

Rough sleeping on Stroud Green Road

Haringey and Islington Councils are aware that a group of vulnerable people have been sleeping rough under the railway bridge on Stroud Green Road, outside Finsbury Park Interchange. Both councils recognise the significant harm that rough sleeping presents to these individuals and to the wider **community**. We are working together to help get them into safe and secure accommodation.

Who is supporting these vulnerable individuals?

Islington and Haringey Council both commission our own specialist outreach services:

- **St. Mungo's and Thames Reach** provide support and offer routes off the streets to those sleeping rough
- **Change Grow Live (CGL)** and **Bringing Unity Back into the Community (BUBIC)** provide specialist support and harm minimization advice around substance misuse
- **Women at the Well** provide support to vulnerable women

What are you doing to help?

- We have offered a route off the street to every individual identified as sleeping rough in the area. Not all have accepted these offers or choose to stay in their accommodation all of the time
- We hold six-weekly **Rough Sleeping Steering Groups**, attended by members of **Islington and Haringey Council's rough sleeping and Community Safety & Enforcement teams, Met Police** and third-sector partners named above
- We have developed a joint action plan to address the issues in the area, and agreed how we will work together to help rough sleepers
- We have increased outreach support in the area. All those new to rough sleeping are assessed by outreach workers within 48 hours and offered support and a route off the street
- The Finsbury Park policing team has established proactive, high-visibility patrols and joint operations with neighbouring police teams to target drug dealing, including using warrants on nearby addresses thought to be involved in drug dealing and issuing closure orders on properties being used to sell or consume Class A drugs in the Finsbury Park ward

Why are individuals still rough sleeping under the bridge?

Some individuals have been placed into accommodation or successfully reconnected elsewhere. However, some people who have been offered accommodation have chosen to return to Stroud Green Road. Others have refused all offers. One reason for this is that people are being given large sums of money by kind, caring and generous members of the public. Many of these individuals are battling with substance addiction and drug dealers exploiting these very vulnerable people by taking the money they have been given in exchange for crack cocaine and heroin.

What harm is being caused?

The cycle of drug use and rough sleeping causes significant harm:

- **To the individuals:** risk of overdose and physical health complications from injecting, such as Deep Vein Thrombosis, loss of limbs, contraction of blood-borne viruses. The average age of death of a male rough sleeper is 47 and 43 for a female. The risk of being the victim of violence is 17 times higher for someone rough sleeping.
- **To the community:** witnessing the suffering rough sleeping causes creates significant concern and emotional distress. During clean-ups, the councils have found used syringes, faeces, rats, rotting food etc. which pose a serious health and safety risk to everyone in the area.

It's for these reasons and more that we need to stop enabling people to sleep on the streets and help them access the right support

What else do you plan to do?

- We will continue to support the individuals and offer routes off the streets
- **We will be running weekly 'Days of Action' where representatives from both Islington and Haringey Councils and our third-sector outreach partners will give information and advice to the community**
- **We are developing campaigns with Thames Reach and St. Mungo's to advise the public of the risks of giving money to people begging and suggesting alternative ways to help**
- We have asked the NHS Tuberculosis van to visit to offer vaccinations and tests to those rough sleeping

What can I do to help?

- Talk to the person. Being kind and interested can be invaluable
- Please think very carefully before giving money to people who are rough sleeping. We need to encourage individuals to leave the streets, not enable them to stay at significant risk of harm;
- Consider donating to a homeless charity or a night shelter in Islington or Haringey (details below)
- If you see someone new rough sleeping, report this to Streetlink giving as much detail as you can on their location and a description of the person to help the team identify them
- Buy a copy of The Big Issue magazine from a registered vendor

Contacts:

- Thames Reach: www.thamesreach.org.uk/ 020 7702 4260
- **St. Mungo's:** www.mungos.org/ 020 3856 6000
- Women at the Well: www.watw.org.uk/ 020 7520 1710
- Highway of Holiness Night Shelter, Haringey: www.highwayofholiness.co.uk/ 020 8808 4444
- All People All Places Winter Shelter, Haringey: www.allpeopleallplaces.org/ 020 3643 1373
- The Margins Day Centre – held at Union Chapel, 19b Compton Terrace, N1 2UN on Wednesday from 11am until 2pm.
- The Manna Day Centre– held at St Stephens Church, 17 Canonbury Rd, London N1 2DF on Tuesday from 7pm to 9pm, Wednesday 1pm to 3pm and Friday 9am -11am.
- Housing Aid centre at 222 Upper St, London N1 1YA for advice on housing options available to you - there is a drop in service on Monday to Friday from 9am until 5pm.
- Streetlink: www.streetlink.org/ 0300 500 0914
- Report any aggressive begging/anti-social behaviour to the local policing team by e-mailing NI-Finsburyparkward@met.police.uk or telephoning 0203 276 3030. In an emergency always call 999
- Report any anti-social behaviour occurring to your area housing office or Islington Council's out-of-hours ASB line: 020 7527 7272, Haringey Council's ASB line: 020 8489 1335
<http://www.haringey.gov.uk/community/community-safety-and-engagement/anti-social-behaviour>

We know we can't do this alone. If you have any comments, questions or suggestions on how we can tackle this harm, please contact sophie.konradsen@haringey.gov.uk or sarah.turley@islington.gov.uk