

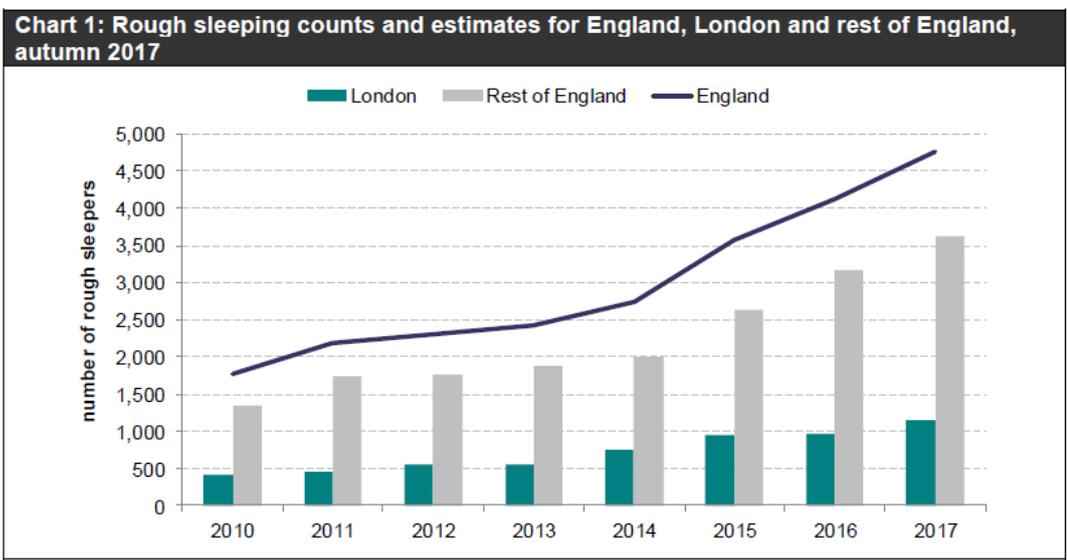
1 Purpose

This document provides recommendations on how to assist people presenting as street homeless at stations. With homelessness rising, the purpose of this Guidance Note is to provide practical support to employees at stations so that our teams are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to aid our customers and local communities while carrying out the daily duties required in a busy operational environment. Each station will have its own policy as to how and when rough sleepers will be asked to leave the premises and how this situation should be best handled; this document deals instead with the ways in which we can best support individuals in these situations as part of Network Rail’s commitment to social responsibility.

2 Background

Local authorities have a duty to try to help people who end up on the streets. In order to meet this duty, many councils commission charities to undertake outreach and contact people directly on the streets. Outreach teams will meet people where they sleep, offer advice and help get them into accommodation. These teams operate in all weather and work with both individuals who are new to the streets or have been street homeless for some time. There are a number of ways that railway colleagues can work with local authorities and charities to offer support to those in need.

During the cold weather between 26 February and 11 March 2018, the public made 11,335 referrals with the word ‘station’ in the location description via the homelessness referral service [StreetLink](#). 1,062 referrals mentioned ‘train,’ and ‘Kings Cross Station’ and ‘Euston Station’ were included in descriptions 765 times. With train stations at the heart of communities, they can be a place of safety and comfort for vulnerable members of the community as well as providing passengers with the opportunity to travel or enjoy entertainment and retail. By maintaining our focus on security and customer service and taking the right action to aid everyone at our stations, we can safeguard those requiring extra assistance while making rail a great experience for our passengers.



Street homelessness across England has increased by 169% since 2010, with an average of 4,571 people sleeping rough per night. Research suggests the number of people sleeping rough is likely to quadruple by 2018. Sources: Department for Communities and Government, 2018 and [Crisis](#).

3 How to recognise and approach those requiring assistance

It can be difficult to juggle the many tasks that need to be undertaken at a station, with a focus on customer service and security vital in a busy environment. Thinking about how to spot someone in need and take action in an appropriate way will help to provide the right service to our station users and local community while balancing other operational requirements. It is recommended that each station has its own vulnerable person strategy in collaboration with the British Transport Police, which sets out a code of conduct and processes for teams to interact with the variety of individuals who may present as vulnerable.

- If you are really worried about someone's health – if they are not responsive, or they look very unwell – call 999 for an ambulance;
- Treat everyone as an individual with individual needs – for example, not all people who beg sleep rough, and not all people who sleep rough beg;
- Everyone has the right to travel – even if someone shows signs of being street homeless, they could still have ticket and should be advised to use this or signposted elsewhere as appropriate;
- Communicate clearly and calmly – remember that body language is even more important than what you are saying – and listen to the person you are interacting with. Repeat yourself if required and give the person time to understand;
- Each situation is different and should be considered on a case-by-case basis. One-off or repeated unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated, however if an individual is not showing signs of inappropriate behaviour, the weather is particularly cold or wet and the station is not busy (for example, it is late at night), station management teams may wish to exercise suitable discretion;
- If the person does not wish to communicate and their behaviour gives cause for concern, escalate the situation to your local British Transport Police team.

4 Begging and anti-social behaviour

Network Rail has a zero tolerance policy around begging at stations; however there are ways to address this while considering the impact on the individual.

- If you see someone begging and feel it is safe to do so, it is recommended you seek information from them as to the support they may require. This will allow you to direct them away from begging at the station but towards an appropriate service such as a day centre or outreach team for assistance;
- If the person's behaviour continues to cause concern and you feel distressed by the situation, contact the British Transport Police at your station or call 999;
- Reporting anti-social behaviour by calling 101 may not achieve a result as quickly, but it will let the police know that you have ongoing problems;
- Network Rail's stations are private property and members of the public have an implied permission to enter – if the problem persists, the British Transport Police can provide guidance around options for withdrawal of implied permission.

5 Other ways to support vulnerable people at stations

We do not encourage rough sleeping at our stations, however we do want to support individuals where possible. It is important to remember that stations are not expected to run large scale events or use lots of extra resource on additional activities. The below examples may however be adapted not only for a positive social impact in your area, but to help address operational issues you may experience and to engage and motivate your teams in a way that best suits you.

- Display the relevant materials (for example leaflets, posters and contact cards) for all employees working at the station, not just Network Rail staff;
- Arrange training for staff with a focus on vulnerable people through charities such as The Railway Children and their [Safeguarding on Transport](#) programme;
- Ensure all members of staff have seen the rail industry suicide prevention briefing videos and are issued with the suicide prevention 'tactics' card – both available on the [Learning Tool website](#);
- Offer the Samaritans Suicide Prevention training course 'Managing Suicidal Contacts' to all staff – courses can be booked free of charge by emailing railcompanies@samaritans.org;
- Find out more about [Secure Stations Accreditation](#), a scheme all Network Rail stations are committed to achieving with the aim of both reducing crime and safeguarding vulnerable passengers;
- Use volunteer leave to support a local homeless charity – for example, help refurbish or run an employability session at a local day centre;
- Consider how you can use your station space to support the homeless community, from running a large scale event like that held at Euston on Christmas Day 2017, to taking clothing donations from customers on the concourse or running a food bank in the station car park. Other options may include: offering void retail space to a local homeless charity for an outreach service or charity shop, holding coffee mornings for their clients, or creating a Big Issue seller's pitch on the concourse.

Case study – Christmas lunch, Euston station

On Christmas Day 2017, Network Rail hosted a lunch for the homeless in Euston station, with 45 volunteers across the company helping to make the day a success.

Network Rail employees partnered up with homeless charity St. Mungo's, grassroots group Streets Kitchen, British Transport Police and other local businesses and charities to serve a four-course lunch, donate presents, warm clothing and chocolate, as well as Christmas cards.

On top of this, volunteers from Streetvet, an organisation which provides homeless pet owners with free veterinary treatment, were on hand to give dogs health checks.

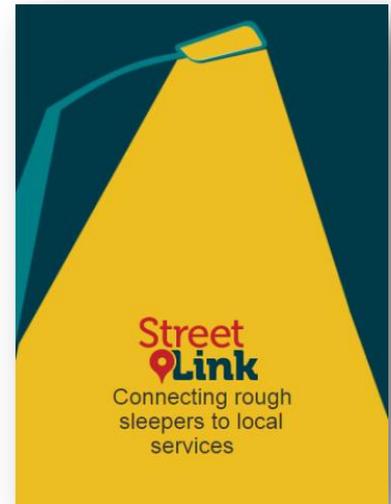
A separate event operations plan should be considered for larger scale events detailing how assets will be used and protected and the control measures for keeping guests safe.

A communications plan should also be in place to accommodate the related interest likely to be shown by the media and public.

6 Useful contacts and materials

StreetLink (England and Wales)

If you know that an individual is sleeping rough then the best way for you to help is to make a referral to StreetLink. StreetLink is operated in England and Wales by St Mungo's and HomelessLink and helps the public connect people they see rough sleeping with local support services. The easiest way to make a StreetLink referral is to download the app, however reports can also be made online at www.streetlink.org.uk or by calling 0300 500 0914. Under new General Data Protection regulations (GDPR), you will need to register with the service online before making a referral, which only takes a few minutes. When making a referral, remember to include the location a person is sleeping, what times they are seen and a good description.



Services in Scotland

Streetwork have dedicated outreach teams who offer immediate support or advice to rough sleepers. The headquarters, in Holyrood, Edinburgh, provides drop-in sessions, support and basic amenities. For urgent help, call Streetwork on 0808 1782323 or email the team at mail@streetwork.org.uk. If you see a rough sleeper in Glasgow, the Simon Community Rough Sleepers and Vulnerable People Service (RSVP) should be able to assist. RSVP also have a street team that work across Glasgow City to support rough sleepers up until 23:00; after this time they can be contacted via the Freephone number 0800 027 7466 or an online form available [here](#).

Day Centres

You can find local day centres at <http://www.homeless.org.uk/search-homelessness-services>. Enter your town/city or postcode and select 'Day Centre' from the drop down filter. Please only direct people if you are confident that the day centres offer what the individual is seeking; this information can be found on the above website.

Winter Shelters

When temperatures are projected to fall to zero or below for three or more days, Local Authorities activate Severe Weather Emergency Protocols (SWEP). Outreach teams undertake extra shifts to ensure that they meet as many people as possible in order to offer them a SWEP bed. Temporary Winter shelters also open up to provide respite from the cold. These services vary hugely but usually provide at least warmth and food, although capacities are limited and finding them can be tricky. To find these you can contact your local council or visit their website and search for 'homeless services' to check whether there are any winter services in your area.

Shelter: 0808 800 4444

Samaritans: 116 123

British Transport Police: Call 0800 40 50 40 or text 61016

In an emergency call 999

Further information can be found in the Assisting Vulnerable Passengers Guidance document, which will be available on the Stations Hub soon.

7 Example activities and volunteering

Volunteering is an effective way to be a caring neighbour and create engaged employees. Some suggested opportunities for supporting your local homeless community are below:

Help with **decorating or gardening** at a day centre or service

Run a **CV and interview** skills workshop to help people back into work

Sort stock at a **food bank**

Hold a **bucket collection** with your team at your station

Offer your skills in **administration or social media** to a homeless charity

Organise an event at your station to support clients of your local Charity of Choice

Network Rail employees: You are entitled to up to 5 days volunteer leave. This can be taken for any UK registered charity or one of the three types of community engagement activity:

(i) Community Safety, (ii) Early Engagement or (iii) Community Rail. For more details, visit

<http://connect/volunteering>.

To view all environment and social KPIs and how they are to be reported, please refer to the *KPI Guidance Note NR/GN/ESD22*.