

Advice and guidance for partners

September 2020

To help people sleeping rough:

Crisis doesn't offer emergency accommodation so if you see someone rough sleeping, we advise the following:

- **For England and Wales**, contact [StreetLink](#). They will try to locate people who are rough sleeping, who will arrange for an 'outreach' worker to come and find them and refer them to local services in England and Wales. You can do this on StreetLink's [website](#), the [app](#), or by calling 0300 500 0914. Always giving specific details about the individual and any risk factors (eg under 25; female; looks unwell; lacks bedding).
- **For Scotland**, contact [the Simon Community](#).
- In an emergency, where there is an immediate risk of significant harm, you should call 999. If you are seriously concerned about an individual but there is no immediate risk, you can call 101 and ask police to attend to undertake a welfare check. This may lead to enforcement measures being used.

Giving people information

You may wish to give people information directly, such as:

- suggesting they approach their local authority housing options team. If you're not sure who your local council is, you can search for them on [this website](#). You might want to phone or check the council's website so that you direct your question to the correct department. Under the Homelessness Reduction Act, local councils have a duty to provide advice and assistance to people who are homeless or about to become homeless, whatever your immigration status. This may not be immediate accommodation, but they will now receive some form of help. This will be 'Prevention duty' for someone threatened with homelessness within 56 days or 'Relief duty' for someone who is already homeless.
- call or visit their local Crisis Skylight centre, if there is one in the area. Crisis has Skylight centres in 9 areas in England (Central London, Brent, Croydon, Merseyside, Oxford, South Yorkshire, Coventry & Warwickshire, Newcastle and Birmingham), as well as 1 in Edinburgh and 1 in Swansea. [Visit our website to find out where our Skylight centres are.](#)

The [London Housing Foundation Atlas](#) has a database of homelessness services in London: if you see someone sleeping rough or begging, you can make a referral directly to some of these services.

[Homeless Link](#) also runs a database of homeless services. You can search for services in your area on their website. This includes local night shelters, day centres, and health services, some of whom may accept direct referrals. Your local authority may also be able to provide information on these services.

Some people may find it difficult to take in detailed information and may feel their needs won't be met by services because of past experiences. They may express frustration and distress in these circumstances. Always ask if someone would find it useful for you to offer

information and ensure you are comfortable and safe before doing so, especially if you may be spending some time searching for information on your phone.

Should I give money to rough sleepers?

It is a personal choice whether you want to give someone a little bit of change. People experiencing homelessness often tell us that isolation, and that feeling of being invisible, is one of the harshest parts of being on the street.

Stopping for a chat with someone who is begging or rough sleeping may be the only contact they have that day. If you feel like you want to give someone change for a cup of tea or something to eat, then make the decision that feels right to you. You should always ask them what they want to eat or drink before purchasing something for them, to make sure it's right for them.

If you do decide to give some money, you should always consider whether this is the most effective means of supporting this individual, and whether there are other ways you can support them instead (such as giving them information), or as well as giving cash.

To help people at risk of homelessness

If you are worried about someone's housing situation, direct them towards Shelter's free Housing Advice Helpline on 0808 800 4444. If the person is young you can find advice on the Centrepont website or 0808 800 0661.

You may need another type of help from a specialist organisation. We have listed some here for you:

- Whatever you're going through, [The Samaritans](#) can offer emotional support. Their free and confidential helpline is always open on 116 123.
- The [Money Advice Service](#) give free and impartial advice on debt and benefits.
- The [National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#) is a national service for women experiencing domestic violence. The helpline is free and open 24 hours a day on 0800 2000 247.
- Men experiencing domestic violence can contact [Men's Advice Line](#) on 0808 801 0327 between 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.
- [Migrant Help](#) provides confidential and impartial advice and guidance to adult asylum seekers and their dependants throughout the UK in many different languages. Call 0808 8000 630 (free from BT and the seven major mobile networks).
- [Missing People](#) is there for people who run away and go missing in the UK. Their free and confidential helpline is on 116 000. It is open 24-hours a day.
- If you are under 25, [The Mix](#) run a free helpline (0808 808 4994) which is open from 11am to 11pm every day.