



London Network of Nurses and Midwives

## Position statement on COVID provision for winter 2020

In response to the new PHE guidance stating that communal night shelters should only be used as a last resort, and rolling night shelters cannot be used, the London Network of Nurses and Midwives Homelessness Group feels that it is likely that all rough sleepers will not be able to be accommodated this winter, unless adequate alternative self-contained provision is found very quickly.

LNNM members have already seen an increase in rough sleeping in the last month. New people have been seen coming out on to the streets, as a result of new evictions and/or people losing their jobs. We are also aware that some Local Authorities are now saying that they have no further current responsibility to rough sleeping clients with No Recourse to Public Funds now lockdown is over. This increase in rough sleeping is a real concern, especially in the context of London's recent move into Tier 2 Covid restrictions.

Homeless healthcare teams delivering outreach in London need clear joined up information as soon as possible from the Greater London Authority / Local Authorities about what alternative self-contained accommodation is being planned for this winter, including the provision that will be made for SWEP (severe weather emergency protocol).

As highlighted by the Faculty for Homeless and Inclusion Health and UCL's Collaborative Center for Inclusion Health<sup>1</sup>, a SWEP provision incorporating shared airspace accommodation could create a crisis of infection. Equally, not delivering SWEP effectively could leave people exposed to weather conditions that may put their lives at immediate risk.

Outreach nurses need to be able to make fully informed decisions about how to prioritise clients who are homeless for emergency placements, if it turns out that there is limited provision, and everyone cannot be brought back in.

Nurses and other front-line health staff also need to be part of any planning and decision making process going forward, and should not be put in a position where they are the last to know the plans, and have to respond at the eleventh hour to provide crisis triage interventions on the ground. Our membership would appreciate being able to provide direct representatives to emergency planning meetings with immediate effect.

### **London Network of Nurses and Midwives Homelessness Group**

Charity no. 1183853

<https://homeleshealthnetwork.net/>  
[contact@homeleshealthnetwork.net](mailto:contact@homeleshealthnetwork.net)  
[@lnmhomeless](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Story, A & Hayward, A. (2020) *Public Health rationale for NOT opening/re-opening communal airspace sleeping facilities for homeless people during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic*: UCL Collaborative Centre for Inclusion Health. Available at: <https://www.pathway.org.uk/publication/public-health-rationale-for-not-opening-re-opening-communal-airspace-sleeping-facilities-for-homeless-people-during-the-sars-cov-2-pandemic/>