

BIRMINGHAM ON STREET SUPPORT HANDBOOK



created in partnership with



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We know that members of the Birmingham On Street Support Forum are working hard to understand the needs of individuals accessing outreach food support.

We all share the ambition to support everyone at different stages of their journey to stability in the most appropriate way for them.

Whilst the work being done by members of the Forum goes beyond handing out food, we know how large a part food poverty plays in the homelessness crisis.

We are united in wanting people to lead more nutritious, healthier and fulfilling lives, and Birmingham's street feeding outreach groups play an important role in connecting with, and developing relationships with individuals who will benefit from this combined supportive approach.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Birmingham On Street Support Handbook, a guide to help community groups working with people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness. This guide has been put together by the Birmingham On Street Support Working Group, which comprises of BVSC, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Homelessness Taskforce, The Active Wellbeing Society (TAWS), Colmore Business District, and Let's Feed Brum.

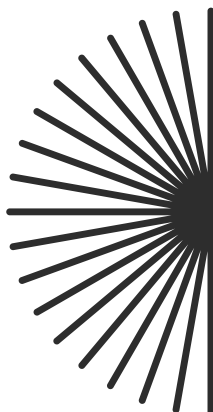
During the Covid-19 pandemic, The Active Wellbeing Society, which helps tackle health inequalities and promotes physical activity across the city, re-focused its work to help those in the most deprived communities. As part of this, #BrumTogether was formed to provide support for local people including the delivery of food parcels, hygiene products, and essential supplies such as clothing and household items. This network of over 80 community organisations and mutual aid groups shows the appetite for collaboration.

As we continue this partnership approach, Birmingham On Street Support Forum continues to link individuals and community groups involved in the city's food outreach and homelessness support. The Forum aims to be a driving force to better connect community groups and commissioned services; improving collaboration, communication, and the positive impact that we can all have on Birmingham's homeless community.

This Handbook aims to bring together the learning of every service, charity, project, initiative, and individual involved in the homelessness space. We want to celebrate the dedication of people and organisations just like you and share best practice that helps us all provide more effective and long-term sustainable support.

Our ambition is for this Handbook to:

- Profile the great work being done to tackle homelessness and food poverty in Birmingham
- Provide a guide to the pathways in place so organisations are able to better signpost and support individuals
- Outline guidance on areas such as safeguarding and mental health support
- Share advice on key areas affecting on street support groups, including food hygiene and befriending
- Outline the various on street support groups and their work, to avoid duplicity, waste and demand-gaps, and make better use of resources





WHO'S INVOLVED?

The Birmingham On Street Support Forum aims to bring together individuals and community groups involved in the city's food outreach and homelessness support. A Working Group comes together to share key information to be disseminated to the wider group, and members of this group include:

James Walker, WMCA Homelessness Taskforce

The WMCA Homelessness Taskforce was established in 2017 with the aim to design out homelessness in all its forms. James' work across the region delivers a clear commitment to collaborate with on street and wider voluntary sector groups to develop innovative approaches to preventing and relieving homelessness.



Harpal Bath, Project Manager RSI Birmingham, BVSC

BVSC is Birmingham's centre for voluntary action and is passionate about making a difference to the lives of people in the city, by harnessing the power of community. Harpal is the lead for the Rough Sleepers Initiative and is at the heart of homeless support in the city.



Amit Dattani and Florence Cadge, The Active Wellbeing Society

TAWS is a community benefit society and co-operative, working to develop healthy, happy communities living active and connected lives. It is the driving force behind the Food Justice Network, which was founded in July 2020 as part of the #BrumTogether campaign, to tackle emergency food needs.



Tara Tomes and Nichola D'Souza, Let's Feed Brum

Let's Feed Brum is a volunteer-led charity on a mission to make a lasting difference to those experiencing and at risk of homelessness. The charity aims to create meaningful engagement with people on the streets, using a cup of tea as the vehicle to start conversations and help them get the support they need.



Paul Street, Special Projects Officer, Colmore Business District

Paul sits on the Colmore BID 'Safe & Sound' working group, which focuses on delivering safety and security for everyone who works, visits and passes through Colmore Row and the surrounding areas. The BID's Security Team works with partners to support some of the most vulnerable members of our community.



OUTREACH SERVICES

Homelessness is a complex issue, so it can often be challenging to understand how people are supported and where to signpost them. Birmingham City Council remains at the heart of homeless support in the city, and there are several key services that prevent and relieve homelessness. Some are commissioned directly by the council to provide specific support, others are considered 'key services' and fund their own activity separately.

STREETLINK

Exists to help members of the public and on street groups connect people sleeping rough with the local services that can support them. If you are concerned about someone over the age of 18 that you have seen sleeping rough in Birmingham (or anywhere in England and Wales), you can use the website to send an alert to StreetLink or call 0300 500 0914. The details you provide are sent to the RSOT to help them find the individual and connect them to the right support. It is important to note that if you think the person you are concerned about is under 18, please do not contact StreetLink but instead call the police.

TRIDENT REACH

The Rough Sleeper Outreach Team (RSOT), which connects directly into StreetLink, is operated by Trident Reach and provides a street-based outreach service that supports people sleeping rough to access accommodation. The outreach team are out seven days a week, throughout the day and night. They can help with access to accommodation and benefits, help obtaining health services, and direct access to health services.

STREET SUPPORT NETWORK

Street Support Network – an online digital platform making it easy to find services to meet the needs of someone who is experiencing homeless. Working in partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority and Birmingham City Council, Street Support Network provides a central place to find out about homelessness, see what support is available, and find out what you can do to help. It allows agencies, members of the public and individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness to find the most appropriate service to meet a need in one place. Visit www.streetsupport.net/birmingham or scan this QR code:



SWEP

Operated by Birmingham City Council, the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol is initiated in cases of extreme weather and below zero temperatures. When SWEP is active there is additional capacity at commissioned accommodation providers.

You can find out when SWEP is activated via Trident's Twitter: www.twitter.com/tridentgrp

SHELTER

Offers advice and support services, providing one-to-one, personalised help with housing issues and homelessness. They have a team of Lived Experience Navigators (outreach workers) who engage with individuals aged over 25, who have been historically long disengaged from support services to focus on gradually and informally building relationships of trust before exploring support and accommodation options.

BIRMINGHAM & SOLIHULL WOMEN'S AID

Supports women and children affected by domestic violence and abuse. The BSWA Domestic Abuse Hub helps people obtain safe accommodation as well as providing practical and emotional support.

CGL

the Change Grow Live (CGL) Rapid Prescribing Service provides a clinical prescriber and two outreach Recovery Coordinators to deliver a rapid prescribing service at selected hostels. They work closely with other services, and work with complex clients as part of the multi-agency Rough Sleepers team operating across the city. Clients are supported until they are settled in accommodation for up to three months then transferred to the community hubs.

CRISIS

Provides vital help so that people can rebuild their lives and are supported out of homelessness for good. They offer one-to-one support, advice and courses for homeless people, and campaign for the changes needed to end homelessness for good.

ST BASIL'S

Works with young people aged 16-25 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to enable them to find and keep a home, grow their confidence, develop their skills, increase opportunities and prevent homelessness. St Basil's has a Young Person's Navigator outreach service, working closely with the RSOT to make contact via street outreach, as well as self-referral and streetlink. The Navigators aim to contact the rough sleeper within 24 hours and carry out risk and needs assessment, then support the young person to return home or secure alternative suitable accommodation and access relevant services.

SIFA FIRESIDE

Offers daily drop-in sessions in Digbeth, giving rough sleepers access to food, shelter, showers and other basic needs. SIFA Fireside is also commissioned by Birmingham City Council to provide emergency accommodation support for anyone made homeless or about to be made homeless, with council officers located on site at SIFA Fireside. Other wrap-around support delivered by the team includes welfare and benefits support and advice, and social support. Services are for single people or childless couples, unless otherwise stated.

HOMELESS HEALTH EXCHANGE

A primary care service for homeless people in the Birmingham area, provided by Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust at their hub and by outreach. They offer a full general practice service to those who are homeless or vulnerably housed (aged 16+ and not pregnant) and are part of the city's outreach team.

AQUARIUS

A charity that supports people affected by alcohol, drugs and gambling, Aquarius has a Navigator who works closely with the St Basil's Navigators. They provide similar support but focused on those who need substance support, as well as tenancy assistance, offering a softer therapeutic approach. The Aquarius role complements the St. Basils navigators offering a time out space and works closely with CGL for those who need scripting or detox.

CHANGE INTO ACTION

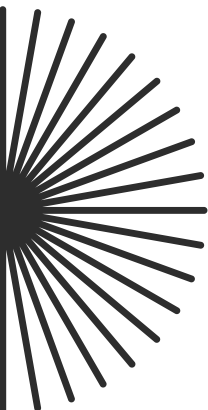
An alternative giving scheme created in partnership by the Mayor of the West Midlands, the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce, local authorities, voluntary sector organisations and business representatives.

Change Into Action has three objectives:

- Providing the public information about homelessness
- Providing a way for the public to give money to support people on the streets
- Enabling the public to identify and locate individuals rough sleeping so that they can be connected to local support services

Further information and details about how to donate can be found on the website:

www.changeintoaction.org.uk



HOUSING PATHWAYS



ALL BIRMINGHAM CITIZENS CAN ACCESS HOUSING ADVICE TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS AND SUPPORT AT A TIME OF HOUSING CRISIS. IT IS ALWAYS BEST TO SEEK SUPPORT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

IF SOMEONE IS ROUGH SLEEPING, THE FIRST POINT OF CONTACT IS STREETLINK, WHO WILL GET IN TOUCH WITH THE LOCAL OUTREACH SERVICE TO MAKE CONTACT

IF SOMEONE IS IN ACCOMMODATION AND HAS ISSUES OR CONCERNS, YOU CAN SIGNPOST THEM TO THE RELEVANT HUB: BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL, SIFA FIRESIDE, ST BASIL'S OR SPRING HOUSING

You can help someone sleeping rough

StreetLink

Open the StreetLink app or visit streetlink.org.uk

Enter the exact location of the person you saw

Enter the time you saw them

An outreach worker goes out to offer support

This is the first step to ending someone's homelessness
Download the StreetLink app today

We recognise that accommodation isn't always right and sometimes people leave the location they've been placed in. If someone has concerns about current accommodation or housing status, please contact the Housing Options Service, and if you need to raise a concern about a private landlord, email prs@birmingham.gov.uk. Independent housing advice and advocacy can also be provided by the Adult Support Hub based at SIFA Fireside: theash@sifafireside.co.uk.

HOUSING PATHWAYS continued...

All Birmingham citizens are able to access housing advice to prevent homelessness, and support at a time of housing crisis. It is always best to seek support as soon as possible in order to prevent a homelessness crisis. The table below sets out the specialist services provided by, supported, or commissioned by, Birmingham City Council, to prevent and relieve homelessness. All for single people and childless couples unless otherwise stated.

GROUP	ORGANISATION	DAYS/TIMES	CONTACT
Families that include children and/or vulnerable adults	Birmingham City Council	Mon, Tues & Thurs: 9am-4.30pm Weds: 10am-4.30pm Fri: 9am-4.15pm	Telephone only: 0121 675 5779
Young people aged 16-25, including 16-17 year olds with children	St Basil's Hub	Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 9am-5pm Weds 1-5pm	0300 303 0099 or text NEEDSTBASILS to 62277
	Children's Trust Emergency Duty Team	Out of hours (16-17 year olds)	0121 675 4806
	Birmingham City Council	Out of hours (18+)	0121 303 2296
Women fleeing domestic abuse	Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid	Mon-Fri: 9.15am-5.15pm	0808 800 0028 info@bswaid.org
Offenders being released from custodial sentences	Spring Housing Association	Mon-Fri: 9am-5pm	0121 663 6290 vpmailbox@springhousing.org.uk
Rough sleepers on the streets of Birmingham	Trident Reach	Outreach - most days and evenings	www.streetlink.org.uk
Single people and/or childless couples (25+)	SIFA Fireside	Mon-Fri: 9am-5pm	0121 766 1700 housingoptions@sifafireside.co.uk
Those with social care needs (aged 25+)	ASH at SIFA Fireside	Mon-Fri: 9am-5pm	0121 766 1700 Option 1

WHY

do people access
on street provision?



There are a number of reasons that people access on street support, and it's not always just about hunger. Of course, food poverty plays such a crucial part in homelessness and it's something that we must address across the board, but Birmingham's on street provision also provides a much-needed sense of community for some.

Many people are stuck in a cycle that leaves them feeling lonely or disconnected from society, which makes it harder for them to engage with services and seek the help they need. Birmingham's on street community groups have the power to build important relationships with people on the streets and at risk of homelessness, helping to build trust and engage in dialogue that encourages them to accept the help and advice on offer from their assigned Support Worker. This is where the Birmingham On Street Support Forum exists to improve communication between all parties and link people with services they need. There are a number of Navigators and Outreach Workers who help access to appropriate support and as they're already operating on the street, it makes sense that community groups engage with them.

We understand the importance of social connection on the street, but there are also risks associated with bringing large groups of vulnerable people together. Unfortunately, there are people who will take advantage of this, raising safeguarding issues and modern slavery concerns. On pages 18-19, you will find advice from SIFA Fireside and the West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network.

Alongside social isolation, food poverty remains an ongoing issue that sits at the heart of homelessness. We know that food poverty can be triggered by crisis with finances and/or other personal circumstances, such as behavioural and emotional wellbeing. Food poverty can mask a myriad of other inter-connected complex needs and The Food Justice Network, led by TAWS, knows that by working alongside a range of other specialist outreach support services, we can all work smarter to deliver faster, better-informed, and unified support that address food poverty and any other underlying conditions that lead to financial and social insecurity and homelessness.

We believe we can only fully optimise our efforts if we all voluntarily work together, in an adaptive and coordinated way, to deliver services to an agreed shared standard, which adds real value to everything we do. To achieve this goal, Birmingham On Street Support Forum invites all on-street community groups to work with us to create a collective set of guidance, advice and information.

This Handbook seeks to share our collective best-practice knowledge, experience and advice for the inclusive benefit of Birmingham's on street provision. We hope all community groups find this handbook useful and constructive, and see this as a "live" document that we will continue to update, to ensure the content is both accurate and relevant.

EFFECTIVE

on street provision

BIRMINGHAM IS A CITY KNOWN FOR ITS COMPASSIONATE PEOPLE, SO IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT THERE ARE A WEALTH OF COMMUNITY GROUPS AND VOLUNTEERS TAKING TO THE STREETS EVERY DAY AND NIGHT TO SUPPORT THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST. THIS CAN BE IN MANY FORMS, BUT USUALLY INCLUDES MOBILE TEAMS HANDING OUT SUPPLIES AND STATIC OUTDOOR SOUP KITCHENS.

Shelter released a report, in partnership with LSE Housing, which looked into “soup runs” in London and made some observations and recommendations that the Birmingham On Street Support Working Group hopes to take forward via the Forum.

For many years, commissioned services and soup runs (defined widely as “mobile food and drink distribution services (hot and cold) aimed principally at homeless people”) have often acted independently of each other. However, we see the power in better communication and collaboration by all, and the Forum hopes this handbook begins to bridge the gap between both sides and ensure that everyone is on the same page.

Ultimately, all parties are working towards the same goal: helping to end homelessness and support people into independent living.

Some of the recommendations from Shelter’s report, which is supported by members of the Birmingham On Street Support Forum, include:

- Community groups should assess need and existing provision before setting up and this should be reviewed periodically; with alternative types of support considered if there is duplication
- Groups should coordinate with one another, especially when operating in the same area, to make better use of resource
- Guidance should be provided and circulated to help all groups ensure a set of minimum standards surrounding health and safety, food hygiene, befriending, and signposting
- It is important for community groups to engage with other agencies, and vice versa, so that on street provision not only addresses an immediate need but is focused on helping people exit homelessness
- Mainstream agencies, including local authorities and street outreach teams, should accept the useful and valuable role that community groups delivering on street provision play



**James Walker from West Midlands Combined Authority is able to assist any group keen to explore the best use of their resources and how to avoid duplication.
Email: James.Walker@wmca.org.uk**

WHO

is operating as part of Birmingham's on street community?

The Active Wellbeing Society has been working hard over the past 12 months to understand the wealth of groups operating in the city centre, so that we can encourage more coordination and avoid duplication.

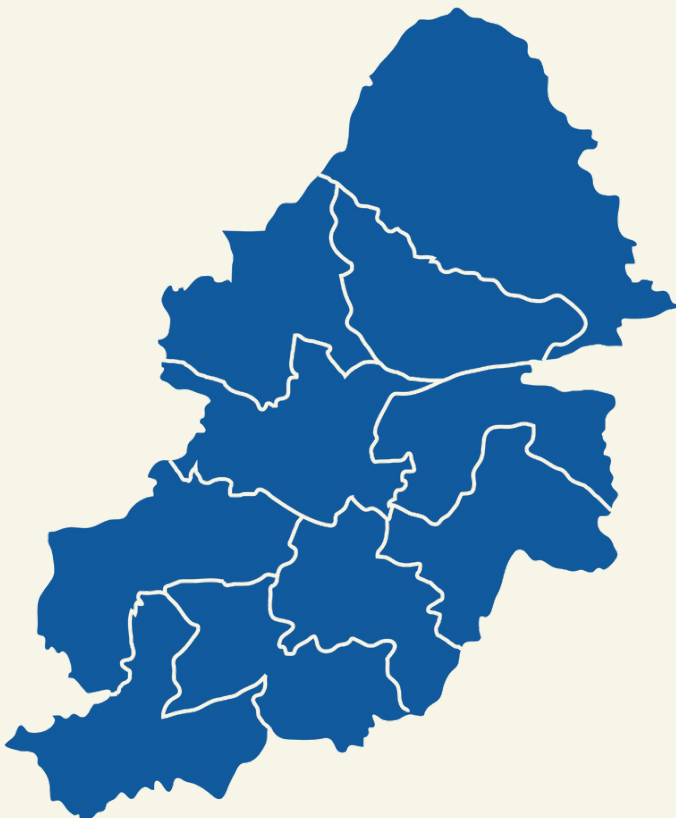
Most on street provision is delivered by volunteers so we hope that by encouraging better communication, resources can be utilised more fairly and people on the streets provided with more useful and sustained support.



[CLICK HERE FOR A LIST OF GROUPS OPERATING WITHIN BIRMINGHAM](#)

There are also free hot meals provided off the city centre streets, in most areas of the city. The Food Justice Network maps foodbanks & hot meals across the city.

**[CLICK HERE FOR A MAP OF
FOOD PROVISION
ACROSS THE CITY](#)**



There is already a lot of duplication taking place in the city centre, which means that more food and supplies are being wasted, as well as making it more difficult for on street outreach services to identify one central location to connect with people who need their help.

We hope that the Birmingham On Street Support Forum can start conversations that see community groups spreading their resource in a more meaningful way.

BIRMINGHAM ON STREET SUPPORT FORUM BRINGS TOGETHER COMMUNITY GROUPS DELIVERING ON STREET PROVISION. WE ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO ADOPT A SET OF STANDARDS...

- Providing services at the advertised time/day/location so that individuals on the streets are not left without the support and supplies they expect
- Communicating with and working alongside other groups to avoid duplication and waste; reviewing what you offer and thinking about alternative methods of support if needed
- Operating in sensible places, making sure not to block or obstruct roads or public places so that members of the public or vehicles cannot pass through
- Being considerate of local residents, businesses and members of the public, and keeping noise and disruption to a minimum
- Asking people to be respectful and form queues to avoid creating unmanageable crowds
- Ensuring that all volunteers and staff treat people fairly and with respect and dignity, including making sure that distribution of supplies is fair to minimise disputes, hostility, and tension
- Engaging with the commissioned services and other charities, community groups and projects, to ensure that everyone is working towards the overarching aim of ending homelessness: providing signposting information to those who need it
- Using street feeding activities to meaningfully engage with individuals, listening respectfully to what they say and signposting or referring to other support services as appropriate. See pages 21-23 for advice on befriending
- Ensuring that volunteers receive sufficient training (see page 16 for links to free training resources), including Level 2 Food Safety & Hygiene, First Aid, and Health & Safety
- Always having at least one group member with a dedicated mobile phone, ready to contact the emergency services if necessary
- Ensuring that volunteers have something that makes them identifiable (for example, branded hoodies, t-shirts, lanyards or hi vis jackets) to reassure both members of the public and people who are being supported on the street

BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

continued...

- Respecting people's right to privacy, especially surrounding being filmed or photographed without their consent
- Leaving the areas in which you operate neat, tidy and clean, collecting used cups and food containers and collecting as much litter as possible and disposing of it
- Consider carrying out DBS checks, which prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. They are affordable and provide reassurance that your volunteers are safe to be supporting vulnerable people. Find out more here.

THE AIM IS FOR ALL ORGANISATIONS WORKING ON BIRMINGHAM'S STREETS TO WORK TOWARDS AND ACHIEVE THIS BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE. AS A MINIMUM, ALL GROUPS SHOULD:

- **HAVE A SAFEGUARDING POLICY IN PLACE, WHICH INCLUDES A PROCESS TO ESCALATE ISSUES IN A TIMELY MANNER**
- **IMPLEMENT A DATA PROTECTION POLICY, AND ENSURE THAT NO IMAGES OR VIDEOS ARE TAKEN AND/OR SHARED ON SOCIAL MEDIA WITHOUT PRIOR CONSENT OF THE PERSON/PEOPLE IN QUESTION**
- **THROUGHOUT EVERY SESSION ON THE STREET, HAVING AT LEAST ONE VOLUNTEER OR MEMBER OF STAFF IN ATTENDANCE WHO HAS A LIVE ENHANCED DBS CHECK.**

If you would like any support in any of these areas or the Best Practice Guidance, please contact harpalb@bvsc.org.

Advice for on street groups:

FOOD HYGIENE

DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF ON STREET PROVISION THAT YOU PROVIDE, THERE WILL BE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS TO ENSURE THAT YOU ARE ADHERING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY, AND FOOD HYGIENE REGULATIONS. BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH TEAM WILL BE ABLE TO HELP WITH SPECIFIC QUERIES.



SOME INITIAL AREAS TO CONSIDER:

- Anyone preparing their own food to distribute on the streets must be registered as a food premises with Local Authority Environmental Health department ([free online registration](#))
- Food handlers should be trained to Level 2 Basic Food Hygiene, with someone present when serving open high-risked foods, e.g. dairy, meat, rice
- Any person handling food must be clean, free from food-borne illness or infection, and fit to work: i.e. free from infectious disease and skin complaints
- Food handlers should be wearing clean over-clothing
- A Food Safety Management System needs to be in place, e.g. Safer Food Better Business pack/Safe Catering pack implemented
- It is crucial to have temperature-controlled storage facilities: high risk food must be kept cold (8 degrees or colder), or hot (63 degrees or hotter). Evidence of these temperatures should be kept
- Allergen control is important and you must have a list of allergen information available for anyone who is consuming the food
- You should have suitable hand washing/sanitising provision for your team, as well as providing cleaning materials, antibacterial spray and paper towels
- All equipment used, both in food preparation and distribution on the streets, must be clean and in good condition. Within your premises, water should be sourced from a potable supply
- Vehicles used to transport food must be clean and in good repair and condition
- If you are working with external food providers (e.g. restaurants or cafés donating food), ensure that they have a minimum Food Hygiene Standard of FHRS 3 or higher

Advice for on street groups:

TRAINING



[CLICK HERE FOR AN EXTENSIVE LIST OF FREE TRAINING RESOURCES](#)

WE KNOW THAT TRAINING IS INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT AND SOMETIMES A MINEFIELD TO MANAGE WITH VOLUNTEERS. WE HAVE PULLED TOGETHER SOME LINKS TO RESOURCES THAT WILL SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR TEAMS.

FOOD HYGIENE

There are a number of sites that offer free training, with an optional payment for carrying out the test and certificate. While the certificate is a good way to show that you have achieved a standard, it's more important that people gain and use the skills and information. Free versions of level 2 food hygiene equivalent include [Cocoms](#) or [Alison](#). For those wanting a certificate, there are [versions at £20](#). Top up modules on [Food Safety](#), covering specific things like allergen labelling.

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is something that all on street support groups should prioritise, especially when working with vulnerable people. There are a number of useful resources, including this [Safeguarding e-learning](#), [Adult Safeguarding and Homelessness](#), and advice from [HomelessLink](#).

MENTAL HEALTH

[Rough Sleeper Mental Awareness training](#) is available. There are also occasional places on Mental Health First Aid courses, so please do get in touch if this is of interest and we can see if there are any courses happening.

FIRST AID

This is not a suggestion that you carry out First Aid, particularly with the ongoing Covid-19 guidance, however we do recommend that someone in your group is a qualified First Aider to do initial assessments, both on clients and on volunteers should anything be needed. If you need support getting onto a formal course with a test, please let us know and we can help identify these. There is usually a cost, but it may be possible to include you on a course being held by one of the partners in the network, please let us know if this is of interest and we'll see what we can do. However, we think all volunteers may benefit from free training such as [this](#) or the [British Red Cross](#) app to help keep themselves, and those around them, safer.

DATA PROTECTION

Data Protection is incredibly important and the NCVO has some [great advice](#) about your responsibilities and how to best manage GDPR. There is also training available via [NCVO](#), as well as [DSC](#) and [Civil Society](#).

RISK ASSESSMENT WRITING

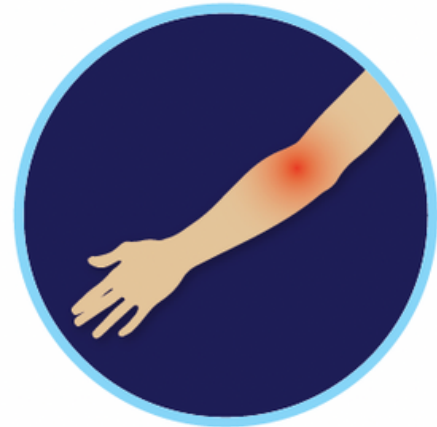
[Free training](#) (there is a paid for certificate if you need it) is available for Risk Assessments, which we highly recommend, to protect your organisation, your volunteers, and the people around you.

JAMES WALKER FROM WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY IS ALSO ABLE TO FACILITATE TRAINING AND SIGNPOST OPPORTUNITIES.



Wound infections

- wound infections are caused when a wound, including somewhere you inject drugs, gets infected by bacteria
- these infections can be serious and have led to people being taken into hospital, losing arms and legs, and even dying
- they are increasing across England in people who use drugs



Signs and symptoms

- heat, swelling, redness, aches and pain around a wound, joint or muscles
- pus and/ or unpleasant smell from site of wound
- wound that will not heal
- a swollen pus-filled lump under the skin (abscess)
- red, painful, hot, swollen, tender, blistered skin
- dizziness, confusion
- shortness of breath, fast breathing, difficulty breathing
- unexplained 'bruising' or rash

Ways to reduce risk

- wash your hands before injecting
- clean injection sites
- use new kit every time
- don't re-use filters or lick needles before using them
- try and avoid missed hits
- don't inject into your groin

Seek medical attention

If left untreated, these infections can get worse and can even kill. Early identification and treatment are vital. If someone has a combination of the symptoms mentioned above they should seek medical attention from their GP, call NHS 111 for advice or - **if symptoms are severe - go straight to hospital. In an emergency call 999**

Advice for on street groups:

KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE

THE WORK OF ON STREET GROUPS CAN BE CRUCIAL WHEN IT COMES TO KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE. YOU WILL OFTEN COME ACROSS VULNERABLE PEOPLE WHO MAY NEED ADDITIONAL HELP OR SUPPORT, SO KNOWING HOW TO SPOT CERTAIN SIGNS AND HOW BEST TO HELP THEM IS REALLY IMPORTANT. BELOW IS SOME GUIDANCE FOR YOU TO SHARE AMONGST YOUR TEAMS, BUT REMEMBER THAT TRAINED PROFESSIONALS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO DELIVER THE RIGHT SUPPORT IN THE RIGHT WAY. YOUR TEAMS BEING ABLE TO SPOT THE SIGNS AND SIGNPOST HELP IS THE ROLE THAT YOU PLAY.

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding adults means protecting the most vulnerable from abuse and neglect. The reality is that abuse and neglect can happen in different ways and be perpetrated by anyone, and it's important to remember that abuse can be a crime.

If you're delivering on street provision, you will be in contact with vulnerable people so it's important for your volunteers and staff to familiarise themselves with adult safeguarding. There is a free safeguarding basic awareness e-learning course available: www.tlds.learningpool.com and a free workbook for those with limited internet access; visit www.bsab.gov.uk to access this. The site also contains other useful information.

If your teams see something, are told something or something doesn't feel right, report it to the Adult Social Care team on 0121 303 1234, or by visiting www.bsab.org.uk and click on 'report a concern'. If there is ever a concern about a child, call: 0121 303 1888 or visit www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk. It also goes without saying but if someone is in immediate danger, call 999.

MODERN SLAVERY

People often ask if 'modern slavery' is even an issue in Birmingham, and the answer is yes! Last year alone, there were over 700 modern slavery crimes recorded in the West Midlands, and Birmingham sees around 40% of these. It is a complex issue but some of the key indicators that your team might look out for include someone who is: scared or intimidated, closely guarded or 'branded' with a tattoo, showing signs of physical abuse including bruising or scarring on their arms, part of a large group of adults or children who consistently return to the same area to beg, working in excess of 'normal' working hours, unable to access their own belongings especially ID, living in overcrowded conditions, and many more!

When we talk about Modern Slavery, we're referring to Human Trafficking or Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour.

SAFETY

continued...

MODERN SLAVERY CONTINUED...

Human Trafficking involves the recruitment and movement to another state or within the same state for the purposes of exploitation. Victims of trafficking are subjected to various forms of exploitation, which can include domestic servitude, forced labour, sexual exploitation, criminal activity (drugs, begging, benefit fraud), organ harvesting, and forced marriage.

When referring to Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour a person may not have been trafficked (experienced an act of movement or recruitment) to have experienced modern slavery. Forced labour refers to all work or service which is demanded from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the person has not offered himself voluntarily.

Human trafficking and people smuggling are not the same thing. People smuggling is the illegal movement of people across international borders, the person generally pays a smuggler a fee and when they arrive they are free. There is no intention of exploitation when they arrive. Human trafficking is different; the intention is to move a person for the purpose of exploitation and there is no need to cross an international border. Smuggling is a crime against the state, trafficking is a crime against the person.

The West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network is a network of agencies working in partnership to tackle modern slavery in the West Midlands and beyond, in two key ways:

- Develop and maintain an effective regional multi agency anti-slavery network to raise awareness, reduce the threat and harm, and rescue and support survivors of modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation in the West Midlands and beyond
- Develop strategic partnerships and collaborations with other regional, national and international organisations to tackle modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation including networks, partnerships, agencies and learning establishments

Again, as on street groups, it's important to be aware of the issue and the important role your teams can play in getting people help. Your teams are not expected to be professionals, so if they suspect any of the above, here are some useful contacts:

- The Salvation Army Modern Slavery Helpline: 0800 808 3733
- Unseen Helpline: 08000 121 700
- Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA): 0800 432 0804
- West Midlands Police

There is also a dedicated Anti-Slavery and Homelessness Development Officer based at SIFA Fireside:

nicolemorris@sifafireside.co.uk
0121 766 1700



SAFETY

continued...

DEALING WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

We all have mental health, and there are different ways of defining it. Often, we refer to either having good mental health or poor mental health, or having no diagnosis of mental illness or a diagnosis of severe mental illness.

Mental health difficulties are common. Throughout the course of any person's life, it is highly likely that they will either develop mental ill health themselves or have close contact with someone who does. Even more so when someone has experienced, or has been at risk of, homelessness. However, there is still a lot of stigma, discrimination and misunderstanding around mental illness.

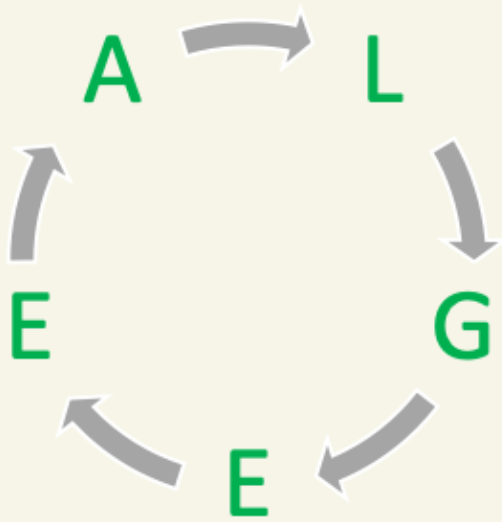
No absolutes

Maximum mental wellbeing/fitness

The continuum . . .



It's important for all on street groups to remember that it's not their responsibility to manage any individual cases; there is specialist support available. However, there is a simple framework that may help your volunteers and employees, as and when they come across someone on the street who needs assistance and guidance: A-L-G-E-E.



It isn't possible to fully cover all mental health challenges that you'll face, but Mental Health First Aid guidance is a great way to empower your teams as they head out on to the streets. Although the action of assisting with a crisis is the highest priority, the other actions in the Mental Health First Aid plan may need to happen first.

APPROACH, ASSESS & ASSIST

Approach the person, assess and assist with any crises. For example: if they might harm themselves, are experiencing extreme distress, or their behaviour is disturbing to others.

LISTEN & COMMUNICATE NON-JUDGEMENTALLY

Most people who are experiencing distress, want to be genuinely listened to with empathy, before being offered options and support that might help them.

GIVE SUPPORT & INFORMATION

Be sure to check that it's wanted at the time of the conversation. If so, this support might include emotional support (recognising how they feel) or practical help (with tasks that might be overwhelming them).

ENCOURAGE PROFESSIONAL HELP

Encourage the person to get appropriate professional help. In Birmingham, the [Community Mental Health Team for Homeless People](#) is the statutory NHS service. The [Homeless Health Exchange](#) offers assessment for relevant services, including health and social care.

ENCOURAGE OTHER SUPPORT

Encourage other support, where appropriate, from other individuals, voluntary and community sector organisations, and explore self-help possibilities.

These actions are not steps to be followed in a fixed order. Remember to be responsive to anyone you are attempting to help, flexible and culturally competent in your approach – listening carefully throughout and setting aside any pre-conceived judgements about the person or their situation as well as avoiding expressing those judgements.

THERE IS A 24/7 URGENT MENTAL HEALTH HELP, ADVICE AND SUPPORT LINE: 0121 262 3555 OR FREEPHONE 0800 915 9292. IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, CONTACT 999 OR 101.

the importance of

BEFRIENDING

One of the most powerful things that members of Birmingham's On Street Support Forum can offer befriending, as volunteers and staff can conduct meaningful dialogue with people when handing out food, drink, clothing and supplies.

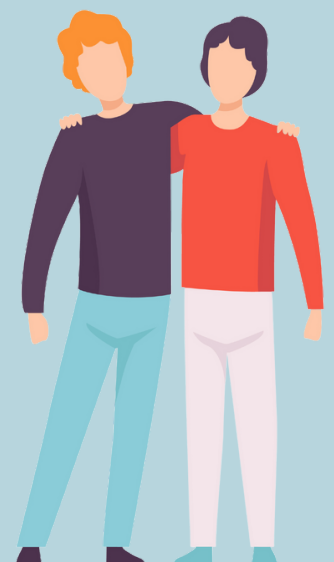
When a person becomes homeless, for whatever reason, they lose a lot more than just a roof over their head. Along with this primary loss can come a range of secondary losses, including access to friends and the security of a familiar neighbourhood. Even if they manage to access temporary housing, getting the rest of their life back on track can be difficult.

We all need support and encouragement to achieve our goals, and most of us look for this from family, friends, and colleagues. A homeless person risks being cut off from contacts that the rest of us take for granted. There is potential to build on the strong and trusting relationships developed as part of your on street activities through befriending, which can have a more sustainable impact on the cycle of homelessness and social exclusion and improve wellbeing.

WHAT A BEFRIENDER CAN OFFER:

- companionship and support
- help with linking into local activities, e.g. leisure and sports centres, libraries, colleges and community events
- company and support in attending doctor or hospital appointments
- help in dealing with the local housing or social services department
- support in developing independent living skills, e.g. cooking, gardening, and managing a household budget
- help in setting personal goals or objectives and working towards them

Befriending has been identified as a natural continuation of some of the on street support, as people move off the streets into accommodation. As members of the Birmingham On Street Support Forum, we all value the different approaches that different groups might take, but agree to some minimum standards, as well as points to consider in setting up our schemes. Below is some guidance, which includes advice from [Shelter](#), the [NCVO approved standards for mentoring and befriending](#), the [Housing Justice Guidance](#) and [Befriending Network Guidance](#).



BEFRIENDING

continued...

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- What need have you identified and what do you want to achieve? Who will you target? Do you need funding? How will you design the programme?
- Will your group offer befriending or mentoring? These are two parts of the same spectrum but have different aims and ways of working. Groups should consider which they think is needed, make sure volunteers are adequately trained, and ensure expectations of the befrienders and clients are clear
- Some befriending relationships are more informal chats, some set out clear goals. A group can offer one or the other, or a mix depending on the needs and interests of the client and befriender, but again Groups should ensure everyone is clear on the expectations
- Community groups should consider a fair and transparent way for matching befrienders and clients, and an end date of the befriending should be discussed up front so everyone is clear on ongoing expectations, and the process doesn't end up with the client feeling abandoned
- Often befriending groups are attached to an organisation that provides other services, perhaps food, or housing or debt advice, which makes it a perfect add-on
- Some effective schemes involve relationships with lived experience, so it may be worth considering how you might support clients to become mentors in the future, or can signpost those who would prefer this type of befriending to another service
- The design of any befriending scheme should take into consideration ideas and feedback from clients to try and make it as relevant as possible
- It may also make sense to add on telephone support
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of your befriending activities will allow you to improve the way things are run, or make a case for any funding support needed



BEFRIENDING

set of standards

- Your group remains responsible for drawing up a Risk Assessment, and carrying out DBS checks where appropriate. You must also have suitable insurance in place
- The needs of a client should be assessed before embarking on the relationship to try and ascertain the value that will be added by the befriending, and that there isn't another service that is more appropriate
- You should implement a clear process for referring a client into their befriending programme. It should be clear to everyone if a client is accepted, or whether they are on a waiting list, or it has been deemed that a befriending relationship cannot be arranged
- You will undertake recruitment, training and regular ongoing support and supervision of the befriender. This includes considering the safety of clients and befrienders
- Consent is a huge part of befriending; you need consent from clients to be befriended and also agreement to share their personal detail under GDPR. Clients should also give specific consent for their data to be shared with other agencies, which is something to make clear to both befriender and clients, as we encourage you to always loop commissioned services in with your activities
- Befrienders need to commit adequate time to build a relationship with the client and there needs to be a monitoring process to ensure both parties are finding it rewarding
- Clients should be encouraged to seek relevant statutory support where available, as befriending should not replace this support, but complement it
- Clients should be encouraged to develop wider social networks, where possible, recognising that we are all stronger when we have multiple relationships to rely upon
- Befrienders will be volunteers, and won't accept money from clients or third parties
- Befriending should ideally take place in a neutral space, and any home visits should be carefully planned with the support of your organisation
- Boundaries should be discussed with the befriender and the client, and groups should consider advising befrienders not to give out their address or phone number

IF YOU ARE KEEN TO ADD BEFRIENDING, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH AND WE CAN HELP GUIDE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS, AS WELL AS PROVIDE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION TO LOOP IN THE RELEVANT PARTIES.

SIGNPOSTING



what to do if...

You see someone rough sleeping, or you feel is at risk, over the age of 18: In the first instance contact StreetLink via their website www.streetlink.org.uk or call 0300 500 0914. Unless you feel it is an emergency, in which case call 999

You see someone who is rough sleeping, or you feel at risk of rough sleeping, under the age of 18: Call either 999 or 101

Someone is fleeing domestic abuse and in need of help: Contact Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid: 0808 800 0028 or Birmingham City Council: 0121 303 2296 (out of hours)

Someone over the age of 18 is in accommodation but has problems or concerns: If provided by a commissioned service: Birmingham City Council's Housing Team: 0121 675 5779. If in exempt or private rented sector accommodation email: prs@birmingham.gov.uk.

Someone under 18 has accommodation concerns: Contact St Basil's Youth Hub on 0300 303 0099 or text NEEDSTBASILS to 62277

Someone needs medical attention that isn't an emergency: Direct them to the Homeless Health Exchange. Appointments can be made by contacting 0121 465 3965

Someone is looking for advice on benefits, status and visas, specialist housing, and general health and wellbeing: Direct them to the ASH team at SIFA Fireside

You have a modern slavery concern: Call 08000 121 700, email exploitation_hub@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk or, if an emergency, calling 999 or 101

Someone is looking for food: Information can be found on the [Food Justice Network map](#) and on this calendar daily activity

Someone is looking for support but has no recourse to public funds (NRPF): Contact the Asylum Support and Immigration Resource Team: www.asirt.org.uk or The Refugee and Migrant Centre: www.rmcentre.org.uk

**YOU WILL ALSO FIND ADDITIONAL ADVICE AT
WWW.STREETSUPPORT.NET/BIRMINGHAM/ADVICE OR BY SCANNING:**



BIRMINGHAM ON STREET SUPPORT HANDBOOK

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF BIRMINGHAM'S THRIVING ON STREET SUPPORT COMMUNITY. THE WORK YOU'RE DOING IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE EVERY DAY!

WE HOPE TO KEEP BUILDING THE BIRMINGHAM ON STREET SUPPORT FORUM, SHARING IDEAS AND EXPERTISE, AGREEING BEST PRACTICE AND STANDARDS, AVOIDING DUPLICATION AND OVER-PROVISION, AND DISTRIBUTING RESOURCE IN THE BEST POSSIBLE WAY. MOST OF ALL, WORKING TOWARDS THE SAME GOAL: ENDING HOMELESSNESS.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BIRMINGHAM ON STREET SUPPORT FORUM, EMAIL:

HARPAL BATH: HARPALB@BVSC.ORG

TARA TOMES: TARA@LETSFEEDBRUM.COM

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