

Sourcing buildings to support
people rough sleeping during
cold weather

The Challenge

In London, when temperatures are forecast to drop below zero, the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEPP) is activated.

Local authorities are expected to provide emergency accommodation for everyone rough sleeping in their locality. Rules regarding eligibility, vulnerability and local connection are all suspended.

As rough sleeping numbers have continued to rise year on year, increased bedspaces are needed.



**Winter
2023-24**



**Winter
2024-25**

Winter 2023-24

Existing commissioned provision was not sufficient to meet demand on the streets. SWEPP came earlier than anticipated that year, precluding planning

In a space of 24hrs we established an additional 12 bed rest centre

We used a council building, with camp beds provided civil resilience, delivered by facilities management, and sharps bins from the local day centre, and support from our outreach team

Housing Director was key in bringing departments together all of whom showed great flexibility and adaptability

Explored additional options for sub-regional use in the faith and VC sectors

Winter 2024-25

Began review of previous year and planning for this year in June

Planned with partners, prepared budget and contracts

Identified another council building – this was mothballed but in good condition / location

Worked with Facilities to risk assess, check insurance, update fire risk assessment, and complete maintenance needed

Explored other options in faith and VC sectors for over-flow

Key Considerations

Who will receive services in the building?

- Location; access; layout; space for staff; male and female areas; dogs; support model; security; volunteers

Who can help you find a building?

- Local faith and voluntary sectors; local authority estate; civil resilience teams; asset management; facilities management; NHS estate; Business Improvement Districts; Regional Government

Who can support you to secure use of a building?

- Directors and other decision makers; local leaders; clear vision and motivation

Key Considerations

Planning – start early! Ensure you have budget, contracts or other agreements, permission to use the building; planning permission / consultation?

Fire Risk Assessments; maintenance; insurance; asbestos; legionnaires

Support model and wider staffing; access for staff and service users; security

Make wider service network aware including fire brigade

Communicate with service users – co-produce wherever you can