

# HOW YOU CAN HELP END ROUGH SLEEPING



## FROM HOSPITAL TO HOME

### STEPS FOR HOSPITAL STAFF - IDENTIFY NEED AND TAKE ACTION

When someone who is homeless is admitted to hospital, their stay will often last longer, and become more complex and costly for the NHS, than your other patients.

When they leave, more than 70% will be discharged straight back onto the streets, further damaging their health and all but guaranteeing their readmission.

Housing is key to a 'safe discharge' from hospital, as well as to reducing the ongoing burden on your service. There are steps you can take to help.

#### TOP STEPS

- ▶ **On admission, identify homeless patients and those living in homelessness services:**
  - ▶ Ask if people have accommodation, whether they can return and if they risk losing it
  - ▶ Contact the patient's support services – this can prevent them losing their accommodation
- ▶ **If a housing need is identified, know how to respond and who to refer them to**
  - ▶ Find out who to notify within the hospital and externally – is there a named contact?
  - ▶ Know how to make a referral to the local Housing Options team
  - ▶ Ask for training on the assessment and referral of homeless people
  - ▶ Keep an up-to-date contact list of local agencies such as hostels, outreach and drug and alcohol services on each ward. Use: [www.homelessuk.org.uk](http://www.homelessuk.org.uk)
- ▶ **If homeless people discharge themselves:**
  - ▶ Alert local services
  - ▶ Record the self-discharge and the reason

- ▶ **Ensure patients can access ongoing care**
  - ▶ Complete a social needs assessment
  - ▶ Notify the GP and relevant agencies about follow up treatment
  - ▶ Provide a copy of the discharge plan and medication
- ▶ **Help people return to their accommodation**
  - ▶ Let the housing agency know when the patient is returning to ensure they can get in
  - ▶ Avoid out of hours discharge
  - ▶ Help the patient get home – they may need travel expenses

#### ALREADY TAKING A STEP...

**Dr Nigel Hewitt runs a dedicated Pathway Homeless Team at University College Hospital London.**

UCLH now checks the housing status of all patients upon admission. All homeless patients are assessed and a care plan is put in place in partnership with other agencies such as housing.

Nigel told us: *"This has not only benefited [homeless patients] but in the long-term has saved the NHS significant sums of money."*

#### ADVICE AND HELP

The full Hospital Admission and Discharge Report by Homeless Link and St Mungos is here (PDF download):

[homeless.org.uk/hosp-discharge](http://homeless.org.uk/hosp-discharge)

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YOUR  
STEP**

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**St Mungo's**  
Opening doors for homeless people

**homeless link**