

# FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **More support for rough sleepers through council's extended cold weather provision**

Fenland's homelessness teams have been able to offer even greater support to anyone rough sleeping during this winter's freezing temperatures after Fenland District Council expanded its Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP).

SWEP is a humanitarian response that requires local authorities to provide emergency accommodation to anyone experiencing rough sleeping during severe weather – including people who have no right to claim benefits or housing in the UK or who have refused offers of accommodation and support.

Most councils activate the emergency protocol when temperatures are forecast to be zero degrees or lower for three consecutive nights.

But this winter, Fenland District Council has triggered its SWEP when there has been sub-zero "feels-like" temperatures due to high winds as well as 'actual' temperatures, and warmer nights during prolonged freezing spells.

Cllr Samantha Hoy, Fenland District Council's Cabinet member for Housing, said: "SWEP can offer a vital lifeline to any rough sleepers at risk during freezing winter weather. It also gives us another chance to offer them the help and support they might need to leave the streets behind for good.

"Previously, we found that if the protocol ended due to one or two warmer nights and there was a break in the emergency accommodation provided, then some of the progress made with longer-term support could be lost.

"This winter we've adopted a flexible, common-sense approach and expanded the protocol to continue the excellent work the district's homelessness teams provide. Having this longer period to work with vulnerable individuals has achieved better and sustained outcomes, with many rough sleepers using the opportunity to settle and engage with services on a deeper level."

The Council works with Wisbech charity, The Ferry Project, to provide emergency accommodation through SWEP, with bed and breakfast provision being used if additional beds are needed. It also works with Amicus Trust, Change Grow Live, Clarion Housing, Cambridgeshire County Council and other partners to provide support.

Anyone provided with emergency accommodation is given the opportunity for support with a broad spectrum of services including health, finance, addiction and benefits and most importantly the chance to speak to someone who understands.

If you are rough sleeping when SWEP is activated, or at any other time of the year, or you are concerned about someone else sleeping rough, please:

- Visit [www.thestreetlink.org.uk](http://www.thestreetlink.org.uk) for an alert to be sent to a local outreach team.

- Or call 01354 654321 – please be persistent if your call is unable to be answered immediately.

**ENDS**

**Notes to Editors**

For media enquiries, please contact the Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226 or email: [communications@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:communications@fenland.gov.uk)