

# STANDARDS FOR OUTREACH TEAMS

## BACKGROUND

In *Vision to End Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out Nationwide*, the Government pledges a commitment that no-one should spend a second night on the street, or make their home on the streets. Outreach teams play a vital role in ensuring this vision is realised. These standards have been developed to form a quick reference guide for outreach teams to ensure they link in with any local service offer for people new to the streets. For more details see the new No Second Night Out standards, designed to ensure excellence is achieved and good practice is shared: <http://www.homeless.org.uk/effective-action/NSNO>

**The Outreach Balanced Scorecard** was commissioned by CLG, London Borough of Southwark and Thames Reach in 2009. It aims to provide local authority commissioners with a framework through which they can assess the quality and effectiveness of local outreach services. The Outreach Balanced Scorecard is an in-depth quality assessment tool that can be used in partnership with this quick check list. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/archived/publications/housing/outreachbalancedscorecard>

**Why outreach?** Street outreach teams offer a valuable support service to some of the most deeply excluded people in our communities. Outreach workers facilitate the crucial first step from the street to home. This work is challenging and requires workers to be attentive, proactive and persistent to understand the individual needs and realistic options of each rough sleeper.

## THE BEST OUTREACH TEAMS ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN:

### Understanding the NSNO standards and offer including

- ✓ Methods to identify new rough sleepers
- ✓ Ensuring a single point of entry for all new rough sleepers
- ✓ Understanding the 'offers' available to rough sleepers

### Working in partnership

- ✓ Working collaboratively with partners including hostels, day centres, health (and mental health), drug and alcohol teams, police, fire services, forestry services, coast guards, housing and benefit teams, local authority, probation, prison services and reconnection services
- ✓ Challenge decisions made by partner agencies in a constructive and solution focused way

- ✓ Attend task and targeting meetings as well as relevant forums
- ✓ Following, and where necessary developing, appropriate protocols
- ✓ Be actively involved at a strategic level to establish pathways for rough sleepers
- ✓ Demonstrating flexibility when working with external agencies (even if they do not)

### Having flexible working patterns

- ✓ Developing shift patterns that meet the need of the client not the staff, (which means nights and weekends)
- ✓ Working from a variety of locations (preferably building-based services)
- ✓ Being flexible to work across caseloads to make things happen

### Being assertive and pro active

#### Advocating for hard-to-reach people by

- ✓ Using a personalised and tailored responses
- ✓ Using expertise from those who have an experience of homelessness
- ✓ Always giving a consistent message
- ✓ Holding your line, even when it's tough
- ✓ Viewing change as possible for everyone, everyday
- ✓ Celebrating small steps and recognising complex needs and the barriers individuals may face
- ✓ Demonstrating unconditional regard for all
- ✓ Being an effective advocate with agencies

- ✓ Working with a robust reconnections policy
- ✓ Alerting rough sleepers to the dangers of rough sleepers
- ✓ Never condone living on the streets
- ✓ Having an adequate response to street population and methods for tackling antisocial behaviour, drinking, begging, sex working and drug and alcohol use.
- ✓ Working with the police

### Gathering and sharing intelligence

- ✓ Work with partners to know and understand your street population
- ✓ Work with the public
- ✓ Monitor and evaluate

### Risk assessment

- ✓ Understanding the risk of rough sleeping and outreach work
- ✓ Follow procedures accurately
- ✓ Apply a positive approach to risk taking