



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this statement is to advise residents on how to seek advice if:

- a) They are concerned that they are at risk of becoming homeless
- b) Are concerned that someone they have seen is homeless or sleeping rough

As is often the case, when people find themselves in a position such as this, the solution is not straightforward and often requires a multi-agency approach.

## 2. PROCEDURES AND SYSTEMS – FOR THOSE AT RISK OF BECOMING HOMELESS

In Alton, East Hampshire District Council is the statutory authority responsible for homelessness and as such has a duty to someone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local housing authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas, and to provide homelessness services to all those who are eligible.

Section 175 of the Housing Act 1996 Act defines that a person is threatened with homelessness if it is likely that they will become homeless within 28 days. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 extends the number of days from 28 to 56. In addition, people who have received a valid notice under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 and the expiry date is within 56 days, will be treated as being threatened with homelessness.

Under the 2017 Act, East Hampshire District Council is required to provide or secure the provision of free services to give people in their area information and advice on:

- preventing homelessness
- securing accommodation if homeless
- the rights of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and
- any help that is available for people who are homeless or likely to become homeless as well as how to access that help

The link to the referral form and protocol can be found at:

<https://www.easthants.gov.uk/duty-to-refer>

In addition, the housing provider **Two Saints** operates across East Hampshire and are specialists in assisting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. If anyone in Alton is worried about their own position and are concerned that they may be at risk of becoming homeless please contact Two Saints. They run a drop in session every Wednesday from 1pm - 4pm at Alton Maltings where advice can be given as well as an assessment to identify your needs.

<https://www.twosaints.org.uk/>



### **3. PROCEDURES AND SYSTEMS – FOR THOSE CONCERNED THAT SOMEONE THEY KNOW OR HAVE SEEN BECOMING HOMELESS**

As part of the new Outreach for rough sleepers service available across the Havant Borough and East Hampshire District, a direct email portal is now available: [EastHants&HavantOutreach@TwoSaints.org.uk](mailto:EastHants&HavantOutreach@TwoSaints.org.uk)

This email portal is available for referrals including Street Link, as well as a central point to log information regarding a rough sleeper.

Alternatively, you can go to the Streetlink website <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/> or call 0300 500 0914.

You will be asked to provide as much information as possible about the location of the person you have seen sleeping rough such as the town or postcode; street name and nearest building number; a description of where they are sleeping rough (i.e. bench outside supermarket); and what time of day/night you have seen them sleeping rough.

The information you provide will be reported to Two Saints who will arrange for the rough sleeper to be approached, so there is no need for you to do this yourself. Two Saints will then be able to link them with local services and offer them advice and assistance.

However, if you think that the person is in immediate risk of harm or danger or needs urgent medical attention please call 999.

### **4. DOMESTIC ABUSE.**

There are many and complex reasons why someone may be at risk of becoming homeless and if possible, it is advised that assistance is sought from the statutory authorities in the first instance. However, if you are a victim of domestic abuse and need specialist support and advice or safe and secure accommodation Stop Domestic Abuse offers a confidential support service to everyone affected by domestic abuse

Please call their Helpline on: – 0330 016 5112 or go to <https://stopdomesticabuse.uk>

### **5. EXTREME WEATHER**

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

East Hampshire District Council is required to ensure that there is provision in place for rough sleepers during periods of extreme weather to prevent people dying on the streets in the cold.

The SWEP is triggered when the night time temperature is forecast by the Met Office to be zero degrees Celsius or below for three consecutive nights. This temperature is monitored by the council's Emergency Management and Housing Services teams who will also monitor any other extreme weather conditions which may also trigger the SWEP such as torrential rain/flooding etc.

During the period of the SWEP the rough sleeper is not required to demonstrate eligibility for assistance as homeless (including whether they have any recourse to public funds), priority need, intentionality or local connection.

However, the rough sleeper must:



- Be at risk if they continue to sleep rough during the course of the severe weather;
- Have nowhere to sleep indoors during the course of the severe weather (indoors does not include cars, sheds or garages);
- Agree to the assistance offered by the council.

If the rough sleeper meets the above criteria they will be offered emergency accommodation for the duration of the severe weather.

Rough sleepers requiring assistance can make contact during office hours with the Housing Team by calling at Penns Place or telephoning 01730 234415 or outside of office hours they can use the council's emergency contact telephone number 07850 358156. Their circumstances will be assessed so as to determine the most suitable accommodation to be provided.

Clients placed into emergency accommodation when the SWEP is in operation will be referred to a Community Housing Support Worker so that contact can be arranged for ongoing support.

The weather forecast will be checked daily and once the minimum temperature is predicted to have risen above zero degrees Celsius, emergency accommodation will no longer be provided.

The rough sleeper will be offered housing advice and assistance from the Housing Team to deal with their longer term issue of homelessness.

## **6. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE.**

If residents wish to make a contribution or do something to help, it is suggested to either make a donation to Alton Foodbank or to Two Saints or another charity supporting the homeless. There have been recent incidents in Alton of "professional" beggars who prey on people's generosity, so residents are requested to not give cash to deter this behaviour.

## **7. CARE PACKS**

Under the General Power of Competence Alton Town Council is able to put together care packs to offer to the homeless and those sleeping rough. This is not a solution to homelessness but lets someone know that they are cared for on that day. The content of care packages varies on the time of year but typically will include:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Granola bar/Protein bars /Fruit snacks | Voucher for a hot meal                                  |
| Water bottle                           | Warm socks / Gloves                                     |
| Sun protection cream                   | Hand wipes / Hand lotion                                |
| Chapstick & Deodorant                  | Dental floss / tooth paste / toothbrush.                |
| Hand written note, A book              | A copy of this statement with useful telephone numbers. |

The Town Council is also able to access, through Alton Foodbank, emergency provisions for those sleeping rough and has a small Emergency Intervention Fund, generously provided by the Complins Trust for use when no other provision of support for those sleeping rough in Alton is available.