**Appendix 3 – Tameside Cold Weather Protocol**



**Cold Weather Protocol (CWP)**

**Introduction**

Within its duties as a local authority, Tameside MBC aims to ensure that homeless people who are sleeping rough are protected and provided for during the winter cold season, when extreme cold temperatures can threaten the safety and wellbeing of some living in the borough.

This document sets out the mechanism by which rough sleepers in Tameside can access accommodation and support during periods of exceptionally cold weather when the Cold Weather Protocol (CWP) is activated.

Under the terms of the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol promoted by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), all local authorities are required to ensure that specific provision is in place to deal with rough sleeping when severe weather is forecast.

Tameside Council, along with other Councils in Greater Manchester has agreed to operate a Cold Weather Protocol. Tameside Housing Advice (THA) is the service responsible for activating and implementing the CWP at an operational level on behalf of Tameside Council. The delivery of CWP is the responsibility of Tameside Council’s Homelessness and Community Safety section, Tameside Housing Advice and other partner organisations working to implement the Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

**Aims**

To prevent loss of life

To reduce rough sleeping to as near to zero as possible by:

* 1. Using CWO to engage with rough sleepers with a local connection who would normally be resistant to coming inside.
  2. Using CWP to connect rough sleepers with other support services including relocation services for those who do not have a local connection.

**Activation/Deactivation**

The CWP will be in place from the 1st December 2017 to 31st March 2018. If cold weather occurs outside of this period the Council will, in liaison with THA decide whether the CWP should be activated.

THA is responsible for checking the five day weather forecast on the MET office website every day before 10am. The forecast taken on a Friday will be used to decide whether or not the CWP should be activated/de-activated over the weekend.

It has been agreed with partners that once the forecast night time temperature for Tameside falls to zero degree Celsius or below, the CWP will be immediately activated.

THA are responsible for activating and deactivating the CWP. Once a decision has been taken it will stand until the following day’s check when a fresh announcement will be made either confirming that the SWEP remains activated or that it is deactivated due to an improvement in the weather conditions.

**Notification**

When CWP is activated or deactivated by THA, the information will be updated on the front page their website before 11am.

The following agencies will be sent a copy of this protocol and directed to consult the THA website for further updates regarding activation/de-activation:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| TMBC Welfare Rights |  | Councillor Gerald Cooney |
| TMBC Library Service |  | Adullam Homes Housing Association |
| TMBC Customer Services |  | Greater Manchester Police |
| TMBC Call Centre |  | TMBC Environmental Services |
| GM Fire and Rescue Service |  | TMBC Public Service Hub |
| Probation Service / CRC |  | TMBC Adult Services |
| Citizens Advice Bureau |  | CGL |
| TMBC Neighbourhood Services |  | Foundation |
| Impact |  | Threshold |
| Transport for Greater Manchester |  | Shopping Centre Managers |
| Tameside Hospital |  |  |

**Assessment**

All customers requiring accommodation under the CWP will be placed by THA following a triage interview.

During the normal THA opening hour’s customers will be expected to attend in person to enable the triage interview to be made prior to the placement. THA are open Monday to Thursday 9am – 3pm Friday 10am – 3pm and their address is:

Tameside Housing Advice

119-125 Old Street

Ashton under Lyne

OL6 7RL

Telephone: **0161 331 2700**

**Out of Hours**

Referrals to THA under the SWEP can be made at anytime between 9am – 5pm (4pm on a Friday). Outside of these hours referrals under the CWP can be made via the Out of Hours service on:

**0161 331 2700**

**Accommodation Placements**

Accommodation provided under the CWP will be on a night by night basis and will be reviewed each day based on the temperature forecast. Accommodation will be extended on a night by night basis for as long as the temperature remains at zero degree Celsius or below. The accommodation placement will end once the temperature rises above zero degree Celsius when the SWEP will be deactivated.

THA will make a preliminary decision regarding appropriate placement for each customer. In the first instance this is likely to be sit-up provision or other emergency spaces being provided by one the council’s partners. If this provision is not available customers will be placed in bed breakfast provision.

If THA have a reason to believe that the customer has a priority need from circumstances other than cold weather the accommodation can be continued if the placement is appropriate and a Housing Benefit claim can be made. This will be under an interim duty whilst THA carry out further investigations.

An accommodation placement will continue if the customer is assessed to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need, or if they have requested a review of their homelessness decision and Tameside Council choose to exercise their power to provide accommodation pending the outcome of a review.

**Outreach and Assessment**

Once the CWP has been activated the Impact Project and other services in regular contact with people who sleep rough should be in communication with THA regarding anyone they have concerns about.

The Impact Project will work assertively through its outreach service to make contact with known rough sleepers and seek to make a referral to THA for a homelessness assessment under the terms of this protocol.

Agencies and members of the public who wish to report sightings of rough sleepers will be encouraged to provide as much detail as possible to maximise the potential for successful contact to be made on outreach visits. Ideally reports should endeavour to confirm that the person has been seen bedded down along with a brief description, any information about the persons identification and as much detail as possible of where they can be found.

Reports of rough sleeping can either be made to the Impact Project on **016 330 1557** or the national Streetlink service on **0300 500 0914.** Further details of the Streetlink service can be found by following this link: <http://www.streetlink.org.uk/>

THA will ensure that the Impact Project and other referring agencies are provided with feedback regarding the outcome of the assessment.

Prior to making an accommodation placement under the CWP, THA will use its best endeavours to complete a risk assessment based on either newly gathered information or a recent assessment.

During the period of accommodation the customer and their advocates will be expected to remain in communication with THA with a view to securing alternative accommodation at the end of the SWEP period.

**Relocation**

THA and the other partners signed up to this protocol will work proactively with customers to help them relocate to an area where they are likely to have a local connection if that does not apply in Tameside.

Homelessness and Relocation services in other boroughs will be notified at the earliest opportunity if SWEP placements have been made in Tameside.

**No recourse to public funds**

Customers who have no recourse to public funds are entitled to an accommodation placement under the CWP.

THA will continue to work with this group after the CWP period to inform them of their housing options and to link them in with relocation services and other potential sources of support.