



City of London Corporation

Protocol

SWEP – Severe Weather Emergency Provision

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1. Background

This SWEP protocol is reviewed annually by the Rough Sleeping Team and circulated to SWEP partners. The separate appendices for Winter and Summer SWEP allow for an agile, in-year approach to planning. The relevant appendix will be circulated to partners in the autumn and spring respectively.

1.1. Winter SWEP

Historically, the protocols and provision for when SWEP is activated varied significantly between London boroughs, both in terms of the number and location of emergency beds, and when the protocol was triggered. Many London boroughs waited until the Greater London Authority (GLA) triggered Pan-London SWEP (based on temperatures in Westminster dropping to freezing or below for three or more consecutive nights) to activate their local SWEP whilst others had their own activation point. Some boroughs also failed to make any extra beds available during freezing temperatures, solely relying in Pan-London provision funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA). As part of the Mayor of London commitment to tackle rough sleeping across the capital, for winter 2017/18 the GLA for the first time released SWEP guidance to ensure a consistent response from London boroughs and set a minimum number of bed spaces that a local authority must make available, and fill, before Pan-London provision can be accessed. The guidance also set that SWEP would now be activated and deactivated centrally by the GLA for London.

The Mayor believes that triggering SWEP on the first night of freezing temperatures and standardising practice across London will help safeguard all the capital's rough sleepers from the worst of the negative health effects of severe weather. Experience and learning from every winter is recorded, explored and incorporated into this and all future protocols.

1.2 Summer SWEP

During summer 2022, much of the UK experienced record-breaking daytime temperatures. Greater London recorded max temperatures in excess of 40 degrees Centigrade for the first time and two separate heatwaves saw nighttime temperatures regularly settle around 20 degrees. Various measures were mobilised at short notice including advice on keeping cool, provision of water and suncream, signposting to daytime cool spaces and accommodation offers. While heatwave conditions are not new and hot weather mitigations have been mobilised in the past, there is now recognition in the sector that the probability of extreme heat is increasing and that this presents a comparable, if different, risk to rough sleepers.

The GLA drafted a hot weather (H-SWEP) protocol during winter 2022/23. H-SWEP and Summer SWEP are interchangeable terms. This is used by Local Authorities in the same way as the existing (winter) SWEP protocol – as a guide with which to align local arrangements. The protocol is closely linked to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Heat-Health alerts that are issued in partnership with the Met Office between 01 June and 15 September. The aim of these alerts is to flag the impact that the high temperatures may have, both from the severity of the heat but also non-temperature related factors, for example capacity within the health-care system to cope with heat-related health conditions. There are four levels from Green which is preparedness, and no alert will be issued to Red requiring an emergency response across all sectors.

2. City of London SWEP Protocol - Aims

This protocol is an overarching document which sets out the City of London's approach to organising and delivering SWEP measures every year. We recognise that arrangements may change from year to year depending upon the resources available, therefore, specific arrangements will be prepared each year, for both winter and summer SWEP, and circulated to partners in advance of the relevant season. These arrangements will be attached to this document as an appendix each year.

The primary aim of SWEP is to prevent loss of life or harm and to reduce rough sleeping during extreme weather to as near zero as possible by:

- Using SWEP to engage with entrenched rough sleepers with a local connection who would normally be resistant to coming inside

- Using SWEP to engage rough sleepers who do not have a local connection with support and reconnection services
- The priority in all cases is to prevent loss of life or harm over the intent to verify rough sleeping, respect local connection status or engage with support and reconnection protocols.
- Wherever possible, the 'in for good principle' will apply. This means that if a rough sleeper is brought into accommodation, the City of London will continue to accommodate that person for as long as it takes to arrive at a Credible Service Offer¹

The City of London Corporation will design a response that caters for a range of support needs to ensure every rough sleeper in our district has a viable support offer and/or accommodation option during the extreme weather. The provision available, plus extra capacity available should meet the full spectrum of support needs and characteristics present in the City rough sleeping population. This information will be cascaded down through partners by the Head of Service, Service Manager or Rough Sleeping Coordinator in the first instance.

3. Activation

Ordinarily, the City of London will await a SWEP activation from the GLA before proceeding with a local activation. Partners will be notified through an email by 11.00 on the day of the activation. Winter SWEP is activated by GLA when one or more London borough has forecast temperatures of zero degrees or below for one or more night. Summer SWEP is also activated by GLA but when UKSHA issue an Amber or Red Heat Health alert for London, however additional daytime provision is implemented when a Yellow alert is in place. A summary of the UKHSA Heat-Health alert levels are below:

¹ Please see City of London Credible Service Offer (CSO) Policy for more information

Alert level	What this level indicates	Possible scenario when this is triggered
Green (preparedness)	No alert will be issued as the conditions are likely to have minimal impact and health – however, planning and preparations are recommended.	
Yellow (response)	These alerts cover a range of situations, but may be issued when people who are more vulnerable (such as those who are rough sleeping) may struggle to cope. A yellow alert may also be issued if the confidence in the weather forecast is low, so has the potential to be upgraded.	This may be triggered when forecasted temperatures in London approach 30°C for a few days, with high overnight temperatures – but a yellow alert could be issued due to a range of factors. ⁶
Amber (enhanced response)	An amber alert indicates that weather impacts are likely to be felt across the whole health service, with potential for the whole population to be at risk. Non-health sectors may also start to observe impacts and a more significant coordinated response may be required.	This this may be triggered when forecasted temperatures in London approach 32°C – but an amber alert could be issued due to a range of factors.
Red (emergency response)	A red alert would indicate significant risk to life for even the healthy population. It may mean that national critical infrastructure failures are anticipated – such as power outages or major roads and rail lines closed.	

Winter SWEP will normally be deactivated when a forecast predicts two or more consecutive nights of a temperature of one degree Celsius or higher and Summer SWEP will be activated when an Amber or Red Heat Health alert is downgraded by UKSHA to Yellow, Green or no alert.

In the event the City of London wishes to activate SWEP independently of GLA activation, the Head of Service is responsible for making the decision.

The Rough Sleeping Service Manager is responsible for activating/deactivation SWEP. In the Rough Sleeping Services Manager’s absence authorisation to activate SWEP will fall to the Rough Sleeping Coordinator. In the absence of the first two officers the task will be escalated to The Head of Service in consultation with the Outreach Manager. As a last resort the Outreach Manager may trigger SWEP using the Pan London recommendation as a guide.

4. Flexible SWEP response and shared air spaces

Under most circumstances it is assumed that the City of London can meet the GLA’s guidelines within the arrangements detailed in the relevant appendix. Where SWEP periods extend beyond 7 days, or the weather event is particularly serious, it is acknowledged that existing resources may become depleted.

Individuals who may ordinarily reject SWEP offers or make arrangements which safeguard themselves, may now request assistance. This can result in demand for SWEP capacity that exceeds the arrangements described.

As per the guidance from the GLA, City and Hackney Public Health and in line with CoL's flexible approach to SWEP, shared air spaces accommodation will be used if the risk of not placing someone outweighs the risk of introducing them to a shared air space. If there is a need for additional capacity, this will be arranged with commissioned accommodation providers, and/or voluntary and faith sector groups. In extreme cases, consideration will be given to mobilising the CoL Local Resilience Forum. Where possible, it is CoL's aim to avoid using shared airspace SWEP provision. Clients offered a shared airspace provision will only be placed after a full assessment of any health needs that may put them at a higher risk of serious harm from respiratory viruses. Providers of SWEP provision will be given up to date guidance from public bodies City and Hackney Public Health, on the subject of advice regarding mitigation of health risk when using shared airspaces. Updates will be included as appendices to this document as and when available.

5. Contributors & roles

City of London Rough Sleeping Team

- Will notify SWEP providers that SWEP has been activated
- Will confirm arrangements with the outreach team
- Will confirm that SWEP has been deactivated
- Will make supplementary spaces available in B&B accommodation upon request. These can be booked in advance of the first SWEP shift. In the event of an extended SWEP period, it will be at the Head of Service's discretion whether to continue to re-book unused B&B spaces
- Will review SWEP capacity on a continual basis and expand placements available if needed.
- Will record and track activity for internal monitoring
- Will track and cascade public health advice
- Review SWEP periods with partners and update arrangements as necessary
- Will provide commissioning support where contracts are required

Commissioned outreach providers

- Will identify clients who are particularly vulnerable in advance. This data will include need and risk information as well a location where they can be found.
- Will use risk assessment tools to determine priorities.
- Will adopt a flexible shift pattern through the SWEP period to ensure that rough sleepers are given as many opportunities as possible. It is recognised that this approach may need to adapt if the SWEP is of a long duration.
- Make use of the temporary housing situation to casework clients and offer solutions and alternatives to rough sleeping
- Contribute to pre-winter preparation meetings and post SWEP review.
- Support clients to safely maintain SWEP accommodation and arrange subsequent moves to longer-term and sustainable accommodation or reconnect to existing support professional and personal networks.
- Will distribute health advice, water, sunscreen etc during activations
- To be aware of other accommodation provision over the winter period and utilise this recourse in addition to CoL SWEP accommodation (Crisis at Christmas and Winter Shelters)
- Ensure all accepted SWEP accommodation is recorded as such on CHAIN and provide analytics at the end of SWEP periods upon request
- Will refer to statutory safeguarding processes where applicable

Accommodation Providers (Pathway)

- Will make spaces available for rough sleepers as agreed
- Will ensure that this is compliant with COVID-19 guidance, as provided by City and Hackney Public Health.
- Will make use of their existing staffing provision to manage risk and meet needs
- Will arrange extra staff to cover staff cover in the event that daytime temperatures remain below zero
- Will agree any extra arrangements with the Head of Homelessness Prevention & Rough Sleeping and record any costs to be reimbursed by City of London
- Will record attendance on CHAIN and/or INFORM or another system
- Will refer to statutory safeguarding processes where applicable

Cool Space Providers (Summer SWEP)

- Will make spaces available at the agreed times in line with Summer SWEP activation framework
- Will agree any extra arrangements with the Head of Homelessness Prevention & Rough Sleeping and record any costs to be reimbursed by City of London
- Will record attendance on CHAIN and/or INFORM or another system
- Will refer to statutory safeguarding processes where applicable

6. Monitoring

The City Outreach Team Manager will need to have oversight and capacity necessary to provide a nightly summary of SWEP shift activity, if requested by City of London staff. The Outreach Team will provide a SWEP monitoring sheet (Excel) which will be kept by both the project staff and the City Outreach Team. This will be the principal document for tracking use and determining and costs.

7. Payment

Accommodation stays and cool spaces requiring additional staffing will be agreed in advance by the Head of Service. If necessary, a contract will be required between the City of London and the supplier. Payment will be made in arrears, at the end of a SWEP period upon the provision of supporting data and financial information.

8. Review

This is a protocol which will be reviewed annually. Changes to arrangements (appendix 3 and 4) will be circulated each spring and autumn respectively. Review will include analytics of data, service use feedback and consultation with providers and stakeholders.

9. List of appendices

- Appendix 1 – GLA SWEP guidance
- Appendix 2 – Winter SWEP Arrangements 2023/24
- Appendix 3 – GLA H-SWEP guidance
- Appendix 4 – Summer SWEP Arrangements 2023

Appendix 1

Guidance for winter Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) in Greater London 2022-23

This guidance is produced for London local authority rough sleeping lead officers and their colleagues involved in the provision of services for people sleeping rough in the capital.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the *Winter Provision and SWEP Toolkit 2022²*, which provides advice for local authorities nationwide.³

Background

SWEP is an emergency humanitarian response to severe weather conditions, the primary aim of which is to preserve life.

Since winter 2017/18, the GLA has provided guidance for London's councils regarding local **SWEP** plans. This guidance, which has been agreed by all 33 London councils, introduced a trigger point for **Pan-London SWEP activation** of 0°C on any one night to ensure consistency across the capital.

Each borough is expected to make its own local **SWEP** provisions for those sleeping rough in the area. The capacity of local provision should be informed by an assessment of need undertaken at the borough level.

In addition, the GLA funds '**overflow provision**' accessible by any London borough when local **SWEP** provision reaches capacity.

Terminology

SWEP is Severe Weather Emergency Protocol

Activation is the opening of SWEP to new referrals

Deactivation is the closing of SWEP to new referrals

Pan-London activation is the centrally coordinated activation of SWEP by the GLA across all London boroughs and including GLA overflow provision

Overflow provision is GLA-funded SWEP provision accessible by all London boroughs when local provision reaches capacity

In for Good is the principle under which once a person is supported to access shelter or accommodation they are not asked to leave until there is a support plan in place to end their rough sleeping.

² The Homeless Link guidance can be found [here](#).

³ Reference can also be made to the Greater London Authority (GLA)'s Review of Winter SWEP 2017/18, which includes multiple best-practice recommendations, and Review of SWEP response during winter 2020/21, which outlines some learning around how London can continue to successfully deliver SWEP in the context of the pandemic. Both documents can be found attached at the bottom of [this webpage](#).

Guidance on borough SWEP provision

The Mayor asks that all London councils adhere to the following minimum standards for **SWEP**:

- local **SWEP** capacity should match the anticipated level of need in the area.
- councils should continue to ensure *at least* the same level of **SWEP** provision as in the previous year, unless there has discernibly been a reduction in anticipated need to below that number of beds.
- while **SWEP** may be provided in a variety of settings, each council should ensure that their accommodation can be easily accessed from across the borough (by foot, public transport, or SWEP-specific arrangements and by both people sleeping rough and the services working them).
- councils should ensure that local **SWEP** options can always be easily accessed, including out of hours, by all outreach teams operating in their borough.
- **SWEP** for every council across London will be triggered and activated when any part of the capital is forecast to be 0°C or lower overnight. The GLA will coordinate this **Pan-London activation** of **SWEP**.
- councils will commit to implementing the '**In for Good**' principle. This means that once someone has accessed **SWEP** shelter, they are sheltered/accommodated until a support plan is in place to end their rough sleeping - regardless of whether the temperature has risen above 0°C^{4,5}.

It is also encouraged that councils try to ensure **SWEP** provision is well suited to the needs and circumstances of the people sleeping rough in the borough who are likely to need it. For example, where there is a need, providing women only spaces within SWEP accommodation⁶.

Councils should prepare for the need for daytime **SWEP** provision in the event of exceptionally prolonged or extreme cold weather. For example, this could be done by arranging 24/7 access to shelter or by working with local partners to extend opening hours or capacity in local day centres.

Where there are local protocols in boroughs that already exceed these guidelines, councils should of course continue operating their current good practice, local leads are simply requested to notify GLA where local provision is available outside of Pan-London activation periods.

SWEP is an emergency response, and as such it is expected that councils will work together in that spirit of cooperation. Specifically, providing shelter should not be considered as accepting a local connection or constitute a relief duty.

Pan-London overflow SWEP provision

The GLA funds **overflow SWEP** provision. Once capacity is full within a given council's individual **SWEP** provision, **SWEP overflow provision** will be available for referrals from that council.

⁴ A support plan is considered to consist of an assessment of needs and eligibility, a service offer, and a nominated lead support agency.

⁵ It is recognised that some people will have very limited options due to issues outside of the local authority's control; for this reason, it is expected that local authorities will work towards this goal, rather than being able to guarantee its delivery in every case.

⁶ Further information on setting up women's spaces within homelessness service can be found [here](#).

When **SWEP** is active, the SWEP coordinator for an area has the responsibility for notifying St Mungo's at swep@mungos.org and the GLA at roughsleepingcommissioning@london.gov.uk when their emergency accommodation is close to capacity and **overflow provision** may be required. Where possible, notification of anticipated need should be made by midday to allow the overflow provision to prepare.

Where there is capacity within the borough's own emergency provision, it is expected that all rough sleepers will be accommodated there, rather than in the GLA's **overflow provisions**.

Councils should ensure that where **local SWEP provision** is available, these beds can be easily and swiftly accessed at all times by outreach teams, including by the Rapid Response team. Boroughs are encouraged to thoroughly 'road test' their systems for accessing local SWEP provision (including out of hours) because **overflow SWEP** cannot be used where local provision isn't full, regardless of any difficulties accessing this.

Arrangements for access to **overflow SWEP** will be circulated to Local Authority Rough Sleeping Leads along with **SWEP** alerts if/when **SWEP** is activated. As usual, the GLA will collate information from boroughs of their key contacts and planned capacity.

Public health considerations

Historically, a large proportion of **SWEP** provision had been through the use of shelters and communal spaces in commissioned services. The COVID-19 pandemic meant that the nature of service provision, and the specifics of how services are operated had to be reconsidered. Evidence suggests that the rough sleeping population remain vulnerable to COVID-19 and other respiratory infections (e.g., flu). Therefore, single room accommodation remains the preference to minimise infectious disease transmission.

It may be possible that combining reductions in accommodation density, increases in social distancing, stringent hygiene measures, universal mask-wearing, and screening of staff/service users, can help reduce COVID-19 incidence in communal accommodation for people experiencing rough sleeping, but is **unlikely to prevent all outbreaks**.

However, local authorities should also consider the other health risks posed by people remaining on the streets, particularly in cold weather, and the opportunity through providing accommodation and other support services to improve health.

The GLA's position for its **overflow SWEP provision** is that single-occupancy accommodation will always be the first preference. In the scenario that demand exceeds all available single occupancy bedspaces and there are no viable alternatives, some small-scale communal sleeping arrangements could be used for **SWEP**, with extensive mitigation measures in place (See Appendix A). However, this approach may need to be adjusted, should an increase in the prevalence or severity of respiratory infections change the balance of risks.

The above contingency plan for the delivery of the GLA's **overflow provision** is **not** given as guidance to councils for **local SWEP** arrangements. Should any local authority be considering using communal sleeping arrangements in the event of a shortage of single-occupancy accommodation during severe

weather, it's recommended that this is first agreed with the relevant Director of Public Health and/or public health team.

Local authorities can also consult the [operating principles](#) for night shelters published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in August 2022 This outlines key principles for maintaining public health in night shelter settings. There is also extensive national guidance at gov.uk on managing COVID and other infectious diseases.

London-specific guidance and resources for the safe operation of homelessness services in the context of COVID-19 can be found on the [Healthy London Partnership website](#), including how to access COVID testing and advice from the Find and Treat service.

Monitoring

Councils and their services should make every attempt to record all local **SWEP** stays on CHAIN. This should include recording of people accommodated each night and the demographics and support needs of those using the emergency spaces. This will allow councils to monitor use of their own SWEP accommodation and enable a comprehensive evaluation of **SWEP** provision at a Pan-London level, informing future provision, and facilitating further improvements to the protocol in following years. The CHAIN team can provide more information about this at chain@homelesslink.org.uk.

It is, however, recognised that a requirement to record details on CHAIN can, in some instances, be a barrier to people accessing **SWEP**. So, while CHAIN recording is strongly encouraged it is not an absolute requirement.

If you have any questions regarding this document, please contact:
roughsleepingcommissioning@london.gov.uk.

Appendix A

Mitigation measures in the event that small scale communal sleeping (≤5 people) is needed for GLA overflow SWEP provision

- Those sharing the provision would be made aware of the potential infection risk.
- Shared accommodation would not be used for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable and other vulnerabilities, including age, will also be considered.
- Changes (throughput) in those sharing a room would be minimised.
- There would be symptom screening (for respiratory infections) prior to entry.
- A thorough health screening, including vaccination status, would be part of the initial assessment, with access to vaccines offered for all those who are eligible.
- Measures would be in place for rapid recognition of symptoms, rapid testing on entry and isolation of any symptomatic and/or positive cases.
- Staff regularly tested for COVID-19.
- A range of Infection Prevention Control (IPC) strategies such as hand washing, ventilation and social distancing would be put in place.
- Enhanced environmental cleaning implemented.

- Ensuring there is a means to contact trace individuals when they move on.
- Opportunities to promote vaccination and GP registration would be maximised.

These mitigation measures were agreed and presented to the Life Off the Streets Core Group on 10th October 2022.

Appendix 2

City of London SWEP arrangements for winter 2023/24 to be inserted once confirmed.

Appendix 3

Hot weather Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (H-SWEP): Guidance and activation procedure for London (2023)

1. Who is this for?

This H-SWEP guidance has been produced for London local authority rough sleeping lead officers, and anyone involved in the provision of services for people sleeping rough in the capital. It may also be useful to those considering their response to heatwaves (e.g., local resilience forums).

Other useful resources are available, such as UKHSA guidance: “Supporting people sleeping rough before and during hot weather”¹, and Homeless Link² resources.

This guidance was produced in 2023, using input from a rapid evidence review, experience from 2022, and discussion by a task and finish group. It will be kept under review and may be updated for summer 2024, if needed. **It provides a series of recommendations which local authorities will choose to deliver in a variety of different ways based on local circumstances and resources.**

If you have any questions or comments regarding this document, please contact: roughsleepingcommissioning@london.gov.uk

2. What is SWEP?

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is an emergency humanitarian response to severe weather conditions, the primary aim of which is to preserve life. Each borough is expected to make its own local SWEP response for those sleeping rough in the area. The local response should be informed by an assessment of need undertaken at the borough level.

3. Why is H-SWEP guidance needed?

Climate change means we can now expect regular episodes of dangerously high temperatures in London and therefore since summer 2022, GLA has issued H-SWEP guidance. Most heat-related illness and deaths are preventable with appropriate action. UKHSA has an interim estimate of 2,803 heatwave-associated excess deaths in England’s 65+ general population in 2022³ - there is no estimate available specifically for the rough sleeping population. Increasing temperatures (in excess of 25°C) are associated with excess heat-related deaths, with higher temperatures associated with greater numbers of excess deaths.

People sleeping rough have a higher risk of poor health outcomes or even death during hot weather for three key reasons. First, they are likely to have greater levels of exposure to heat – as they may be exposed to direct sun and the higher temperatures in many built-up environments. Second, they are likely to be more vulnerable to the effect of heat due to underlying health conditions or other factors, such as drug or alcohol use, which affect their ability to adapt their behaviors to the

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hot-weather-and-health-supporting-vulnerable-people/supporting-vulnerable-people-before-and-during-hot-weather-people-homeless-and-sleeping-rough>

² <https://homeless.org.uk/knowledge-hub/hot-weather-sweep/>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heat-mortality-monitoring-reports/heat-mortality-monitoring-report-2022>

increased temperatures. Third, they may be less able to take preventative steps or respond to extreme heat for other reasons related to their circumstances, especially social exclusion and lack of financial or other resources.

4. When will action be needed, notification and activation procedures

A) Heat Health Alerts

Heat Health Alerts⁴ (HHA) are issued by the UKHSA in partnership with the Met Office⁵. The core alerting season is between 1 June and 15 September. Alerts can be issued outside of this, but this is when heatwaves are most likely to occur.

The heat health alerts aim to flag what impact heat will have. They are based on a combination of the impact the weather conditions could have, and the likelihood of those impacts. Unlike winter SWEP the ‘trigger’ is not solely based on forecast temperature. They have four levels:

Alert level	What this level indicates	Possible scenario when this is triggered
Green (preparedness)	No alert will be issued as the conditions are likely to have minimal impact and health – however, planning and preparations are recommended.	
Yellow (response)	These alerts cover a range of situations but may be issued when people who are more vulnerable (such as those who are rough sleeping) may struggle to cope. A yellow alert may also be issued if the confidence in the weather forecast is low, so has the potential to be upgraded.	This may be triggered when forecasted temperatures in London approach 30°C for a few days, with high overnight temperatures – but a yellow alert could be issued due to a range of factors. ⁶
Amber (enhanced response)	An amber alert indicates that weather impacts are likely to be felt across the whole health service, with potential for the whole population to be at risk. Non-health sectors may also start to observe impacts and a more significant coordinated response may be required.	This this may be triggered when forecasted temperatures in London approach 32°C – but an amber alert could be issued due to a range of factors.
Red (emergency response)	A red alert would indicate significant risk to life for even the healthy population. It may mean that national critical infrastructure failures are anticipated – such as power outages or major roads and rail lines closed.	

⁴ To sign up for the UKHSA heat health alerts, users must register here <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=mRRO7jVKLkutR188-d6GZn06Ss-xPLpCuYeyOZ-eFIFUMEVIMDRTOE5FVzFFMONXNjFMWUIWMkJVMCQIQCN0PWcu>

⁵ Please note, the Met Office deliver the national severe weather warning service which is triggered at higher temperatures likely to affect the general public and have cross-sectoral impacts. Both services are intended to be aligned. It should be noted that the HHA and National Severe Weather Warning Service Extreme Heat system are both separate to the Met Office Heatwave Definition. For more information, please see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1153477/User-Guide-impact-based-weather-and-health-alerting-system.pdf

⁶ The possible temperatures suggested here are based on information which has been provided to the GLA about the indicative thresholds for different levels of alert. However, forecast maximum temperatures are only one factor that UKHSA consider when setting the alert level so alerts may be issued at temperatures different to those stated here. The GLA will keep this under review across the summer and consider any implications for this guidance.

B) Notifications

On the morning that a **Yellow** alert commences, the GLA will notify SWEP contacts that actions are advised, as detailed in section 5B.

If the UKHSA's heat health planner suggests an Amber or Red alert is due to start in the next 5 days, a notification will be circulated by the GLA to key SWEP contacts for each borough.

C) Activation procedure

The GLA will activate H-SWEP in line with the UKHSA's heat health alerts.

- On the morning that an **Amber or Red alert** for London commences, the GLA will activate H-SWEP.
- Should the Heat Health alert be upgraded or downgraded between Yellow, Amber or Red, the GLA will notify SWEP contacts of this change.
- If the alert is extended beyond the period which was originally stated, the GLA will issue a SWEP continuation notification.
- When a Heat Health alert is downgraded below Amber the GLA will deactivate SWEP.

If the Heat Health alert suggests that Amber or Red will be reached during a weekend or bank holiday, SWEP will be activated on the working day immediately preceding this. Similarly, H-SWEP will only be modified or deactivated on a working day.

When sending H-SWEP activation, continuation or deactivation notifications, the GLA will endeavor to email SWEP contacts before 09:30am on the morning in question.

5. What action is recommended?

A) In advance of heat health alerts

Plan response

Identify suitable cool spaces for use during the day (see detail below), and what accommodation options could be suitable during periods of hot weather (as well as how to prevent rooms becoming too hot)⁷. This may include purchasing room thermometers or other equipment to help indoor areas or people stay cool.

Build your response network

Make links with others who can mobilise and/or support a response. This could be via the local resilience forum, who will also have plans to respond to heat. It is likely to include links to community groups and other local services who may be able to support a response during hot weather, including emergency services and those who may also engage with people who are sleeping rough. Voluntary and faith sector, health and veterinary care in the local area will all play a key role in the response.

A local resilience forum (LRF) is a multi-agency partnership made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local

⁷ This could include the suggestions from the 'Beat the Heat' guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england/beat-the-heat-keep-cool-at-home-checklist>

authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and others. LRFs aim to plan and prepare for localised incidents and catastrophic emergencies, such as extreme heat. They work to identify potential risks and produce emergency plans to either prevent or mitigate the impact of any incident on their local communities. It is worth checking your plans are consistent with and build upon local resilience arrangements.

Train staff and volunteers

Build the capacity of your frontline staff with specific training, considering: the relevant preventative measures in your context

- who has risk factors for poor outcomes in hot weather
- what heat-related health problems look like and what to do
- what actions can be taken in your local context during hot weather
- how concerns can be escalated and how you work with other services
- [how staff can keep themselves safe in hot weather](#), such as increased breaks and access to fluids and cool rooms
- how to implement this guidance

It is worth checking the latest available advice for the general population:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/beat-the-heat-hot-weather-advice/beat-the-heat-staying-safe-in-hot-weather>.

Assess individual vulnerability to heat

It may be helpful to identify individuals with risk factors that make them more vulnerable to heat ahead of a heatwave event. This could involve understanding if someone who is rough sleeping has particular risk factors that could mean they are more vulnerable during periods of hot weather. Where possible, it's advised that an assessment is made of their level of exposure to extreme heat, any health conditions they have, and their likelihood of engaging with a response (as detailed in section 6).

Prepare resources

This could include a local map of cool spaces⁸ and water fountains⁹, and resources for people who are sleeping rough that encourage them to look after their health in hot weather¹⁰. Lack of access to toilets can mean people avoid drinking fluids which exacerbates dehydration, so resources could include details of nearby public toilets¹¹. General guidance¹² suggests the following can all help people stay well:

- Find somewhere cool
- Drink plenty of fluids and avoid excess alcohol
- Slow down when it's hot
- Cool your skin with water, slow down and drink water
- Dress appropriately for the weather

⁸ <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/environment-and-climate-change/climate-change/climate-adaptation/cool-spaces>

⁹ More information available here: <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/environment-and-climate-change/waste-and-recycling/single-use-plastic-bottles/drinking-fountains-london>

¹⁰ <https://groundswell.org.uk/resources/>

¹¹ <https://tfl.gov.uk/help-and-contact/public-toilets-in-london>

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/beat-the-heat-hot-weather-advice/beat-the-heat-staying-safe-in-hot-weather>

B) During yellow alert: enhanced outreach

Local authorities, their outreach teams and other involved agencies are encouraged to implement these recommendations, so that people who are sleeping rough are:

- offered advice about keeping cool, such as avoiding direct sun (including seeking shade)
- offered water or other ways to stay hydrated
- offered, or signposted to, other useful resources, such as appropriate clothing (e.g. loose cotton, hats, sunglasses) or suncream
- signposted to places where they could cool down (either places that are generally available, such as those on the GLA Cool Spaces map, or places specifically catering for people who are rough sleeping if available)
- assessed for particular vulnerability to heat, especially if they have not previously been assessed¹³ (acknowledging that people who are newly sleeping rough may not be known to services immediately)
- where identified as more vulnerable, are a focus for further action
- checked for any signs of heat-related illness and early signs of dehydration¹⁴

Local authorities and those they are working with will choose to deliver this enhanced outreach in a variety of ways depending on local context and resources. To do this effectively, they:

- Could draw on support from other services, such as those who are part of the local resilience forum and others working with this group, such as voluntary sector organisations, drug and alcohol treatment providers and others
- Could use an assessment tool that considers heat-related vulnerability
- Should ensure those interacting with people sleeping rough are aware of the signs and symptoms of dehydration, heat-related illness, and symptoms of heatstroke (which is a medical emergency) - as they can play a crucial role in preventing dehydration and people becoming unwell
- Should consider what might encourage someone to engage with advice and offers about keeping cool
- Should consider timing and delivery of outreach shifts – this will need to balance outreach during the day as well as ways to prevent staff or volunteers being exposed to extreme heat.

C) During amber alert: cool spaces and accommodation

In addition to the actions listed for a yellow alert, local authorities are encouraged to implement the following measures during an amber alert, when H-SWEP will be activated:

Cool spaces:

Ensure that suitable cool spaces are available to people sleeping rough, and people are encouraged to take up this offer (particularly those who are more vulnerable). No restrictions should be placed on use of cool spaces (i.e. someone would not need to be eligible for public funds or have connections to the local area).

¹³ The Find and Treat team can provide clinical advice if required, where a vulnerability may be unclear. They are available during office hours via 0203 447 9842. This is not for medical emergencies or a substitute for local primary care provision.

¹⁴ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/>

A cool space for this population should ideally:

- Be open at least 11am-5pm, including weekends
- Be cooler than the outside temperature, ideally aiming for 26°C or below
- Allow people to physically rest
- Offer a range of ways to rehydrate (e.g. water, ice lollies, non-alcoholic beverages and/or food)
- Be accessible without requiring extensive travel
- Be inclusive and 'appealing', particularly where the only cool space available is designed for the general public
- Consider safe spaces and where possible offer separate areas dependent on specific needs¹⁵
- Have staff trained to recognise signs and symptoms of heat-related illness and dehydration

They could also:

- Allow the storage of belongings
- Welcome pets, or support could be sought from organisations such as Dogson the Streets
- Link with other, useful services for people sleeping rough
- Offer other means of cooling down, such as showers, wet towels or water sources

Accommodation:

Ensure that suitable emergency accommodation is available for people sleeping rough who are more vulnerable during periods of hot weather. Accommodation should be prioritised for the most vulnerable (see section 6).

- To assist with planning, councils should identify in advance of Amber activation anyone sleeping rough who may be extremely vulnerable to high temperatures.
- The number of emergency accommodation bedspaces available locally ought to be proportionate to the number of people identified.
- The GLA will use any available bedspaces in its Pan-London supported accommodation and hubs as 'overflow' emergency accommodation, should there be additional high-risk cases which need assistance in areas providing emergency SWEP accommodation that has reached capacity.
- Guidance on referrals into available Pan-London overflow provision will be communicated at the start of a Hot Weather SWEP period.

Accommodation would need to be:

- Cooler than the outside temperature, ideally aiming for 26°C or below

¹⁵ There is more information about creating a safe environment on page 31 of this toolkit

<https://homelesslink->

[1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/SWEP_and_Winter_Provision_Toolkit_2022_JP020822_002.pdf](https://homelesslink-1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/SWEP_and_Winter_Provision_Toolkit_2022_JP020822_002.pdf)

- Prevented from getting too hot¹⁶ (e.g. through the ability to ventilate, especially at night; use of window coverings to prevent direct sunlight)

Consideration should be made about how to encourage take up of suitable accommodation.

Even in accommodation, during periods of high temperature there will be an ongoing risk to people who are more vulnerable. Consider conducting regular welfare checks to spot and respond to signs of heat-related illness for people who are in accommodation.

Wherever possible, accommodation should be:

- low threshold, with no restrictions on entry (e.g. local connection or eligibility for public funds)
- operated under the 'In for Good' principle so that no one should be asked to leave until fully assessed and a support plan put in place to help end their rough sleeping.

The GLA will also re-allocate resources, such as staff time, to support the H-SWEP response.

Staff and volunteer welfare

During an amber and red alert, consideration should be made for staff/volunteer welfare, as their health may also be at risk. Refer to existing guidance about this, such as from the Health and Safety Executive.¹⁷

D) During red alert

In addition to the actions suggested for yellow and amber alerts, consider how the response could be maintained when other sectors may be impacted (e.g. health, transport, utilities, emergency services) or if there was disruption caused by other concurrent risks (such as power outages, fire and water shortages).

6. Who is more vulnerable to heat impacting their health?

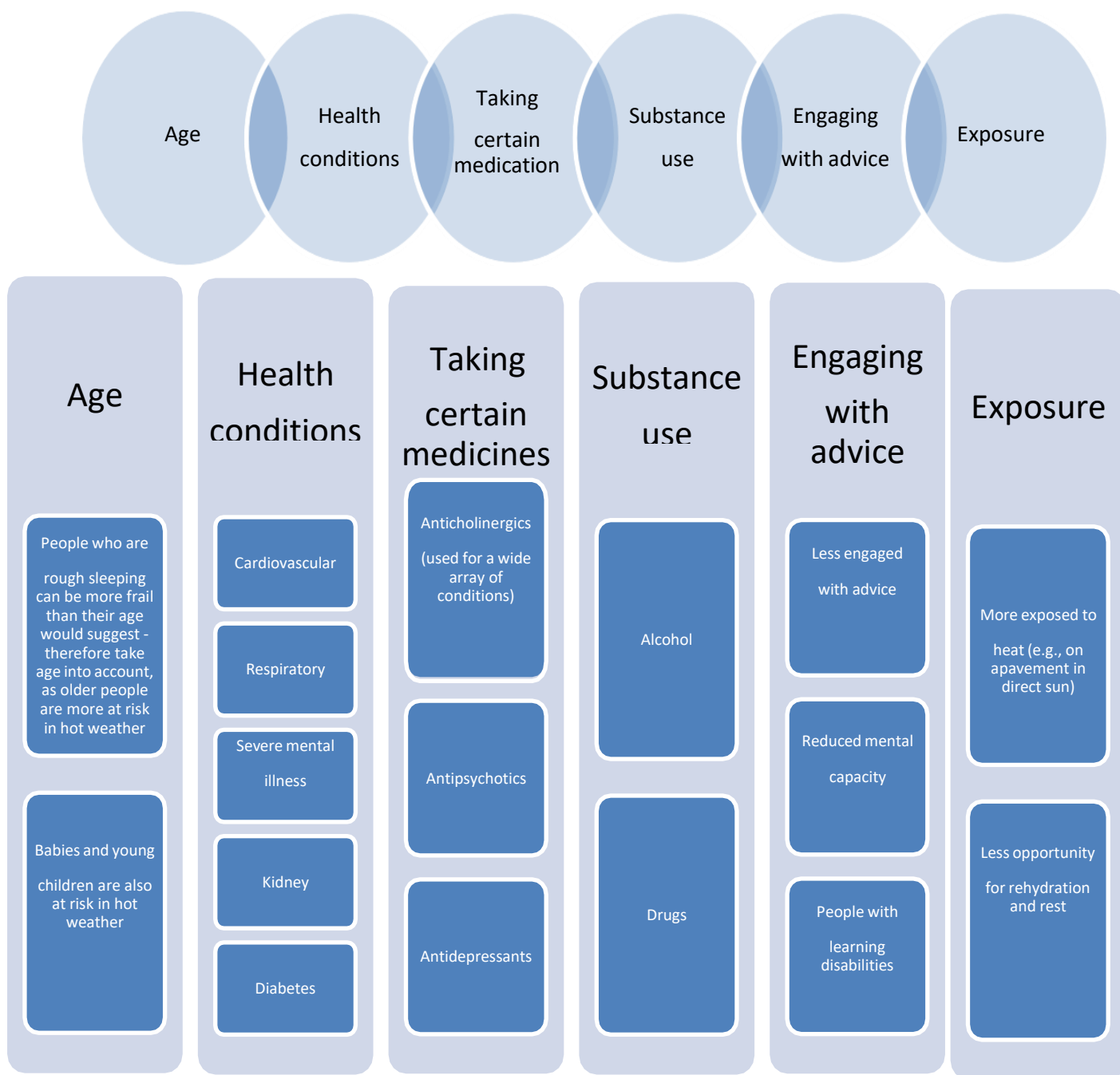
Several factors (age, mental and physical health conditions, medication¹⁸, substance use, exposure, likelihood to follow advice) may make someone more vulnerable to heat having a negative impact on their health. These individual factors may be mild to severe. Any assessment of vulnerability should consider the following factors, especially if there are combinations of them.

¹⁶ This could include the suggestions from the 'Beat the Heat' guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england/beat-the-heat-keep-cool-at-home-checklist>

¹⁷ <https://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/employer/outdoor-working.htm>

¹⁸ Medicines such as anticholinergics, antipsychotics and antidepressants all contribute to being more at risk in heat. They can affect the processes through which the body usually regulates heat. An anticholinergic is a type of medication that works by blocking a chemical in your body called acetylcholine. Acetylcholine is used in many parts of your body and helps you stay alert, keep a steady heart rate, breathe, digest food, sweat and empty your bladder. Anticholinergic medications act on many parts of the body at the same time.



Adapting or using relevant questions from an assessment tool such as the [mini-CHRISP Plus](#)¹⁹ may assist in identifying these factors. Assessment may be difficult as it relies on self-reporting.

7. What are heat related illnesses?

The main causes of illness and death during a heatwave are exacerbation of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Chronic illnesses can get worse in hot weather.

Many heat-related illnesses are preventable, including dehydration. Heat exhaustion and heatstroke are two potentially serious conditions that can occur if you get too hot.

¹⁹ [https://www.transformationpartnersinhealthandcare.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Mini-CHRISP-Plus-Tool-Final-191120 .pdf](https://www.transformationpartnersinhealthandcare.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Mini-CHRISP-Plus-Tool-Final-191120.pdf)

- dehydration can be gradual, and may mean someone feels thirsty, dizzy, lightheaded or tired. Individuals can be reminded to keep an eye on the colour of their urine²⁰
- heat exhaustion is where someone becomes very hot and start to lose water or salt from their body. Common symptoms include weakness, feeling faint, headache, muscle cramps, feeling sick, heavy sweating and intense thirst
- heatstroke is where the body is no longer able to cool itself and a person's body temperature becomes dangerously high. Heatstroke is less common, but more serious. Untreated symptoms include confusion, seizures and loss of consciousness

More information and what action to take are available from [the NHS](#).

8. How will this guidance be monitored and reviewed?

The heat health alert system has been updated this year, so the impact and implementation of this guidance was initially reviewed in July 2023 and will be fully reviewed at the end of the summer. We are keen to understand how this guidance has been used and how it could be improved. We would also find any data or information on local responses (beyond routine information collection) very useful –but do not wish for this to be a barrier to implementation.



Appendix 4: City of London Summer SWEP 2023

City of London Corporation

Summer SWEP Arrangements 2023

1. Background

The extreme temperatures seen in summer 2022 put a spotlight on the risk of poor health outcomes and even death that hot weather poses to rough sleepers and with climate change, we can now expect to see an increase in periods of dangerously high temperatures.

In response, the Greater London Authority (GLA) has produced Hot Weather Severe Weather Protocol (Summer SWEP) guidance for London local authorities and City of London for summer 2023. Previously, London boroughs made their own arrangements or in some cases none, and the new H-SWEP guidance aims to standardise responses across the capital to protect and provide for when extreme temperatures threaten the safety and wellbeing for those who sleep rough. In response, City of London has developed this protocol as a new standalone document.

2. Aims

The aim of the hot weather arrangements is to reduce risk of poor health outcomes and potential loss of life during periods of hot weather. This is achieved by:

- Using distinct service offer of practical advice and guidance which varies in stages as the risk posed by rising temperatures increases
- Effectively utilising a hot weather assessment tool to identify those most at risk and prioritise resources accordingly
- Providing effective daytime coverage when temperatures are highest
- Setting up daytime 'cool spaces' in local day services to provide low threshold, appropriate space for clients to access and cool down

3. Activation Levels

The GLA will send alerts when the Heat Health Alerts, issued by UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), are at Yellow, Amber or Red. A summary of the alert levels are as follows:

- Green – when conditions are likely to have minimal impact and no alert will be issued
- Yellow – when temperatures approach 30°C for a few days and people who are more vulnerable may struggle to cope. A yellow alert may also be issued if the confidence in the weather forecast is low. **The GLA will circulate an alert, but there will be no formal H-SWEP activation.**



- Amber – when temperatures approach 32°C and the impact from the weather are likely to be felt across the whole health service, with potential for the whole population to be at risk. In the case of an amber alert, the GLA will activate H-SWEP for London.
- Red – when a significant risk to life to everyone, and national critical infrastructure failures are anticipated. In the case of a red alert, the GLA will activate H-SWEP for London.

4. **Activation and Deactivation Procedure**

- The GLA will activate H-SWEP for London in line with UKHSA's heat-health alerts.
- The first day of an Amber or Red alert, the GLA will activate H-SWEP and notify SWEP contacts for each borough usually before 9.30am.
- Upon receiving the activation email, CoL's Rough Sleeping Services Manager will be responsible for emailing CoL H-SWEP partners (Appendix 1) informing of the Heat-Health alert level and formally activating H-SWEP in the City of London.
- The Heat-Health alert may be upgraded and downgraded during one activation period and if so, the GLA will notify London boroughs and the CoL Rough Sleeping Services Manager will consequently inform partners of the change in alert level.
- Once UKHSA has downgraded the Heat-Health alert to Yellow or below, the GLA will notify all London boroughs and CoL Rough Sleeping Services Manager will then notify H-SWEP partners of its deactivation in the City of London
- During periods of Yellow alert, the above process is followed except there will be no formal H-SWEP activation by the GLA or City of London. Instead, the GLA will circulate an alert notifying that a Yellow alert is in place and additional preparations and enhanced outreach are advised. CoL Rough Sleeping Services Manager will then email the same H-SWEP partners in Appendix 1, notifying that CoL will be taking additional steps to protect those who sleep rough as outlined under 'Yellow' in the table below. When the Heat-Health alert is downgraded to Green or below, GLA will send out a notification and City of London Rough Sleeping Services Manager will email partners informing that the additional provision has ended.

5. **City of London Summer SWEP Provision**

City of London Summer SWEP provision is reflective of the alert level issued, to ensure services respond appropriately and proportionally to the different levels of risk that comes with varying temperatures and conditions. A tailored response also ensures the response of the CoL, and its partner is sustainable throughout the summer months.

A summary of City of London’s Summer SWEP Provision is as follows:

Heat-Health Alert Level	City of London Summer SWEP Provision
Yellow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased daytime targeted coverage by City of London Outreach • Water and suncream provision • Guidance and advice of keeping cool and out of the sun • Signposted to existing open access spaces to keep cool • Information sharing of where to access water fountains in the City of London and neighbouring London Boroughs • Information sharing of the symptoms of heatstroke and how to minimise harm in warm weather
Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • Cool space daytime provision at Providence Row Day Centre • Accommodation offer for those at increased risk of poor health outcomes caused by hot weather
Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • Extended hours at cool space daytime provision at Providence Row Day Centre

Please note that during periods of Red alert, the impact the heat may have on support services, infrastructure etc, will need to be considered alongside CoL’s H-SWEP response.

6. **Cool Space daytime provision at Providence Row Charity Day Centre**

Providence Row Day Centre, also known as the Dellow, is a homeless day centre on Wentworth Street in London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH). CoL has funded Providence Row Charity to provide a cool space that is accessible for rough sleepers for CoL during periods of Amber and Red alert levels. The cool space will be made available 7 days a week between the following times:

- Amber Alert
 - 08:30 – 20:00 weekdays
 - 11:00 – 20:00 weekends
- Red Alert
 - 08:30 – 21:00 weekdays
 - 11:00 – 21:00 weekends

7. **Accommodation**

When H-SWEP is activated, an accommodation offer will be available for those at increased risk of poor health outcomes caused by hot weather. These individuals will be identified using the Heat-Health Matrix, and those who score 20 or above out of the maximum score of 48 will be regarded



as those at increased risk. As such, they will be prioritised by the City Outreach team for targeted attempts to engage and escalation with relevant health services if they do not accept offers of support during H-SWEP. The offer of accommodation may include void bedspaces at the City Inn Assessment Service, Travelodge or other commercial hotel, or Pan-London H-SWEP accommodation should CoL exhaust its local provision. If someone is placed in accommodation, attempts will be made to keep the accommodation at 26°C or below. If someone is placed in accommodation, the 'In for Good' principle will apply, whereby no one will be asked to leave their H-SWEP accommodation without a plan in place to end their rough sleeping even after temperatures reduce. This will usually be in the form of a Credible Service Offer.

Summer SWEP Contact List

Name	Organisation	Role
Will Norman	City of London Corporation	Head of Homelessness, Prevention and Rough Sleeping
Fleur Holley-Moore	City of London Corporation	Rough Sleeping Service Manager
Rowan Wyllie	City of London Corporation	Rough Sleeping Coordinator
Vacant	City of London Corporation	Pathway Liaison Officer
Charley Matthews	Thames Reach	Outreach Manager
Sam Cogan	Thames Reach	Senior Practitioner (MIST)
Beth Winter	Thames Reach	Area Manager
Angie Knight	St Mungo's	City and Tower Hamlets Navigator Manager
Laura Shovlin	St Mungo's	Regional Head
Mike Fill	London Borough of Tower Hamlets	Commissioner and Ending Rough Sleeping Team Manager
Dominic Gates	Providence Row Charity	Director of Services