



# TOGETHER we change lives

Ending the need for people  
to sleep rough in Northampton

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MULTI-AGENCY STRATEGY 2016-19



# Energy

noun 1. the strength and vitality required for sustained physical or mental activity  
2. a person's physical and mental power or capability

“People who sleep rough are prone to chronic health conditions and will often only seek treatment in an emergency. This puts pressure on local health services, including hospital Accident and Emergency.”

“There shouldn't be a need for anyone to be on the streets. It's vital that we all work together to achieve this common goal.”

**Pat Haslam, Nene Clinical Commissioning Group Locality Support**



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## PHOTO OF STEPHEN HIBBERT

“Together, we have the chance to change people’s lives for the better, and make sure that there’s no need for anyone to have to sleep rough in Northampton. We all have a role to play in this – let’s make it happen!”

**Councillor Stephen Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing,  
Northampton Borough Council**

“Young people and offenders face all sorts of discrimination.”

**Wilkie, Accommodation Coordinator, Youth Offending Service**

“People need to be given a second chance.”

**John-Paul Russell, Team Manager, Leaving Care Service**

“Women and older people are especially vulnerable if they’re living on the street.”

**Kim Downer, Resettlement Officer, National Probation Service**



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# Northampton's multi-agency pledge

As a partnership of statutory, voluntary, private, charity and faith-based local agencies, we're committed to tackling the causes of rough sleeping, providing coordinated services that keep people safe, supported and off the streets. We promote aspiration.

## **Working together**

This strategy brings together an alliance of more than 30 local agencies behind the common aim of ending the need for people to sleep rough on the streets of Northampton.

It is unnecessary, unsafe and unacceptable for anyone to be homeless and on the streets in a prosperous, modern borough like Northampton. So together, we pledge to do everything we can to make this a thing of the past.

Rough sleeping is not just about the nighttime. We're signed up to changing people's lives for the better, through round-the-clock prevention, support and engagement.

## **Doing more and better**

By combining all of our resources and energy in this joint strategy, we can better integrate the different kinds of support offered to people who are homeless or at risk of sleeping rough. This will reduce duplication, make us more efficient and produce better outcomes.

## **Sharing information and resources**

Timely and effective sharing of information is the key to making our pledge a reality. To better serve the interests of people who are homeless or at risk of sleeping rough, all of the strategy partners have agreed to sign up to an information sharing protocol and use a common, multi-agency database.

## **Getting to and staying at zero**

From an estimated nightly number of around 25 people sleeping rough in Northampton in June 2016, we aim to reduce this to as close to zero as possible by June 2017.

Sustaining this change to permanently eradicate rough sleeping from the borough will require continuous development of our multi-agency partnership, to keep ahead of the economic and social trends that force people onto the streets.

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# Strategy summary

**TOGETHER we change lives** sets out why tackling rough sleeping matters in Northampton, who's involved in ending the need for people to sleep rough, and how we can make it happen.

## Partnership power

It's clear from the numbers of people sleeping rough in our borough and evidence of how the problem is being tackled more successfully in other parts of the country, that the support we're offering and the way we're working in Northampton are simply not good enough. We need a more collaborative and determined approach to achieve a step change in tackling the reasons why people sleep rough, and helping those who are on the streets to turn their lives around.

## Vision, principles and objectives

Our multi-agency alliance wants Northampton to be a place where there is no need for anyone to sleep on the streets, and where the community does not have to suffer the upsetting and sometimes anti-social effects of rough sleeping.

Achieving this vision is a shared responsibility. Our approach is based on clear roles and joined-up local services that fit and work together to provide positive pathways for people at risk of sleeping rough or who are already on the streets.

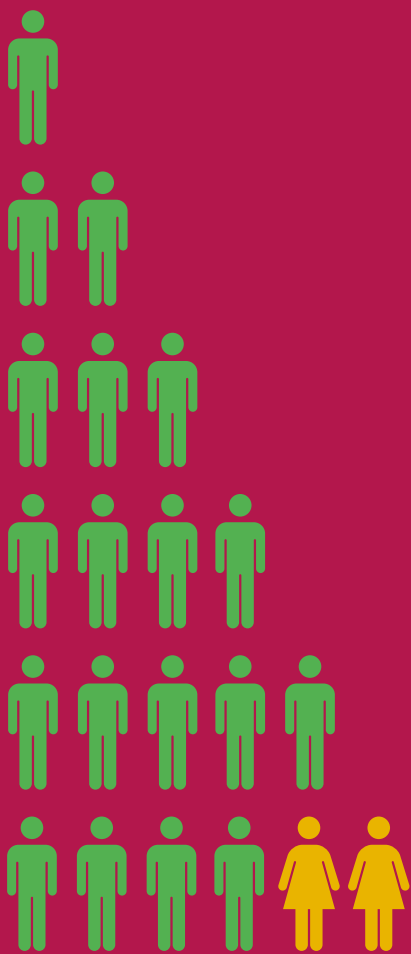
Everyone who sleeps rough is an individual with their own needs, problems, hopes and fears. So our strategy is about working across all of the partner agencies to provide the right mix of advice, support and practical help to change each person's life.



“The Hope Centre isn't interested in providing a social club that just perpetuates people's problems. We're in the business of preventing homelessness, rebuilding lives and changing the way the world works.”

**Adrian Pryce, Chair of the Hope Centre**

## Northampton rough sleeping in numbers



**21 PEOPLE\***  
**SLEEPING ROUGH**  
BOROUGH COUNT,  
24 MARCH 2016

**19 MEN +**  
**2 WOMEN**

**ALMOST HALF**  
COME FROM EASTERN  
EUROPEAN EU STATES

\* Information from across the alliance of local agencies suggests this official, nighttime count slightly underestimates the average number of people sleeping rough in Northampton. The true, nightly figure (as at June 2016) is likely to be around 25.



“People see their mates succeeding in work because of the intensive training we offer – and they want to succeed too.”

**Mike Britton, Managing Director, Goodwill Solutions**

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# Grasping the problem

Sleeping rough on the street is always a sign of other things going wrong in a person's life. It's a call for proactive, holistic and coordinated support that will help them achieve stable, secure and sustained independence.

## Why people sleep rough

A wide range of personal, local, national and international factors can conspire to leave someone sleeping rough. Debt, domestic violence, family breakdown, mental ill health and addictions are just some of the causes and influences. People who leave prison, local authority care or the armed forces in an unplanned way are also particularly at risk of becoming homeless.

Free movement of citizens between EU countries and the escalating challenge of refugees and other world people movements have contributed to a recent rise in rough sleeping. There is a strong connection between rough sleeping and the state of the national and local economy. Unemployment, worklessness, welfare reforms and the shortage of affordable housing all have an adverse impact on the level of homelessness.

Government figures collected in autumn 2015 estimated that more than 3,500 people sleep rough in the UK each night. This was a jump of 30% compared to 2014, and was more than twice the number of people sleeping rough in 2010.

## Effects and impact

For the people involved, the effects of sleeping rough (especially for long periods) can be devastating or even fatal. Homeless people are far more likely to be assaulted and abused, to experience problems in accessing training and employment, and to have difficulty in meeting their nutritional and healthcare needs.

A person who sleeps rough for a long time is at high risk of acute psychological problems and long-term drugs, alcohol and substance abuse. When someone is on the streets, they run the risk of this becoming their 'normal', permanent lifestyle, and being unable to integrate back into permanent housing, work and a settled life.

Areas affected by people sleeping rough can experience a loss of community pride and confidence, increased petty crime and damage to the public realm and amenities.



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## Preventing homelessness

We all know that the best way to avoid and prevent people from needing to sleep rough is to identify and assess those most at risk, and intervene early. We also know that engaging and supporting people when they are on the streets is a lot more difficult, and less likely to succeed in the long term, than working with them before they become homeless.

The accumulated knowledge and experience of our multi-agency alliance means that we're well aware of the challenges involved in helping people to avoid and move away from sleeping rough. People's circumstances mean that they can sometimes be hard to reach, connect with and assist.

Our strategy for tackling rough sleeping accepts this and reflects the multi-agency commitment to a positively persistent approach. By gaining the trust of people sleeping rough, we can deal with setbacks and empower them to change.

Although we offer tailored, individual support for lasting change, our help is not unqualified. In exceptional cases (for example, where someone is violent, refuses to engage with local services and organisations or shows that they're determined to remain on the street), there will be occasions when we are unable to help.

## Thinking wider

As our strategy and practice develops, we expect that our success in working with people who are sleeping rough will inform the local approach to other complex problems like begging, street drinking and anti-social behaviour. Multi-agency work to prevent and tackle street homelessness should be a catalyst for improvements in other services.

We also hope that Northampton will be recognised as a model of best practice for other local authority areas and communities to follow. We're committed to sharing our learning through professional and voluntary networks and the media.



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“It’s not just about finding somewhere to live – support counts as well.”

**Samantha Pontin, Drugs and Alcohol Challenge Worker, Bridge**

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PHOTO OF MANDY WILSON & BABS MAJOR

“Homelessness can happen to anyone. It’s great to be part of a multi-agency team that offers people the hope, help and encouragement they need to achieve their full potential and enjoy their lives again.”

**Mandy Wilson, Outreach Worker**

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# A fresh, partnership approach

The causes of street homelessness are complex, dynamic and varied. So we need a strong and determined, multi-disciplinary, team effort to address rough sleeping in Northampton.

## **A common strategy**

This strategy has been co-produced by more than 30 services and organisations through a series of workshops and close collaboration on the style, objectives and priorities of our joint work. This shared approach will give Northampton the best chance of benefiting from synergy, where local agencies can achieve much more together than they could do alone.

## **Sharing and using information**

As well as sharing information through a common database, we will use case conferences to focus our efforts and attention on the individuals with the most complex needs.

This will help us to assess risks, work smarter and identify the agency that is best placed to take on the role of lead professional for each person. It

will also enable us to address each person's needs in an holistic way that tackles every aspect of their life that has made them vulnerable.

## **Keeping our promises**

Our fresh, multi-agency approach will only achieve its full potential if everyone involved does what they are required to do, and helps us keep our promises to homeless people, the borough and its residents.

## **Keeping it up**

Complex, cross-sector partnerships can fail because of unexpected changes to the law, policy, local politics, staff turnover and resources. We're committed to making sure that this doesn't happen in Northampton, so we will keep our partnership and plans open to continuous review and improvement. Mutual accountability is a core part of our approach.

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# Principles and objectives

Our strategy is not about hiding the problem of rough sleeping or just moving it elsewhere. **TOGETHER we change lives** means working differently to help people avoid becoming homeless and engaging assertively with those who are on the streets.

## **Unnecessary, unsafe and unacceptable**

We're clear that sleeping rough is not something anyone should have to experience or endure in 21st century Britain. Our partnership is committed to not just ending the need for anyone to sleep rough in Northampton, but also to raising people's aspirations and achieving lasting, positive personal and community change.

## **Fair for everyone**

People sleeping rough often face many other sorts of disadvantage and discrimination. Support for some of the most vulnerable people in our society has to respect and cater for people's individual differences and needs, which demand personally-tailored intervention.

## **Efficient, value for money services that work**

Local government, charities and voluntary groups don't have money to waste. We have a duty to use our

resources wisely and well, to deliver a response to rough sleeping that's comprehensive, responsive and reliable. Better coordination and sharing of information, accommodation and other assets makes this happen.

## **No attraction**

Improving homelessness services and support can create the risk of attracting people sleeping rough into Northampton from other areas. This is not an option we'll accept, so we will make maximum use of our countywide relationships and links to agencies outside the borough to avoid this.

## **Telling people's stories**

The stories and testimony of individuals sleeping rough can help to raise public awareness and understanding of street homelessness, and mobilise support for this strategy and partnership. We'll use local, regional and trade media to showcase the style and successes of our approach.



“Many people who sleep rough have complex problems, including mental health issues and substance misuse, which contribute to anti-social behaviour and crime. Partnership working is essential.”

**Sergeant Julie Parsons, Northamptonshire Police and Northampton Borough Council Anti-Social Behaviour Unit**

# Ways to change

Our partnership offers a clear and comprehensive framework of interlocking services, accommodation and support to tackle, prevent and reduce rough sleeping.



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# Making it happen

Keeping rough sleeping to the absolute minimum for the long term demands decisive, collective action backed up by robust planning, communication, accountability and review.

## Ten strategic objectives

These are our ten, top-level objectives to end the need for rough sleeping in Northampton and change people's lives for the better.

- 1 Set up a temporary nightshelter** with the capacity to offer all local rough sleepers emergency shelter until they are able to move into settled housing
- 2 Make it clear that there is no need for people to sleep rough** in Northampton, and that anyone choosing to do so will not be helped to sleep rough
- 3 Review the way food, blankets and sleeping bags are distributed** to people who are homeless in Northampton, to ensure that this is coordinated and supports, rather than undermines, everyone's efforts to discourage rough sleeping
- 4 Encourage services and organisations to work proactively** with the Council's Outreach Workers to establish a multi-disciplinary Street Services Team that is able to engage with people who are sleeping rough
- 5 Promote the use of the reconnection service and work with the Immigration Service** to help people who have no local connection with Northampton, who want to move closer to family support, or who are not exercising their treaty rights
- 6 Work proactively with the hospitals, prisons, supported housing schemes and social landlords** to ensure that people leave hospital and prison in a planned way and that residents get the help they need to sustain their tenancies
- 7 Develop and implement an information sharing protocol** and make optimum use of a joint, multi-agency database
- 8 Produce comprehensive, individual support plans** for everyone sleeping rough and promote the use of multi-agency case conferences for people with complex needs or a long history of sleeping rough
- 9 Review the move-on arrangements** at Oasis House and NAASH's 'No Second Night Out' project to ensure that residents can move on in a timely and appropriate manner
- 10 Develop and promote a comprehensive programme of volunteering, training and employment** for people who have recently been sleeping rough.



“We need to slow down the flow of people becoming homeless, open doors to people who become homeless and keep our promises.”

**Emma Forbes, Housing Options and Advice Manager, Northampton Borough Council**

### **Three-year action plan**

Although it has been possible to produce TOGETHER we change lives quite soon after the second workshop in April 2016, a considerable amount of work is now required to develop a comprehensive action plan, setting out how and when our partnership will achieve the ten strategic objectives over the next three years. The action plan will be produced jointly by all of the services and organisations which have committed to ending the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton. We hope that agencies that were not able to

attend the workshops can make a positive contribution to drafting and implementing the plan.

Copies of the three-year action plan will be made widely available as an insert to this Strategy and published on the Council’s website.

### **Monitoring and accountability**

Performance and progress against the ten strategic priorities and the action plan will be monitored quarterly by a multi-agency Rough Sleeping Strategy Group, and reported to the Borough Council’s Cabinet annually.



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# Working together

The Northampton multi-agency strategy to end the need for people to sleep rough in our borough is supported and delivered by more than 30 agencies (see insert). Here's how, together, they helped two people back to safer and more fulfilled lives, off the streets.

## Madison's story

“You saved my life. You'd never met me before, but you listened to what I said and trusted me.”

PHOTO OF MADISON

Twenty-eight-year-old Madison had been caring for her terminally ill mother for five years when her life fell apart, and unable to cope, she ended up sleeping on the streets.

Struggling to deal with her emotions, her mother's illness and her role as a carer, Madison had been drinking heavily and, after becoming angry and aggressive, her sisters told her to leave their mother's home.

After a week sleeping rough, Madison felt lonely, frightened and very vulnerable. She approached the day centre at Oasis House, but didn't disclose that she was using alcohol to deal with her emotions and problems, because she was afraid of being judged.

Since there was no other accommodation available, Outreach Worker Mandy Wilson arranged for Madison to move into a local bed and breakfast. She then started to work with Madison to resolve her housing situation and help her deal with her drinking, her mother's illness and the breakdown of her relationship with her sisters.

When she realised that no-one was judging her, Madison started to visit Mandy regularly and talk openly about her feelings, problems and family. She later moved into a flat at Oasis House, and developed a strong link with her support worker, which meant she was to look after her mother again.

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## PHOTO OF CHANTELLE AND PETER

“Things have changed so much since you found us in our tent. You have shown more faith in us than anyone else has ever done. You’ve given us hope, and a chance to make something of our lives. We won’t let you down.”

### Chantelle and Peter’s story

When Outreach Workers Mandy Wilson and Babs Major first met Chantelle and Peter, they were sleeping in a tent in the woods at Delapre Abbey.

Twenty-one-year-old Chantelle had been sleeping rough for seven months and had problems with managing anger. Her partner Peter (23) had been sleeping rough for about a year after being unable to manage the tenancy of his former housing association home.

Both Chantelle and Peter had been in care as children, and no longer had any family support. They had serious problems with drug use and lacked the skills to deal with their emotions and difficulties.

The Outreach Workers encouraged Chantelle and Peter to engage with local services and organisations to address their addiction, mental health issues and past experiences. This helped Chantelle and Peter to appreciate that by accepting the support offered by local agencies, they would be in a much better position to get and sustain a more secure home.

The input from Mandy and Babs has helped Chantelle and Peter to grow in confidence and become much better at solving problems and managing their anger. They’ve worked with S2S to tackle their drug dependence and moved into a flat at Oasis House, where they’re developing the skills they need for successful, independent living.

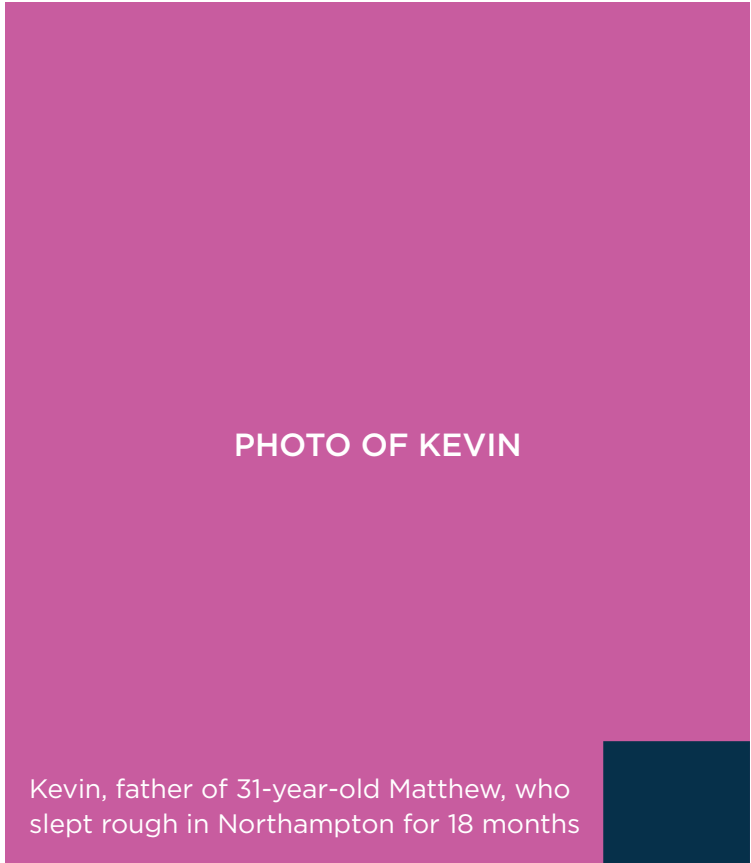
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### Kevin's story

Kevin's son Matthew had a troubled childhood and drank alcohol from a very young age. His drinking led him into crime and being imprisoned for alcohol-related offences.

S2S, Bridge and The Mayday Trust have supported Matthew, and Northampton Borough Council's Outreach Workers have helped him keep in touch with his father while in prison.

Together, this partnership of individuals and local agencies is changing Matthew's life.



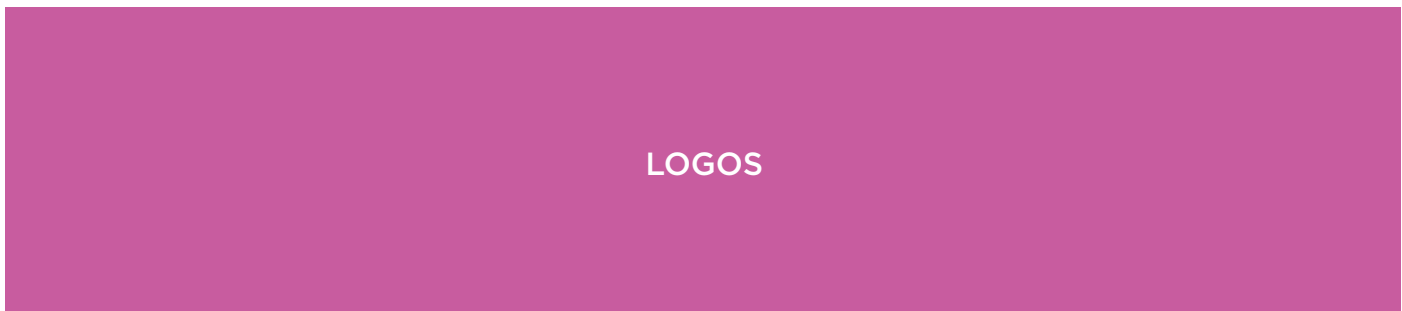
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“Matthew never felt accepted, never found the right people to help him. But the Outreach Team did all of that and more, in only a few hours.”

## Our partnership

For the full list of agencies supporting this strategy to end the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton, please see the action plan insert.

The partners include:



## How to report people sleeping rough

If you are concerned about someone who is sleeping rough in Northampton, or is at risk of sleeping rough, please contact the Council's Outreach Team:

**T: 01604 837344 / 837345**

**E: [outreachteam@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:outreachteam@northampton.gov.uk)**

## Other media

If you need this document or any other information about local services in large print, a different language, audio, Braille or another format please contact the Head of Housing and Wellbeing on 01604 837871.

TRANSLATION TEXT

TRANSLATION TEXT

Northampton Borough Council  
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**0300 330 7000 (9am-5pm, Monday to Friday)**

**01604 838 970 (text phone)**

**01604 837 999 (out of hours emergencies only)**

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