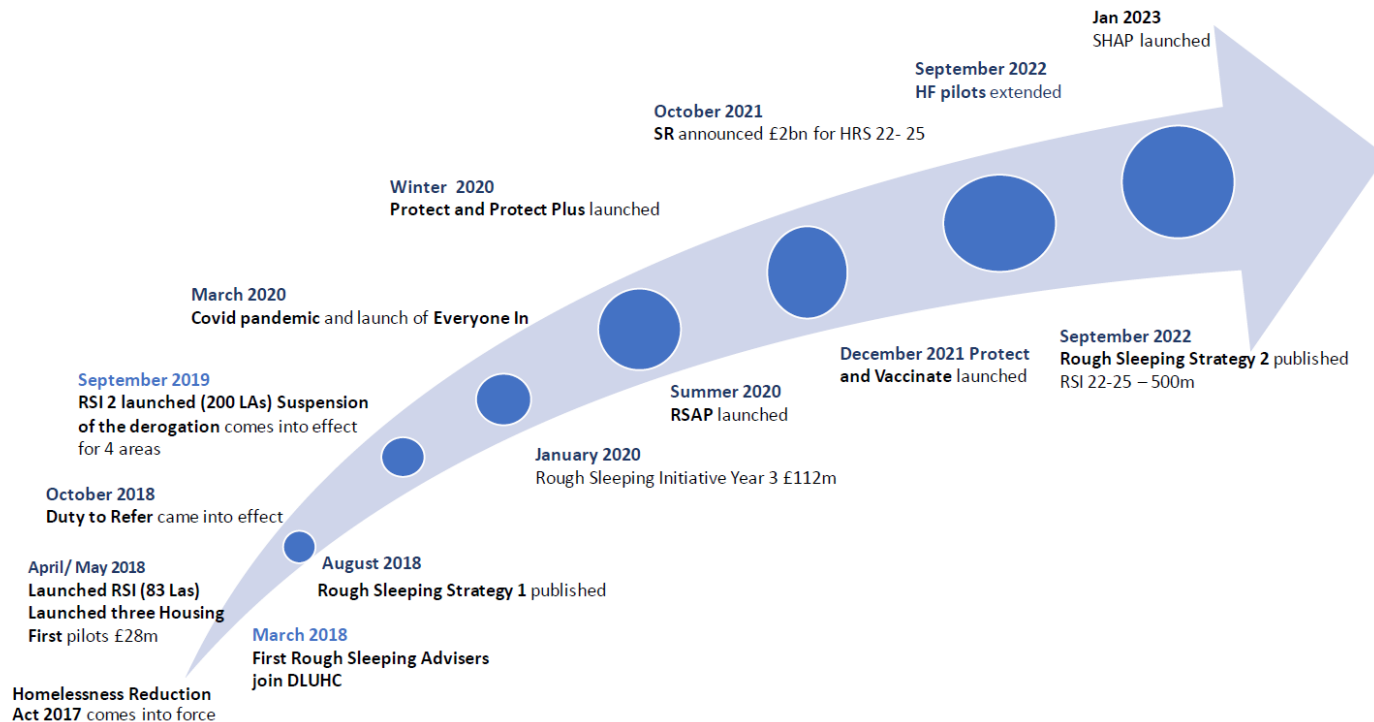
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Homelessness and rough sleeping interventions

2017 onwards



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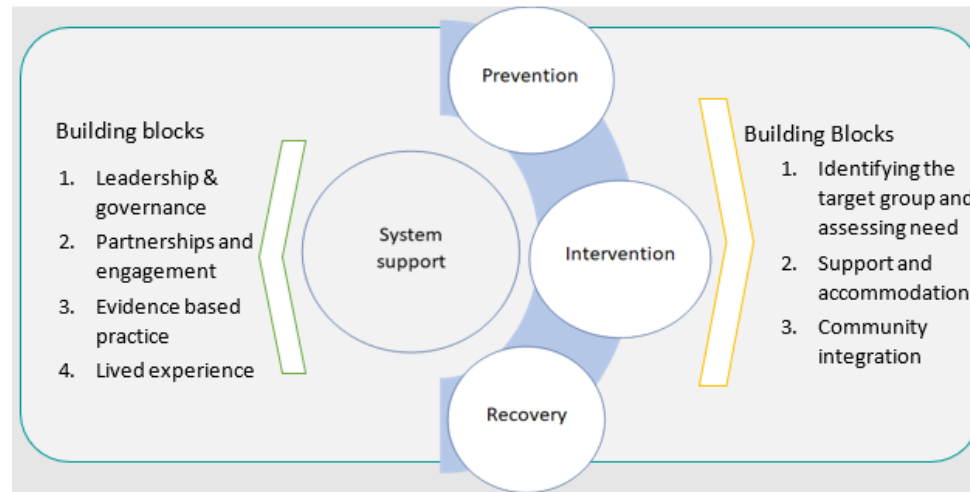


Ending Rough Sleeping for Good

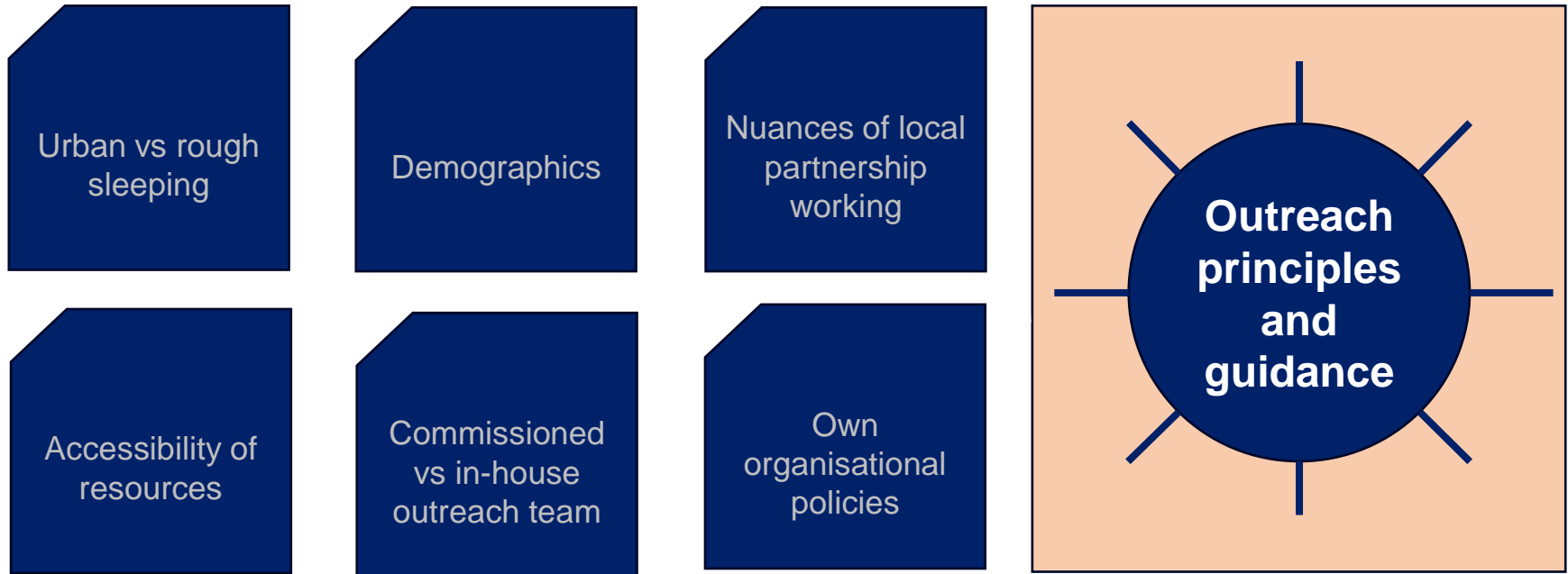
Cross-governmental commitment to end rough sleeping



In September 2022, we published the new cross-government strategy, 'Ending Rough Sleeping For Good', replacing the 2018 strategy.



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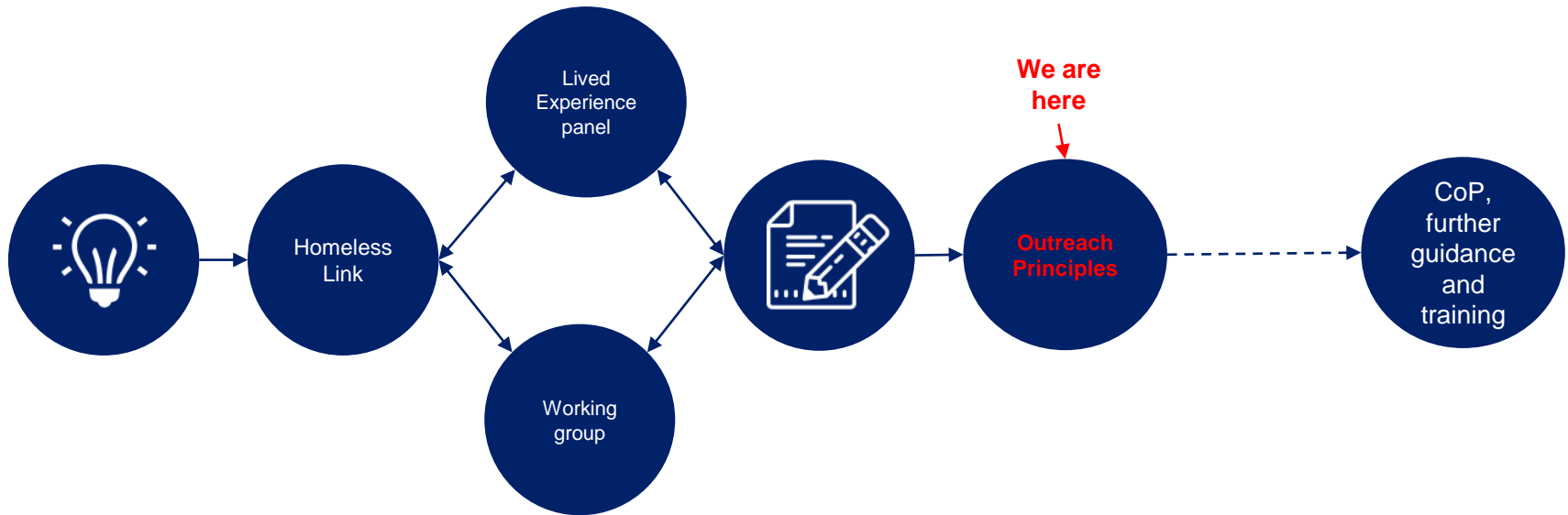


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Outreach principles

The development process



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Outreach Principles

Simone Bennett-Crump
Porchlight outreach service manager



About Porchlight

Porchlight was founded to help people facing the devastating effects of homelessness. Today, we also tackle the causes and consequences of poverty and inequality.

- We're here when it matters most
- We offer safety, stability and respect
- We empower people to live the life they want
- Together, we fight for lasting change

Last financial year, more than 7,442 people were supported by Porchlight and our partner organisations. We supported 308 people who were sleeping rough in Kent.

Changing attitudes • Changing lives

Principle 5

Verification is not a barrier to advice and/or support

- Acknowledging that a traditional verification process does not serve all groups of people.
- Applying professional judgement and a multi-disciplinary approach when 'verifying' someone as rough sleeping.
- Providing advice to anyone who states they are rough sleeping.

Best practice

- Drop-in & referral line
- Reactive and proactive outreach- early morning and SWEP
- Regular multi-agency meetings
- Specific female-only worker and women's only spaces available- support based on individual needs

Principle 6

The service is trauma-informed and seeks to reduce harm

- People feel respected, in control, valued, and listened to.
- Staff are accountable to people by being transparent and delivering the actions that have been agreed, but not over-promising.
- Individuals are supported to identify their strengths and goals where possible and are active participants in determining the support they need.
- A harm reduction approach is adopted.

Best practice



- Unconditional positive regard
- Location
- Language
- Body language and tone of voice
- Person-centered
- Reflective practice, clinical supervision & staff wellbeing



Registered charity no. 267116 | porchlight.org.uk |    @Porchlight1974

Simone Bennett-Crump

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Change Grow Live – Best Practice in Street Outreach Services

Lesley Howard – Head of Homelessness Services



**Change
Grow
Live**

Believe in people

7 Street Outreach Services

Leeds

Hull

Cambridge

Camden

Brighton
&
Hove

Newham

Waltham
Forest

Rough Sleeping Drug Alcohol Treatment Grant



26 specialist services funded to deliver drug and alcohol treatment and wraparound support for people who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.

Change Grow Live – Assertive Street Outreach Model



Tents – Change Grow Live Protocol

Why do we open tents?

When should we open tents?

How should we open tents?

When shouldn't we open a tent?

Do we need a protocol?

Why should we not give tents to people who are homeless?



Assertive Outreach



Outreach takes place when people are “bedded down”. A morning shift begins around 5.30a.m. and lasts around three hours.

We always work in pairs, preferably male and female workers. Routes are discussed before the shift; this includes any potential risk situations. We also respond to Street Link referrals.



Workers carry rucksack with refreshments including hot drinks or water, hand sanitiser, a torch, naloxone and calling cards.



Workers complete a dynamic risk assessment while approaching a rough sleeping site. If either worker feels unsafe the intervention does not take place.

They clearly identify themselves and offer refreshments (tools of engagement)
Our approach is tailored to the needs of the person that we are working with.



If someone is sleeping, we may attempt to wake them by repeating who we are and asking if they would like support.

If they do not wake up , we would check that they are breathing and that they don't appear unwell. If we are concerned in any way, we would call for medical assistance and wait with the person until emergency services arrive.



If we believe that the person is just in a deep sleep, we leave a calling card and return at the end of the shift to complete a welfare check.



Lesley Howard – Head of Homelessness Services



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Make a difference



**Change
Grow
Live**



Outreach Principles

**DLUHC Rough Sleeping
Lived Experience Forum**

Expert Link – Humanity, Honesty, Hope



Outreach Principles

**DLUHC Rough Sleeping
Lived Experience Forum**

Who are we?

Why we do this?

Expert Link – Humanity, Honesty, Hope



Outreach Principles

1. Outreach services play a leading role in the contact, assessment, and support of people sleeping rough in their area.

“For me, it's one of the most important jobs on the street because it's the first contact. And it's a gateway to services. And you never know, a year later, somebody's sitting in a flat. Have been to the hospital, in touch with mental health services, which is all important.”

“You say to somebody I'm on this street and I'm in that doorway, it's generally fairly easy to find. But as soon as you start getting away from these spots people don't know how to find you. So what techniques can we use to help identify where the person is?”



Outreach Principles

2. Interventions are timely and purposeful.

“They kind of would be consistent on the same day. Such and such is coming today, so I won't have my hit... That worked for me and I ended up going in.”

“We were putting the tent away because it's just been a massive storm. And you don't move because outreach don't give you a time. The outreach team don't say we're gonna come at 2:00 AM. They say we're gonna come somewhere between 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM. Do you have to be in that one place for such a length of time, regardless of weather, regardless of danger, like we had stones thrown us like several nights?”



Outreach Principles

3. An active engagement approach is used by staff for as long as is needed.

“There's a fine balance between not asking the heavy stuff straight away, because you don't have that relationship with the person, but then is that person just recording your harm? Every day for months and not doing anything...”

“It may not be your choice as an outreach worker to be living in a tent and everything else, but for that person you're talking to, it may be what's the best thing for them at that time... there are all sorts of reasons why people end up in their tent or shop doorway and it may actually be a safer space for them.”



Outreach Principles

4. Person-centred support and advocacy is provided.

“Respect and make the person feel in control, because they may never have felt in control. Care system, prison, always told what to do. Let the person be in control of everything rather than taking over.”

“It's also frustrating when you're just visited by outreach and they're nice, whereas actually nice doesn't get many people housed. You know, if they were trained in homelessness law, or they were trained in advocacy, they were trained in listening to what the person, the person-centered approaches and stuff like that, ... if they were more honest with what they can and can't do, it would have been a better relationship.”



Outreach Principles

5. Verification is not a barrier to advice and/or support.

“When I was visited by the outreach team, it was part of the verification process. And then you're starting off that relationship with, “We don't believe that you're homeless.””

“...because they have to do those tick boxes, they have to verify ... “Are you sitting up, or are you sleeping down?” Or if you're on a bench, then actually you're not sleeping... And I think that that then feeds into a culture of people sleeping rough are lower people. We're not as deserving. Where it's our fault... but we're human beings.””



Outreach Principles

6. The service is trauma-informed and seeks to reduce harm.

“As a homeless person, it was really, really negative. So being a female, you're in a bedded down space and you've got two men approaching you. And it's quite frightening because even though they've got ID badges you don't know who they are.. I come from a place of trauma, childhood abuse, all sorts of things.. [its] too many, in my opinion, they shouldn't be approaching a female like that.”

“They've already been let down time and time again and traumatised time and time again by the system... You're not the first person, so you can't go into it thinking there's a magic wand because we don't believe that... but also a recognition of the fact that one person is literally on the floor and one isn't, and there's that massive sort of gap of power and vulnerability.”



Outreach Principles

7. There is close partnership working with other agencies.

“If next week you're going to be bringing Bob because Joe's not there, you tell the client. You're saying Bob's not here next week, so Joe's going to come. Is that all right? Because they get worried about meeting new people. It's just little things like that.”

“So I think multi agency is banging, but I think there needs to be a transparency of who else are you working with? Because obviously I might not want to work with various organisations ... I [the worker] need to be open and transparent with you about the other agencies I work with and maybe how I work with them.”



Outreach Principles

8. There is a focus on staff safety, wellbeing, and development.

“they'd probably need some sort of reflective practise because if they're being honest, and they're telling someone who's saying ‘I want to kill myself’ and they're going ‘Cool, I can't help with that’ because they're being, honest, that's going to have an impact on them. So they need to then be looked after by their managers and what have you.”

“the engagement was completely different. They were talking, they were interested. And that person actually is now in a Housing First project... They knew we had good experience, I don't even think we told them,... there's a natural sort of connection I can't explain that and they just kind of know the difference.”



Outreach Principles

If you want to find out more about Expert Link

Visit www.expertlink.org.uk/

Or contact Chris Brill

chris.brill@expertlink.org.uk

Resources, Events & Training

- Outreach Principles [Document](#)
- [Community of Practice Series](#) for outreach workers, managers & commissioners
- [Skills Framework](#)
- Outreach Training & E-Learning



Rough Sleeping Conference 2024

26 March

Join colleagues from across the homelessness sector to share effective policy and practice in rough sleeping support.



homeless.org.uk/rough-sleeping-conf



Homeless Link

What we do

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for frontline homelessness services. We work to improve services through research, guidance and learning, and campaign for policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

homeless.org.uk

[@HomelessLink](https://twitter.com/HomelessLink)