

# Rough sleeper management GUIDELINES



The City of West Torrens recognises that homelessness is, in most cases, not a choice and it can happen to anyone. Homelessness is one of the most potent examples of disadvantage in the community and one of the most important markers of social exclusion (Department of Human Services, 2002). The City of West Torrens is committed to a socially inclusive community and to connecting homeless people sleeping rough in our city to opportunities for services, support and assistance.

## Principles

In the management of homeless people in our city, the City of West Torrens adheres to the following principles:

- Homeless people's rights and responsibilities are the same as everyone else's.
- Homeless people may have an affiliation with certain public spaces.
- Homeless people have a right to be in a public space without fear of harassment, as well as the responsibility not to infringe on others.
- Homeless people require access to infrastructure in public spaces to meet some of their basic needs.

## Provision of support

The Community Services and Regulatory Services departments work in collaboration to provide information and link homeless people to relevant services. The main two services homeless people are referred to include:

- **Homeless Connect SA** on 1800 003 308 - 24 hrs /7 days per week freecall service for information and direct referral to homelessness services.
- **Western Homelessness Service** on 8440 2110 - information, advocacy, referral needs and risk assessment, tenancy support and case management.

SA Housing Authority coordinates Code Red and Code Blue extreme weather responses. When a Code Red or Code Blue is activated, there is significant risk to rough sleepers due to potential exposure to extreme weather. During these times, information about the above services will be offered to rough sleepers, as well as blankets and/or water when required and appropriate.

The City of West Torrens incorporates homelessness and rough sleepers in its community development work in the community. This includes opportunities for learning and connection, as well as including rough sleepers in initiatives to assist vulnerable and isolated people in the community.

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## Strategies when rough sleepers need to move from an area

In cases where rough sleepers set up and remain in an inappropriate area, the following strategies may be implemented:

- Community Services and/or Regulatory Services staff will advise the people when areas are not appropriate for them to remain in. Rough sleepers will be asked to relocate and provided with information about services and shelters.
- Security services will be contracted to check areas at regular intervals and ask people to move on.
- Lighting will be reviewed and extra lighting/spot lights may be installed to deter people from remaining in inappropriate areas.
- Overnight music may be implemented in areas to deter people from remaining overnight.
- Public toilets will be locked at night and power will be deactivated where appropriate.

In cases where homeless people exhibit threatening and/or aggressive behaviours towards Council staff, we will contact SAPOL on 131 444 for triage and appropriate response. If a homeless person exhibits threatening and/or aggressive behaviour towards a member of the public, it is that person's responsibility to contact SAPOL and advise them of the specifics (e.g. where the incident occurred, type of behaviour, any physical contact etc.) As much of the following information as possible is collected and advised to SAPOL:

- Name and contact details of complainant (if relevant).
- Information about the homeless person including name, location, date and time seen/located, any description, any vehicle details.
- Details about any compliance issues or interaction with staff which could provide information on the individual's demeanour/behaviour.

## Further information

For further information about these guidelines, contact the manager of Community Services or the manager of Regulatory Services at the City of West Torrens during business hours - 8416 6333.