

PAN LONDON SUBSTANCE MISUSE PROGRAMME FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS

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June 2021

## London's first dedicated inpatient drug and alcohol detoxification unit for rough sleepers will save lives and help the city's most vulnerable off streets

The new service – the first funded through the pan-London programme – is based at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital and opens on June 14th. The service will target rough sleepers with physical and mental health needs who need the extra support available in an acute hospital setting while they are undertaking alcohol and/or drug detoxification.

This exciting new service has been formed through a first-of-its-kind partnership led by Public Health England (London), involving the Greater London Authority and London's borough councils, and commissioned by the City of London Corporation using grant provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The partner organisations have worked closely together to plug a known gap in services for some of London's most vulnerable residents.

The specialist five-bed facility will treat people dealing with serious alcohol and substance dependency in a hospital-based setting, providing the wide range of care needed to treat the complexity of health problems facing those living on London's streets. The inpatient detoxification service will provide a holistic support programme, with access to psychiatrists and psychologists, to help those treated to begin a recovery from life on the streets and harmful substance use.

In addition to supporting rough sleepers to safely withdraw from alcohol and drugs as part of the first steps in a treatment journey, the service will provide peer support, groups, and activities alongside a range of other health promotion activities which will focus on stopping smoking, healthy eating, essential screening, vaccinations and mental well-being.

The intention is to meet immediate needs while providing opportunities for long term change, contributing to ending rough sleeping, and tackling entrenched health inequalities.

Referrals to the new service will come from across London, and the service is funded through a combination of grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and local authority treatment budgets.

Local authorities will ensure that rough sleepers supported by the service have somewhere suitable to go after their detoxification has been completed.

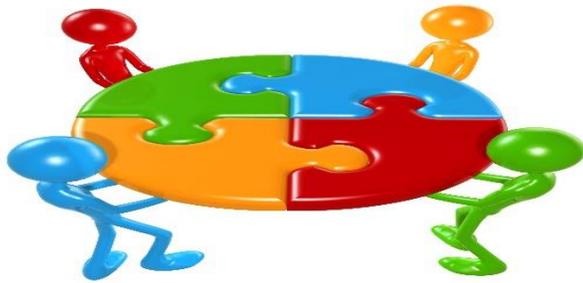
This is the first of several new pan-London substance misuse services which the City of London, acting as lead commissioning authority for the other London councils, will be opening during 2021, as a result of this innovative partnership. These initiatives will give rough sleepers a life-saving opportunity to access valuable treatment services that have been designed to meet their needs and particular vulnerabilities.

For more information about the programme, contact [michelle.binfield@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.binfield@cityoflondon.gov.uk)



**Alison Keating, Head of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco at Public Health England (London), said:**

“We are delighted to have been able to lead on the creation of this fantastic new unit that will provide life-changing and life-saving treatments to some of London's most vulnerable rough sleepers.”



## SEVERAL OF OUR OTHER, EXCITING BID PROPOSALS FOR ROUGH SLEEPING SERVICES ARE STILL BEING CONSIDERED

- 1. Pathways for addressing co-occurring mental health, learning disabilities and substance misuse:** The proposed model is for five strategic project leads to work within ICS areas to improve the integrated access and engagement of rough sleepers with mental health, learning disabilities and substance misuse treatment services through the development of agreed integrated protocols across the whole of London (changed so not just the 21 taskforce areas).
- 2. Tobacco harm reduction:** The model proposes to reduce the levels of smoking amongst rough sleepers, by continuing the delivery of targeted stop smoking support, increasing workforce capability to deliver it and the piloting of a contingency management model to support quit attempts and to better understand the smoking habits and needs of rough sleepers. Funding request has been increased to expand the numbers of workers who can access training across all of London.
- 3. Social isolation and recovery:** The model proposes to enhance the social integration and recovery of rough sleepers across London, in preparation for improved treatment engagement and tenancy sustainment. The model would be developed by a group of experts by experience. The bid has been expanded to a whole London approach which has necessitated an increase in funding request of circa 100k. There are also opportunities for some shared work and alignment with the peer lead workstream supported by HLP.
- 4. Coordinating a strategic approach to primary care substance misuse treatment for rough sleepers with No Recourse to Public Funds:** The proposed model is to fund a pan-London strategic development post hosted by the GLA, working closely with PHE regionally and nationally and a range of regional partners. The role would aim to create alignment with London health and social care groups, and develop expertise so that those with NRPF get better access to free primary substance misuse treatment and recovery services in London, within the current legal framework.

To find out more, email: [michele.kemp@phe.gov.uk](mailto:michele.kemp@phe.gov.uk)

## ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

As part of the Government's ambition to end rough sleeping, funding was announced to better address the increasing complexity of rough sleepers' substance misuse treatment needs, and Public Health England, on behalf of the Greater London Authority and London Local Authorities' substance misuse leads, bid for funds to address some of the gaps in services that have emerged at a pan London level. The purpose of the funding is to:

- Maintain the engagement that rough sleepers have had with drug and alcohol treatment services whilst in emergency accommodation as they move into longer term housing, and support rough sleepers to engage in treatment
- Build resilience and capacity in local drug and alcohol treatment systems, as well as mental health, for future years

The programme is a unique opportunity to maximise the engagement in treatment and recovery of this most vulnerable cohort of Londoners, as well as to significantly address some of London's starkest health inequalities as part of a broader homeless health pathway. The intention is that the pan-London services will augment and complement services already being developed and delivered at a borough-level.

The partnership was successful in securing grant funding from Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government for:

- The new 5-bed hospital-based inpatient drug and alcohol detoxification unit, based at Guy's and St Thomas's Hospital;
- Additional specialist residential service capacity in London, supporting rough sleepers with complex needs with their onward treatment journey and their need for additional stabilisation in a setting which can manage their comorbidities
- A new outreach/floating support team to work in the community to support councils in preparing rough sleepers for treatment, and to help manage the transition between treatment settings, and out into the community.

Governance structures, involving all the key partners needed to make a success of the new programme, have been established, and the City of London has agreed to assume commissioning responsibility for these services for London, working closely with PHE, the Greater London Authority, London Local Authorities and other stakeholders.

## Some more good news

In January 2021, as part of the new £80m Department for Health and Social Care grant for enhanced universal drug treatment services, London was awarded £1.391m to fund a second hospital-based in-patient detoxification service, offering both alcohol and opiate detoxification, alongside work to stabilise co-occurring mental and physical health needs for complex clients. This service is not specific to rough sleepers. It is currently being tendered for and expected to open in September 2021, offering much needed extra capacity to London.