

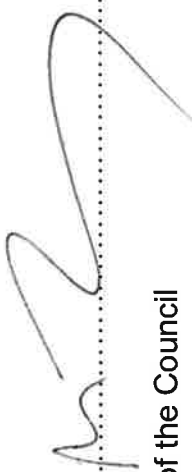
**NOTICE OF DELEGATION OF DECISION TO CABINET MEMBER BY STRONG LEADER**

Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

I, Marcus Hart, as Strong Leader, delegate the decisions on Worcestershire and Herefordshire Reconnection Policy to the Cabinet Member detailed below:

Cabinet Member.....*Anne Hingley*..... Councillor Anne Hingley

Dated: *3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2014*

Signed: .....

Leader of the Council

**NOTICE OF DECISION OF CABINET MEMBER**

Pursuant Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended by section 63 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

In accordance with the authority delegated to me by the Leader, I have made the following decision:

Subject	Decision	Reason for decision	Date for Decision to be taken
Reconnection Policy	To approve Wyre Forest District Council signing up to the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Reconnection Policy / West Midlands Policy	The policy will require Wyre Forest District Council services to actively be involved in reconnecting rough sleepers to where they have a local connection and to receive Rough Sleepers who have a connection with the District in a positive way that prevents their future homelessness where possible.	11/12/2014

**I confirm that the appropriate statutory officer consultation has taken place with regard to this decision.**

Dated: 04/12/14  
 Signed: *A. Hugley*  
 Councillor: ANNE HINBLEY  
 Cabinet Member

To: Cabinet Member for Housing

From: Strategic Housing Services Manager

Date: 1 December 2014

## **Herefordshire and Worcestershire Reconnection Policy**

### **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to present the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Reconnection Policy and seek agreement for the policy to be adopted by Wyre Forest District Council.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

That the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Reconnection Policy is agreed and adopted by Wyre Forest District Council to tackle rough sleeping in the district.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In July 2011, the Government published its report: 'A Vision to Ending Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out' nationwide. The report called on local authorities to adopt a No Second Night Out (NSNO) approach and to meet the five NSNO principles including to reconnect people who have come from another area of the country and find themselves rough sleeping back to their local community (unless there is a good reason why they can not return).
- 3.2 The Herefordshire and Worcestershire reconnection policy sets out the local strategic response to reconnection. It supports the West Midlands Regional Reconnection Policy, which we will also sign up to as an authority.
- 3.3 Reconnection is the process by which people sleeping rough who have a connection to another area are supported to return to this area in a planned way so that they can access appropriate accommodation and/or social, family and support networks according to their needs. It is also an important option for those who are unable to access the labour market or support services in the UK.
- 3.4 The extent of rough sleeping across Wyre Forest has increased in recent years. The rough sleepers count figures have been as follows; 2011/12 (1), 2012/13 (8 ), 2013/14 (7 ). Sleeping rough for even short periods of time results in a risk of a person falling into a longer term pattern of 'entrenched' rough sleeping.
- 3.5 Reconnection plays an important role in reducing rough sleeping and helps to: prevent people rough sleeping at an early stage from becoming entrenched. It enables people to move away from the street through accessing accommodation and support in a known area and ensures agencies provide a

coordinated multi agency approach to support and; make sure that there are enough resources to meet local need.

- 3.6 The Reconnection Policy has also been developed to improve access to Housing Related Support services for those with a local connection to Worcestershire as these services will reduce the time they spend with people who don't have a connection to the county.
- 3.7 Following on from approval of this policy and the recommissioning of rough sleeper services in conjunction with the County Council, this policy will then look to pilot the No Second Night Out standard in March 2015.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Reconnection Policy commits the authority to assisting an individual to reconnect to their local area safely. This will include staff time in ensuring the person can safely return to their local connection area and could possibly include providing the cost of travel. However, by focusing local services on responding to local need, it is hoped that this will make services more efficient and effective to meeting local need.
- 4.2 The costs can be contained within existing budgets so there are no additional financial implications of this proposal.

#### **6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Although the 'Vision to End Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out' is not a legislative requirement, it is an expectation by Government that local authorities implement a NSNO standard and reconnection policy

#### **7. CONCLUSION**

The number of rough sleepers approaching Wyre Forest from outside the District is very low and unlikely to have a significant impact. We will need to gear up services to the potential of receiving rough sleepers from other areas, who have a connection to the District.

#### **8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

The level of rough sleeping within the District is low and various services and organisations are in place to ensure this remains a low risk.

#### **9. CONSULTEES**

None.

#### **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 Herefordshire and Worcestershire Reconnection Policy  
10.2 West Midlands Reconnection Policy

SASH Partnership Board

# Herefordshire and Worcestershire Reconnection Policy

Final draft version



Kate Stevenson  
25/09/2013

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1.02	10/10/2014	Final draft to bring into line with West Midlands NSNO Reconnection Protocol

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 In July 2011 the government published its report on tackling homelessness with a focus on ending rough sleeping, 'Vision to ending rough sleeping: No Second Night Out nationwide'. This vision called on all local authorities to adopt a No Second Night Out ('NSNO') approach and to meet the five NSNO principles including to reconnect people who have come from another area or country and find themselves rough sleeping back to their local community unless there is a good reason why they cannot return. This is to enable them to access housing and recovery services, and have support from family and friends.
- 1.2 This Herefordshire and Worcestershire Reconnection Policy ('Reconnection Policy') sets out the strategic response to reconnection and is designed to support the local authorities across the two counties (as members of the Services Addressing Single Homelessness (SASH) Partnership) and their partners to develop reconnection protocols to enable rough sleepers to return to an area where they have supportive networks and/or where they have a proven link to as it is usually better for people to live where they have family, friends and other support networks.
- 1.3 Reconnection is the process by which people sleeping rough who have a connection to another area are supported to return to this area in a planned way so that they can access appropriate accommodation and/or social, family and support networks according to their needs. It is also an important option for those who are unable to access the labour market or support services in the UK. For the purposes of this Reconnection Policy this area will be referred to as their "Home Area" and will be taken to mean area or country.
- 1.4 The extent of rough sleeping across Herefordshire and Worcestershire has risen in recent years. Wherever someone is rough sleeping there is a very real risk that this can lead to someone falling into a longer term pattern of "entrenched" rough sleeping.
- 1.5 Reconnection plays an important role in reducing rough sleeping and helps to: prevent people rough sleeping at an early stage becoming entrenched; enable people to move away from the street through accessing accommodation and support in a known area; ensure agencies provide a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to support; and make sure that there are enough resources to meet local need.
- 1.6 It sits in the context of a sub-regional approach to ending rough sleeping. One of the key principles of the Worcestershire and Herefordshire No Second Night Out Sub-regional policy ('NSNO Policy') is to facilitate reconnection. This Reconnection Policy has a particular emphasis on rough sleepers with the fundamental principle being to prevent those newly identified as rough sleeping from spending a second night out on the streets and becoming entrenched in a street based lifestyle. It is intended to form part of the service offer for people newly identified to the streets as part of the NSNO policy.
- 1.7 This Reconnection Policy sets out the way in which individuals will be supported to reconnect to their Home Area, reconnect back to Home Areas within Worcestershire and Herefordshire, and work with agencies outside the two counties to assist



reconnection back to Herefordshire and Worcestershire where appropriate. Full engagement will be required to assist individuals to be reconnected within a structured approach.

- 1.8 The Reconnection Policy has also been developed to improve access to Housing Related Support services for those with a local connection to Worcestershire, and Herefordshire Supporting People funded services in the case of those with a local connection to Herefordshire, and to support those without a local connection to return in a planned way to an area where they have either accommodation, support networks or some other connection. The parties to this Reconnection Policy recognise that this is not always a straightforward issue; Worcestershire and Herefordshire has a wide range of commissioned housing related support services to reflect the needs of its population but it attracts people from other areas who gravitate here (particularly into Worcester City) to access those services and this creates a resource implication.
- 1.9 It should also be noted that St Paul's Hostel has developed a reconnection Policy of its own, applicable to all of its services and based on the same principles as this Policy. In practice this means that rather than allowing unrestricted access to its services for people with no local connection to Worcestershire it will work with the local authorities and other providers to reconnect them with their home area unless there is a compelling reason not to do so. St Paul's Hostel will accommodate any client with a connection to a Worcestershire district but, except in cases where it is not appropriate to do so, will ultimately seek to reconnect them to the district to which they have a local connection
- 1.10 Definitions relevant to this Reconnection Policy in section 12.
- 1.11 The signatories to this Reconnection Policy are provided in section 13.

## **2 Legal and Strategic Framework**

- 2.1 This Reconnection Policy is intended to support and be consistent with the following strategies, policies, guidance and duties:
  - Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy 2012-2017
  - Herefordshire Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013
  - Worcestershire and Herefordshire No Second Night Out Sub-regional policy
  - St Paul's Reconnection Policy
  - West Midlands NSNO Protocol
  - Homeless Link guidance on Reconnecting Rough Sleepers

- The homelessness legislation – that is the Housing Act 1996, the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation ((England) Order 2002). There is also a Code of Guidance which sets out how a local authority should interpret the legislation.

### **3 Purpose of the Reconnection Policy**

3.1 The purpose of this Reconnection Policy is to:

- a) Set out the Herefordshire and Worcestershire strategic response to reconnection;
- b) Provide a framework for the local authorities across Herefordshire and Worcestershire to prepare local reconnection protocols to actively reconnect individuals without a local connection to the area in which they're rough sleeping, particular new rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping, to return in a planned way to their Home Area;
- c) Make clear to all partners and service users who should be reconnected and how;
- d) Ensure that access to all housing related support services in Worcestershire are prioritised for those who are assessed as needing the service and who have a local connection in Worcestershire;
- e) Ensure that access to Supporting People funded services in Herefordshire are prioritised for those who are assessed as needing the services and who have a local connection to Herefordshire; and
- f) Agree common criteria and procedures to be applied when reconnecting rough sleepers within the Worcestershire and Herefordshire area.

3.2 This Reconnection Policy addresses a number of key issues including:

- a) What defines where someone's Home Area is;
- b) A common response to people who cannot or do not want to return to their Home Area; and
- c) Agreeing how provision is made for people who have no apparent links to any community and no Home Area to which they can be reconnected.

### **4 Outcomes of the Reconnection Policy**

4.1 This Reconnection Policy is intended to:

- a) Enable the development of local reconnection protocols (and potentially cross-authority or reciprocal arrangements and support in order to maximise resources);
- b) Rapidly reconnect rough sleepers to their accommodation, supportive networks or some other connection in their Home Area;

- c) Prevent people at an early stage becoming entrenched in a street based lifestyle;
- d) Ensure that rough sleepers referred to other areas have accommodation (with support and access to services if appropriate) available when they arrive to prevent the person from rough sleeping in their Home Area;
- e) Reduce the number of people sleeping rough in Herefordshire and Worcestershire;
- f) Ensure that locally funded supported accommodation is prioritised for those with a local connection to the area on the basis of need ensuring that those who are most vulnerable are prioritised; and
- g) Ensure that Herefordshire and Worcestershire's services support rough sleepers for whom reconnection is either unavailable or inappropriate.

## **5 Principles of the Reconnection Policy**

5.1 The key principles of the Reconnection Policy are as follows:

- a) Reconnection will be considered for rough sleepers who have an identified local connection to another area of Herefordshire and Worcestershire other than the area they are currently rough sleeping, for rough sleepers who have an identified local connection outside of Herefordshire and Worcestershire or have identified support networks outside of Herefordshire and Worcestershire where they can access accommodation or services;
- b) It is recognised that is not appropriate to apply the Reconnection Policy to every person. Some people may be so unwilling to return that they will continue to sleep rough as an alternative. This, and other reasons for which it may be inappropriate, is discussed further in section 7. The Herefordshire and Worcestershire local authorities are committed to ending rough sleeping and therefore would not leave people on the streets if they cannot or will not return to their Home Area. Each case should be assessed taking into account individual circumstances in line with this Reconnection Policy;
- c) Reconnection is a planned and robust process;
- d) Reconnection doesn't override any legal requirements or obligations which are placed on any partner involved in the implementation of this Reconnection Policy, in particular the homelessness duties placed on local authorities. It is up to each partner to make sure that they fulfil any legal requirements which are incumbent upon them; and
- e) The SASH Partnership and local homelessness forums/strategy steering groups will promote this Reconnection Policy.

## **6 Scope of the Reconnection Policy**

- 6.1 Reconnection is for rough sleepers in Herefordshire or Worcestershire, who have a connection to another area where they can access accommodation and/or support services and/or some other connection, are enabled to return to this Home Area in a planned way.
- 6.2 This Reconnection Policy sets out reconnection interventions for rough sleepers, particularly new rough sleepers and in this context is likely to be an intervention outside of statutory homelessness legislation and should not be confused with referrals made under the legislation for those in priority need.
- 6.3 An individual not having a local connection with the area where they present should not be an obstacle to being assessed. Where an individual is homeless but not in priority need they have a right to advice and assistance which may include support with a referral to services in their Home Area.
- 6.4 There will be people for whom reconnection is inappropriate and would not enable them to move off the streets and people who are unwilling to return. This is detailed further in section 7.
- 6.5 The responsibility of proof for demonstrating where local connection lies sits firmly with the Referring Authority, not the Receiving Authority. It is the responsibility of the Referring Authority to carry out all relevant checks and investigations in a thorough manner prior to any referral being made.

## **7 People for whom reconnection is inappropriate or unwilling to return**

- 7.1 The Reconnection Policy distinguishes between those who genuinely cannot and those who will not return to their Home Area.
- 7.2 It may not be considered reasonable to reconnect a rough sleeper if:
  - a) It is not safe for them to return to anywhere in their Home Area, because of a risk of violence or intimidation;
  - b) Where the person is considered too vulnerable to return to their identified Home Area. Such decisions will be made in consultation with lead professionals involved in the client's case;
  - c) Where there is an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) or similar in place preventing them from returning to their Home Area;
  - d) The person has been in the area for long enough to have built up strong connections with services but does not have a local connection. In these circumstances, districts can use their discretion to assist individuals and will consider each case on an individual case by case basis;

e) The person does not have a functional link to any area and no identifiable Home Area; and

f) There is no accommodation which can be provided in the Home Area.

7.3 It will be important to identify and agree outcomes for rough sleepers who refuse either to engage with the reconnection process or refuse to accept a referral. Where a rough sleeper has refused all offers of support to reconnect to their Home Area and has continued to rough sleep in the area after arrangements were made for them to return, the local authority will review whether it is appropriate to reconnect them with their Home Area or may choose to use local resources to accommodate the person.

7.4 There may be rough sleepers who repeatedly move from one area to another, not remaining anywhere long enough to sufficiently engage with services to access the support they need. Those with no functional links to any area and no identifiable Home Area and these individuals may be amongst the most vulnerable and present with complex multiple needs. It is recognised that this client group fall outside of the remit of reconnection. It is important to note here that the Herefordshire and Worcestershire local authorities are committed to ending rough sleeping and therefore would not leave people on the streets. Each case should be assessed taking into account individual circumstances and in line with the NSNO policy.

7.5 It is not the intention of this Reconnection Policy to restrict people's legitimate wish to move from one area to another. However, people who choose, without good reason, not to return to their Home Area presents a challenge. There may be local services with legitimate qualifying criteria that include an element of local connection. In such instances it will have to be determined at a local level what service to offer such individuals.

## **8 Implementation of the Reconnection Policy**

8.1 The intention is for a Herefordshire and a Worcestershire reconnection protocol to be developed. The Worcestershire reconnection protocol will clearly detail the individual districts approach to reconnection in accordance with this Reconnection Policy and the NSNO Standard which may become a policy in the future..

8.2 The reconnection protocols should clearly outline the actions to be taken to establish if reconnection is appropriate and how it should be achieved. The protocol should:

- Detail the role of the Referring Authority and Receiving Authority
- Carry out an assessment of the individual's housing and support needs and verification of assessment information in order to reconnect rapidly
- Identify if it is appropriate for the rough sleeper to be reconnected to their Home Area
- Obtain consent from the rough sleeper
- Notify the Receiving Authority/accommodation provider/support service to ensure that the accommodation and/or support services are available for the client in the Receiving Authority
- Facilitate work with support networks if applicable

- Agree arrangements to facilitate the reconnection
- Arrange and fund travel and any associated costs, as required
- Ensure reconnection is successful

8.3 The reconnection offer should be a clear, individual message that should be credible and realistic based on the assessment and inclusive of the support required to ensure that the individual will not sleep rough elsewhere. There are a number of types of reconnection and a tiered approach depending on the situation is considered to be the most appropriate. An example table of reconnection offers, based on a tiered approach, is provided in Appendix 1.

## **9 Partners**

9.1 The following partners have been involved in the development of this Reconnection Policy:

- Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils
- BDHT
- Festival Housing Group
- Herefordshire Council
- Malvern Hills District Council
- St. Paul's hostel
- Worcester City Council
- Wychavon District Council
- Wyre Forest Community Housing
- Wyre Forest District Council
- Worcester Community Housing
- West Mercia Probation
- West Mercia Police
- Worcestershire County Council, Directorate of Adult Services and Health (DASH)

- 9.2 The partners have adopted this Reconnection Policy, agreed to work in a co-ordinated way and to take a consistent approach to ensure that its principles are actively applied. A statement of commitment and signatories to this Reconnection Policy are provided in section 13.
- 9.3 It is expected that agencies contracted to deliver services and accommodation provision to rough sleepers will be clear and consistent in that reconnection will be discussed assertively with all people within the scope of this Reconnection Policy and that support will be given to facilitate reconnection.
- 9.4 Other partner agencies are encouraged to work in the spirit of this Reconnection Policy, not sustain and actively discourage rough sleeping and a street based lifestyle in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The following partners have formally endorsed and support this Reconnection Policy and actively apply the principles in their work with rough sleepers: St Paul's, Cab/WHABAC, YMCA.

## **10 Monitoring and evaluation of the Reconnection Policy**

- 10.1 Monitoring and evaluation of the Reconnection Policy will be the responsibility of the SASH Partnership Board and will include consideration of:
- a) Patterns of rough sleeping locally;
  - b) The number of rough sleepers for who reconnection is an available options;
  - c) The number of rough sleepers reconnected successfully;
  - d) The number of rough sleepers returning to Herefordshire and Worcestershire after re-connection;
  - e) The number of rough sleepers who refuse to engage with the reconnection process;
  - f) Costs of reconnection.

## **11 Review of the Reconnection Policy**

- 11.1 The Reconnection Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis (from adoption of the Reconnection Policy) by the SASH Partnership Board.

## **12 Definitions**

**Connection** may exist through a number of different ways and is established by:

- Residency in the area for six out of the last twelve months, or three out of the last five years, where residency has been out of choice; or
- Close family members (i.e. parent, sibling or in some cases adult children) who have themselves lived in the area for five years or more;
- Employment, other than that of a casual nature; or
- For another special reason (e.g. to receive specialist health care or for religious reasons).

**Home Area** is not necessarily the area or country where a person originates from but where they have most recently has sustained attachments to a local community. This could be an area or country where they have had stable accommodation, employment, where

they have been in receipt of benefits or where they have been engaged with health, probation, Children's Services or Adult Social Care.

**Referring Authority** is the local authority in the locality where a person presents as homeless.

**Receiving Authority** is the local authority of a person's Home Area with which they are being reconnected.

**Local connection** is where someone has a provable "connection" to a local area i.e. in Worcestershire this would be to one of the six district council areas, Bromsgrove, Malvern, Redditch, Worcester, Wychavon or Wyre Forest.

**Reconnection** is the process by which people sleeping rough in Herefordshire or Worcestershire, who have a connection to another area are supported to return to this area ("Home Area") in a planned way so that they can access appropriate accommodation and/or social, family and support networks according to their needs.

**Rough sleeper** is a person coming within the definition used in the DCLG document (September 2010) 'Evaluating the Extent of Rough Sleeping, a new approach':

"People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents (inappropriate use of tents), doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bushes")".

For the purposes of this Reconnection Policy, the definition also includes people in emergency accommodation provided by statutory or voluntary agencies who would come within the above definition if it were not for the provision of such temporary accommodation provided to prevent rough sleeping, hostel residents and day centre users.

### **13 Statement of Commitment and Signatories**

All signatories to this document commit to upholding the principles outlined within the Reconnection Policy and to seeking the best possible collective outcomes through reconnection for rough sleepers, where it is appropriate to do so.

All signatories commit to participating in and facilitating multi-agency training and awareness relevant to this Reconnection Policy, in order to increase the understanding of the terms of the Reconnection Policy and the role that different organisations and agencies have in delivering its aims.

Each signatory also commits to ensuring that its officers are aware of and understand the terms of the Reconnection Policy, including its aims, and will ensure that properly timely training is given to new officers.

This Reconnection Policy has been signed up to and agreed by the following local authorities:



<p>Signed by:</p> <p>Print Name:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>On Behalf of Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Council</p>	<p>Signed by:</p> <p>Print Name:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>On Behalf of Herefordshire Council</p>
<p>Signed by:</p> <p>Print Name:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>On Behalf of Malvern Hills District Council</p>	<p>Signed by:</p> <p>Print Name:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>On Behalf of Worcester City Council</p>
<p>Signed by:</p> <p>Print Name:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>On Behalf of Worcestershire County Council, Directorate of Adult Services and Health (DASH)</p>	<p>Signed by:</p> <p>Print Name:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>On Behalf of Wychavon District Council</p>
<p>Signed by:</p> <p>Print Name:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>On Behalf of Wyre Forest Council</p>	<p>Signed by:</p> <p>Print Name:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>On Behalf of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust</p>

Signed by:	Signed by:
Print Name:	Print Name:
Date:	Date:
On Behalf of Festival Housing Group	On Behalf of Wyre Forest Community Housing

DRAFT

## Appendix 1: Example table of reconnection offers

Group	Situation	Potential Reconnection Offer
<b>UK National, low to no support needs, identified local connection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person has left their Home Area without thinking through the consequences.</li> <li>• There is no vulnerability and on reflection the person realises they have made a mistake leaving their Home Area with insufficient planning/resources and now wish to urgently return there.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If necessary provide means of transport to Home Area.</li> <li>• Referral for social housing or to Private Rented Sector scheme in the Home Area.</li> <li>• Support to reconnect with family and friends.</li> <li>• The above will be made available resources permitting</li> </ul>
<b>UK National, low to medium support needs, possible to identify a connection to a local authority area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person who is observed and confirmed to be new to the streets and is verified as having slept rough.</li> <li>• Someone who is likely to require a needs assessment in order to establish if reconnection is appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSNO emergency accommodation space while undertaking assessment to establish if reconnection is appropriate.</li> <li>• Support to access emergency accommodation in area where connection is.</li> <li>• If reconnecting to an area where no pathway to support access to emergency accommodation exists, phone LA Housing Options prior to presentation.</li> <li>• The above will be made available resources permitting</li> </ul>
<b>UK National, medium to high support needs, has local connection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rough sleeper, new to area and with high levels of vulnerability.</li> <li>• A person who presents with such apparent level of need that an extended period of assessment is deemed necessary. This will be made available for a 28 day period only. This may be for a variety of reasons, including complex needs and high levels of vulnerability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodation provision with support.</li> <li>• Support into appropriate services for a 28 day period only.</li> </ul>
<b>UK National who wishes to be reconnected</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person who having been housed in emergency or temporary accommodation, comes to realise there may be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiate for return to Home Area.</li> <li>• Support to access accommodation that may</li> </ul>

<p><b>to their home area</b></p>	<p>greater opportunity to find then stable accommodation in their Home Area or a person who wishes to either re-establish links with or return to their family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Someone who is accommodated close to where they previously slept rough may decide that it is desirable to move away to leave behind connections to their street based lifestyle. This may particularly be the case for those who have experienced difficulties with substance misuse.</li> </ul>	<p>have been lost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support to reconnect with family and friends.</li> <li>Mediation</li> <li>Identify support and services in Home Area.</li> </ul>
<p><b>UK National, where difficult to establish a local connection</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No connection to any other area.</li> <li>Long term entrenched rough sleepers.</li> <li>Highly transient, regularly moving from one area to another.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reconnection response as such clients may fall outside the sphere of reconnection. However, it may be about working with clients to agree what area they have connections to so that they are most likely to be successful in moving away from rough sleeping. This could be outside local connection as defined by homelessness legislation but take into account contact with services, employment or connections with supportive family or friends.</li> <li>Accommodation with friends or family</li> <li>Hostel accommodation that doesn't require local connection, as close to where a connection is.</li> <li>Private Rented Sector.</li> <li>Tied accommodation with employment.</li> <li>Any other type of accommodation</li> </ul>
<p><b>European Economic Area (EEA) Nationals</b></p>	<p><b>Low to no support needs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newly arrived in the UK as part of a 'scam'.</li> <li>Been in the UK for only a short</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If EEA nationals have recently arrived in the UK and become a rough sleeper than the first offer should be</li> </ul>

**(excluding A2 countries as Bulgarians and Romanian Nationals have certain restrictions)**

time.

- Recently lost work.
- No dependency issues.
- Support at home.
- Should be able to manage their own return if ticket is provided.

**Medium support needs:**

- Been in the UK for a while
- Entrenched rough sleeping
- Alcohol and substance misuse issues.
- Poor health needs.
- Little support at home.
- Should be able to manage their own return if ticket purchases and accompanied to transport.

**High support needs:**

- Been in the UK for along time
- Entrenched rough sleepers
- Alcohol/substance misuse issues
- Serious health needs
- No support at home
- Require more assistance to prepare for the journey and to access appropriate support back home

reconnection back to the home country or a country where they have support and accommodation available.

- Length of time in UK and entitlement will influence whether an offer within the UK is made.
- Low support needs: Ticket only reconnection check and assist with replacement documents as necessary and identify means to purchase.
- If the person has friends and family (in the UK or in another EU country) they should be encouraged to make contact and if they do not have housing or support then the offer must include finding accommodation and referral to support.
- If low support needs and in receipt of benefits then PRS may be the offer.
- If the person is in receipt of welfare benefits, then the course of action may follow as with a UK National depending on need, to ascertain a connection to an area and refer people to a local service.
- Medium support needs: Assisted reconnection – contact supporting services, family, check and assist with replacement documents, identify means of purchase, accompany client to transport.
- High support needs: Supported reconnection – contact supporting services/family, check and assist with replacement documents, purchase ticket

		and accompany client throughout journey.
<b>A2 Nationals (Romanian and Bulgarian)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A2 nationals cannot access benefits whilst looking for work (but can receive in-work benefits) and are only permitted to work in certain circumstances. A2 nationals seeing work cannot access benefits unless they have been working legally without interruption for 12 months.</li> <li>• Low to high support needs, as above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If an A2 national becomes homeless and is not in work or recently in work, a reconnection offer (as above) is the most realistic option to ensure they are not rough sleeping. This could be to an area where they have family or connections as well as the home country.</li> <li>• If in work or have worked legally without interruption for 12 months, then offers can include PRS or support to access supported accommodation depending on support needs and connection to an area.</li> </ul>
<b>Refugees, failed asylum seekers, irregular migrants, over stayers</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once information such as status has been confirmed with UKBA/Voluntary sector refugee support agencies/solicitors a judgement on the offer needs to be made Failed asylum seekers may be able to receive short-term support while they are waiting to return to their country of origin (Section 4, 'hard case', support under the terms of section 4 of the National Immigration and Asylum Act 1999) or if they are seeking to reopen their asylum case or are unable to travel for medical reasons</li> </ul>



## **West Midlands Reconnection Protocol For New Rough Sleepers**

**Agreed by West Midlands Homelessness Forum (Date)**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Rough Sleeping is continuing to rise (2013) and whilst most new rough sleepers do not move far from their local area there is some migration between areas and into the bigger urban centres.
- 1.2 Wherever someone is rough sleeping there is a very real risk that even short term rough sleeping, resulting from an immediate loss of accommodation, can lead to someone falling into a longer term pattern of “entrenched” rough sleeping.
- 1.3 Becoming an entrenched rough sleeper is severely damaging to the individual, often resulting both in a significant decline in their physical and/or mental health and in their developing complex needs well beyond just that of housing.
- 1.4 The most effective way of preventing an individuals experience of new rough sleeping from developing into a prolonged pattern of “entrenched” rough sleeping is a rapid, robust and comprehensive intervention that results in their immediate short term accommodation and their being assisted with their re-establishing themselves in longer term stable accommodation. As a region we have been working towards implementing No Second Night Out across as many areas as possible and this protocol supports that activity.
- 1.5 Individuals are most likely to rapidly re-establish themselves in stable accommodation in the area with which they are most familiar and have the greatest social ties or networks e.g. the area in which they wield the greatest social capital. For the purposes of this protocol we shall term this their “home area”.

### **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of this protocol is to set out a cross authority framework to facilitate the rapid linking back for the small number of newly homeless rough sleepers who migrate across local authority borders to services in their home area.
- 2.3 There are a number of key issues the protocol addresses, these are:
  - (i) What defines where someone’s home area is, i.e. the community to which they are to be reconnected back to.
  - (ii) A common response to people who can’t or don’t want to return to their home area.

- (iii) Agreeing how provision is made for people who have no apparent links to any community and no discernable home area to which they can be reconnected.

### **3. People Who Don't Want Or Can't Return To Their Home Area**

- 3.1 Sometimes new rough sleepers are unwilling or claim to be unable to return to their home area.
- 3.2 The protocol distinguishes between those who genuinely can't and those who won't return to their home areas.
- 3.3 There will be people for whom reconnection is inappropriate and would not enable them to move off the streets. This could include people with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) preventing them from returning to specific areas, people who will be at risk if they return or those with no meaningful connection to any area. It is important to identify and agree the outcomes for clients who refuse either to engage with the reconnection process or refuse to accept a referral. In these instances services should be offered locally as part of a local strategy to tackle rough sleeping.
- 3.4 While people who choose, without good reason, not to return to their home area present us with a very real challenge, it is not the intention of this protocol to restrict people's legitimate wish to move from one area to another.
- 3.5 Although people are at liberty to move from one area to another, it does not follow that when they experience difficulties that they are similarly at liberty to access a service wherever they choose. Many local services have legitimate qualifying criteria that often include an element of local connection.
- 3.6 From this it follows that while an individual is at liberty, utilising their own resources, to move from one area to another, they may also legitimately find themselves not qualifying for services in that area until they have established some measure of residency.
- 3.7 In such instances it will have to be determined at local level what service to offer such individuals.

### **4. Services To Those With No Local Connections**

- 4.1 There are a small minority of clients who present to services who have no functional links to any area and no identifiable home area.
- 4.2 These clients are often among the most vulnerable and present with complex multiple needs. They often lead a nomadic existence, repeatedly moving from one area to another, not remaining anywhere long enough to sufficiently engage with services to access the support they need. Often they are too chaotic or marginalised to even make or maintain benefit claims.
- 4.3 Such clients rarely engage with services in a meaningful manner, as such on the occasions that they do engage with services it is essential that they receive a rapid and comprehensive response to fully exploit their engagement. Assessing their suitability for reconnection may well result in a delay in their accessing services and prompt their disengagement, as such any such assessment would be undesirable. It is also likely to be fruitless.
- 4.5 This protocol recognises the existence of this client group and that they fall outside of the remit of reconnection. It further recognises the need to provide for the planning and resourcing of services to address their needs. This might include developing personalisation and personal budget options.



## 5. Definitions

- 5.1 Home area is not necessarily where a person originates from, but where they have most recently had sustained attachments to a local community.
- 5.2 It is not practical to establish a tight definition for what constitutes the area to which someone has most recently had a sustained attachment, establishing this requires an element of judgement.
- 5.3 The key criteria in making this judgement are identifying where they have had:
- Stable accommodation or employment,
  - Where they have been claiming benefits, or
  - Where they have been engaged with health, probationary or social services.
- 5.4 The local authority in the locality where a person presents homeless, is the **identifying authority**
- 5.5 The local authority of a person's home area, with which they are to be reconnected, is the **reception authority**

## 6. A Tiered Approach

- 6.1 Five tiers of reconnection clients are identified:

▪ **Tier One – low to no support needs**

A person has left their home area without thinking through the consequences. There is no vulnerability and on reflection the person realises they have made a mistake leaving their home area with insufficient planning/resources and now wish to urgently return there.

▪ **Tier Two – low to medium support needs**

A person who is observed and confirmed to be new to the streets and is verified as having slept rough. Someone who is likely to require a formal needs assessment in order to establish if relocation assistance is appropriate.

▪ **Tier Three – medium to high support needs**

A person who presents with such an apparent level of need that an extended period of assessment is deemed necessary. This may be for a variety of reasons, including complex needs and high levels of vulnerability.

▪ **Tier Four – clients who latently wish to be reconnected to their home area**

A person who having been housed in temporary accommodation, typically a hostel, comes to realise there may be greater opportunity for them to find stable accommodation in their home area or a person who wishes to either re-establish links with or return to their family.

Or someone who is accommodated close to where they previously slept rough, may, once they have re-established a degree of personal stability decide that it is desirable to move away to leave behind their connections to street culture. This is especially the case for those who have experienced difficulties with substance abuse.

▪ **Tier Five – clients who are outside the scope of reconnection**

A person who on completion of the initial needs assessment it is established they have high levels of vulnerability but no connection to any other area, where services could be accessed to meet their needs. Broadly speaking this tier encompasses two groups of clients long term entrenched rough sleepers and those clients that are homeless and highly transient, regularly moving from one area to another. Both these groups are characterised by their regularly

presenting with a multiplicity of need beyond just housing but with an unwillingness to engage with services to address their needs. This makes it particularly important that when these clients do present as willing to engage with services that they receive an immediate response that fully exploits what may be only a tentative engagement.

As such these clients are outside the scope of the reconnection process and their needs need to be met by the services in the area where they present. By the very nature of this client group we would envisage this tier of clients will be relatively small in number but will make high demands on services.

6.2 It is expected that the majority of individuals will fall into Tiers one and two with a marked decline in the number of those falling into the other tiers. Monitoring should measure the frequency and success or otherwise for the reconnection of clients from each tier. By adopting this tier model, planning and strategy tools become available to assist operational teams.

6.3 Having identified these five tiers of reconnection clients, the protocol is defined by describing the response of both the identifying and reception authorities in relation to clients who fall within each of these tiers.

## 7. Response of The Identifying Authority

7.1 The Identifying Authority will respond to presenting clients in each of the five tiers as detailed below:

### ▪ **Tier One**

Offer **Immediate** assistance is given to return to their home area, if necessary providing means of transport, i.e. a coach ticket. No further access to services is required or offered. There is no requirement to contact services in their home area to inform them of the intervention or that the person is returning.

### ▪ **Tier Two**

Resources permitting, immediate short term accommodation **of up to 7 nights** is offered in a setting that allows key workers to carry out an assessment with the person of their needs etc. The person has to affirm their preparedness to engage in this process and to accept the outcome. Contact with service providers in the returning area will be made along with confirmation that temporary accommodation and assessment of need will be available on the person's return.

### ▪ **Tier Three**

An extended period of assessment is offered. Target for completion of assessment is no longer than **28 days**. At the end of this process a decision is taken based on the outcome of a NLA and a thorough consideration of all suitable service and accommodation options including reconnection. The recommendations of the NLA are implemented. If reconnection is to be implemented it is essential that full negotiations have taken place with the service providers in the receiving LA.

### ▪ **Tier Four**

Once someone in temporary accommodation identifies as wishing to be reconnected back to their home area, the identifying authority shall contact the receiving LA and negotiate for their return to their home area. If possible this should entail a move to more permanent accommodation. While it will sometimes be relatively straight forward to reconnect someone with and facilitate their return to their nuclear family, it can also be extremely delicate and demand very skilled and time consuming mediation. It may also not present as a possibility

until other interventions have been completed, such as interventions for substance misuse and mental health.

- **Tier Five**

Having established that a client falls within tier 5 and that reconnection is inappropriate the identifying authority will offer a full assessment to establish the extent of the client's needs and formulate an action plan to address these needs.

## 8. Response of the Receiving Authority

- 8.1 It is recognised that the broad acceptance and adoption of this protocol will be dependent on it being possible to adopt it within the constraints of local authorities current duties and resources.
- 8.2 Key to the success of this protocol is a consistent approach across the Local Authorities of good quality housing advice to those who are not in priority housing need, in line with all authorities' duty to provide advice and support to this group.
- 8.3 To successfully reconnect people back to their home areas there needs to be an identifiable and responsive agency there for them to reconnect with. To ensure this all Local Authorities will need to commit to the following three action points. (For those areas covered by outreach services funded by Partnership Prevention Funding this can be partly discharged by the relevant provider e.g. in Central West Midlands and Warwickshire by Midland Heart)
- 1) To identify a specified officer/post to take the lead in co-ordinating the borough's discharging of its duty to advise and assist those who present as homeless but not in priority housing need. The officer in this post should either act as a point of contact or designate another officer/post to be the point of contact for other boroughs or agencies assisting those, who are eligible, who wish to be reconnected back to the borough.
  - 2) To recognise that to credibly discharge their duty to advise and assist those not in priority housing, they have to demonstrate the success of the assistance they provide in resulting in a positive outcome for the person being assisted. As such they need to monitor these outcomes and share the resultant monitoring.
  - 3) To recognise that achieving a positive outcome often requires a degree of case work rather than a one off intervention and to identify the service in the borough they expect those not in priority housing need to access for such support.
- 8.4 Taken together these three action points would better ensure the greater consistency of provision of housing advice and support across all the West Midlands Authorities and help to reduce or prevent prolonged homelessness for those who are homeless/insecurely housed but not in priority need and reduce the risk of their becoming entrenched rough sleepers.
- 8.5 Detailed below are the expected responses of the reception authority to clients from within each of the previously defined 'relocation tiers'. Tier five is omitted as these clients are outside the sphere of relocation.
- **Tier One**  
To have in place, clearly signposted and readily accessible services to advise and assist this client group with accessing accommodation. To monitor the efficacy of these services to ensure its effectiveness. To identify an officer or post to act as a single point for both client's seeking to be, or agencies assisting client's who wish to be re-connected back to their home area in the borough.
  - **Tier Two**  
To recognise that even if these client's are not in priority housing need, having slept rough, they are at enhanced risk of doing so again, so may need a greater level of support and case working to prevent their sleeping rough again. To respond constructively to any approach from the identifying authority to participate in formulating an action plan for the re-connection of these clients's back to their home area and where the identifying authority has managed to

temporarily accommodate these clients, to seek to have accommodation in place in their home area for them to return to.

- **Tier Three**

To respond urgently to an approach from the identifying authority to participate in the client's NLA, so that this can be completed within the target 28 days. Where appropriate, to assist with convening a full, jointly held, case conference, as early as possible in the 28 day assessment period to ensure a timely completion of the assessment. To have services and accommodation in place for the client to return to and in collaboration with the identifying authority to manage their return.

- **Tier Four**

To respond constructively to an approach from the identifying borough and to participate in action planning for the client's return to their home area, despite they're currently being housed outside the borough. To signpost the returning client to local community services and resources that might support them with re-establishing themselves in that community.

## 10. **Protocol Summary**

Please see below:

<b>TIER</b>	<b>IDENTIFYING AUTHORITY'S RESPONSE</b>	<b>RECEIVING AUTHORITY'S RESPONSE</b>
<p><b>One</b> No vulnerability assessed and person recognises that they have made a mistake in leaving their home area with insufficient planning/resources and wish to return.</p>	<p>Facilitate return with immediate effect, providing means of transport if necessary. No requirement to negotiate with LA at returning location.</p>	<p>To have in place, clearly signposted and readily accessible services to advise and assist this group with accessing accommodation and an identified officer to act as a single point of contact for those seeking re-connection.</p>
<p><b>Two</b> Person verified rough sleeper, new to the streets, with no local connection to where they are sleeping rough.</p>	<p>Following triage, offer a time limited (7 days max) full NLA (needs led assessment). The person is expected prior to abide with the outcome and action plan resulting from this.</p>	<p>To respond constructively to any approach from the identifying authority to participate in formulating an action plan for the reconnection of these clients back to their home area.</p>
<p><b>Three</b> Rough sleeper, new to area, with high levels of vulnerability. Target for completion of NLA assessment is no longer than <b>28 days</b></p>	<p>To offer a full NLA, aim for completion within 28 days. Before reconnection it is essential that full negotiations have taken place with the service providers in the receiving LA</p>	<p>To respond urgently to an approach from the identifying authority to participate in the client's NLA, and in collaboration with the identifying borough facilitate a planned return to services and accommodation.</p>
<p><b>Four</b> Even though the initial NLA led to a move to a hostel placement and or treatment following constant case reviews the potential and the desirability of reconnection should continue to be explored.</p>	<p>To negotiate with the receiving LA and relevant local services, if possible, should entail a move to more permanent accommodation if a move to another hostel is inappropriate.</p>	<p>To respond constructively to any approach from the identifying borough. To participate in action planning for the client's return to their home area, despite their currently being housed outside the borough</p>
<p><b>Five</b> Initial NLA indicates high levels of vulnerability, but no demonstrable connection to any local area or engagement with other services.</p>	<p>Full Needs Led Assessment by the service the client has presented to, leading to formulation of a care plan delivered by that service, if necessary in partnership with other</p>	<p>No response required – such clients fall outside the sphere of re-connection.</p>