



Inclement Weather Plan: Rough sleepers 2018-19

A network of support provided by:
Housing Advice Centre
Supporting People
Caerphilly Borough Mind
Cornerstone Support Services Ltd
Rev. Phillips and associated churches
Phoenix Centre GDAS
Street Pastors
StreetLink- the Wallich
Shelter Cymru Helpline

Background

For several years there has been funding support from Welsh Government to enable local authorities to take positive action to provide shelter for rough sleepers during periods of extreme winter cold weather. There has been an increase in people rough sleeping across Wales in recent years and alongside the Rough Sleeper Action Plan (2018) and additional financial assistance from the government, local authorities in Wales are tasked with focussing and implementing programmes of intervention, help and support.

Rather than focus solely on a 'cold weather' response, we need to be able to respond to any extreme or inclement weather and put measures in place to properly assist this client group wherever possible. This plan has been updated to reflect the need to respond to any inclement weather and the implications for rough sleepers and those on the streets in our area.

Who are rough sleepers?

People who find themselves threatened with or are actually homeless are not automatically owed a duty of housing assistance under the homeless legislation in Wales. Many people in these circumstances 'sofa surf' with friends and family or may resort to sleeping rough. During the winter period this is a particularly difficult time and the **Caerphilly Borough Churches Night Shelter Charity** has been developed to assist those affected in this way. Inclement weather may affect those living on the streets through excessive heat, such as was experienced during the summer of 2018.

This plan covers two specific areas of assistance for rough sleepers: the Night Shelter provision (a fixed 3 month period and traditionally called the cold weather plan) and a demand led response to assistance in other periods of inclement weather (throughout the year). The plan details 5 different methods Caerphilly County Borough Council have to offer to address inclement weather.

**Caerphilly Borough Churches Night Shelter
January 2018 - March 2019**

How to access the Night Shelter

Contact the Housing Advice Centre, William Street, Gilfach (telephone numbers below). We insist that all referrals are made before 3pm (Monday to Friday) to allow for officers to make the necessary checks and ensure there is accommodation space within the project. The night shelter is not a direct access facility.

Rev. Phillips has developed a network of church partnerships and trained volunteers to receive referred clients. Church Night Shelter venues are located in various areas around the borough and due to the geographical spread; Cornerstone Support Services will look to assist whenever possible with transportation to some venues.

Bedding and toiletries, a hot evening meal, breakfast and a packed lunch will be provided by the volunteers. Transport will again be arranged for the following night if needed. The volunteers are provided with support needs awareness training to assist with the recognition of issues where further help and support from professionals may be advantageous.

Who can make a referral?

The client needing to access the night shelter should make their own request because we will need to have some personal details to do a risk assessment. We will consult colleagues in our own service area and occasionally external agencies to ensure the Night Shelter is the right option for the client.

When can the Night Shelter be accessed?

Night Shelter is available every night from December through to the end of March 2019. Once accepted to attend the Night Shelter, the service user will be able to attend every

night throughout the duration i.e. every night until the end of the project in March 2019. Whilst the Night Shelter is open every night including weekends; new referrals cannot be received out of hours or on weekends.

Wider support is available

To help ensure that the rough sleeper is assisted to maximise their housing solutions, Supporting People fund Cornerstone Support Services and Caerphilly Borough Mind to

- Ensure that any support needs are identified and with the consent of the client, referrals made to specialists providers via the Supporting People Gateway.
- Provide advice and assistance with accessing accommodation such as through support and accompaniment to lettings agencies and private landlord meetings, practical help with funding applications, benefit claims and employment support.
- Collect information on rough sleeping to ensure we have the best possible understanding of the nature of rough sleeping in our area.
- Provide specific support around mental health whilst at Night Shelter and can continue when accommodation is found.
- Access alternative emergency accommodation during periods when Night Shelter spaces are unavailable.

Referral Contact details:

Housing Advice Centre: 01443 873552, 8:30am – 5pm Monday to Friday.

Please note that referrals or new requests for access to the Night Shelter must be received before 4pm, Monday to Friday.

Referrals for new service users can only be accepted and considered from Monday to Friday because the Housing Advice Centre is unable to properly assess risk to our partners and volunteers.

Rough Sleeper Outreach

Cornerstone Support Services operate a rough sleeper outreach service within the county borough area, responding to all requests and notifications of people sleeping rough and on the streets. As a semi rural area, we have areas of countryside and forestry land which have occasionally become small rough sleeper encampments. Notifications of rough sleepers are most frequently in relation to this type of client: inhabiting woodland and forming camp sites with others for safety and companionship. In the Caerphilly borough, we have fewer instances of rough sleepers bedding down in town centre areas such as in shop doorways, although occasionally this has happened. Through the Streetlink online reporting facility and through notifications to the Housing Advice Centre, all rough sleeper notifications are forwarded to the Cornerstone team.

The Cornerstone team of support staff respond to rough sleeper notifications and provide emergency provisions, equipment, and food and drink. In periods of hot sunny weather, sunscreen and additional bottled water have been supplied and welfare checks are done as a matter of course. In extreme weather conditions that fall outside the three month period that the Night Shelter service is available, Cornerstone Support Services will liaise with the Housing Advice Centre to provide emergency accommodation. Access to mental health support can be through Cornerstone Support Services referral or through the Supporting People Gateway service at WWW.caerphilly.gov.uk/supportingpeople

StreetLink is a website for members of the public and service users themselves to report instances of rough sleepers in Wales. The homeless charity The Wallich manages the process and ensures that rough sleepers are brought to the attention of local services, to identify and assist wherever possible. The StreetLink service can be accessed at the following address:

<https://thewallich.com/streetlink-for-rough-sleepers-launches-in-wales/>

Practical support and assistance throughout the year is also available at the Phoenix Centre in Caerphilly. The service is provided by GDAS, the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Support service at their town centre location in Cardiff Road, Caerphilly.

The Phoenix Centre Drop-In, 97 Cardiff Road, Caerphilly, CF83 1FQ

Tel: 02920 860588

Tweets by @TheGDAS are regularly updated with the latest news and information for service users and professionals.

The **Phoenix Recovery Hub** is part of the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS) Recovery Team. The Phoenix provides a recovery focused community for service users who are currently engaging with GDAS for support with drug and/or alcohol issues and their concerned others.

The Phoenix also provides a referral route into GDAS for people affected by drug and/or alcohol issues who wish to engage in structured support.

The Phoenix Recovery Hub provides a range of practical support to improve the physical and mental well-being of those whom attend such as :-

- An individual 'Recovery Plan' that sign-posts service users to resources that can help with their recovery Journey. This might include support with accessing external training and volunteering opportunities.
- Use of a telephone and computer to enable service users to apply for benefits and undertake job searches.
- Linking service users in with GDAS Recovery Groups such as SMART Recovery, Art and the Well-bring Group.

- Shower facilities, laundry facilities, access to a Clothes Bank, access to Food Bank vouchers and emergency food parcels.
- Opportunity to become a service-user volunteer through the Recovery Service Volunteer Programme (RSVP) and build recovery capital through an integrated, structured and assisted system of peer support.
- One-to One Housing Related Support assisting service users to explore options for alternative housing and helping them to understand the homelessness process.
- Referral into Caerphilly Supporting People Team for specialist debt and housing advice.
- Access to diversionary activities and complementary therapies.

Street Pastors

Originally set up by Rev. Sue Phillips the Street Pastors are a voluntary Christian group, whose members operate in the town centres of Blackwood, Risca and Caerphilly. Whilst their focus is on the welfare of the public in the night time economy, the group are also able to signpost rough sleepers to the rough sleeper's coordinator team. Rev. Phillips coordinates the Blackwood Street Pastors and will liaise with the Risca and Caerphilly coordinators on request.

Other guidance for service users can be found through the **Shelter Cymru** housing advice helpline on 0345 075 5005 (phone lines operate between 9.30am – 4.00pm, Monday to Friday).

Local connection:

All local authorities in Wales are required to plan for inclement weather and provide services appropriate for their rough sleeper service demands. It is important to note that the council will consider whether service users have a local connection to the Caerphilly county borough. If there is no obvious local connection, then access to some or all of the aforementioned services may be limited, or not available. Officers and support services will endeavour to direct rough sleepers with no local connection to the Caerphilly county borough, to their respective local authority area for their assistance.

This plan will be reviewed in January 2020.