



PREVENTION OPPORTUNITIES MAPPING AND PLANNING TOOLKIT

**EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT
SEPTEMBER 2009**

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1. INTRODUCTION

In November 2008, the Government outlined its commitment to ending rough sleeping “once and for all” in England by 2012, with the launch of its strategy, **No One Left Out: Communities ending rough sleeping**.

Following the publication of **Coming in From the Cold** in 1999, rough sleeping reduced in England by two-thirds. This reduction indicates that outreach services and supported accommodation pathways have been successful in helping people off the streets. However, there remains a flow of new people onto the streets, and more needs to be done to tackle this flow. For this reason, prevention of rough sleeping at an earlier stage is a key priority within this new strategy.

Understanding what leads people to sleep rough, and then tackling these causes, is vital to stopping the flow of new people onto the streets. We already have a range of information on the people who sleep rough and those most at risk. However, this information needs to be gathered and used locally to inform timely proactive interventions that can improve safety nets and prevent people sleeping rough.

In its strategy, Communities and Local Government has made a commitment to support the development of tools to assist local authorities, their partners, and the communities they serve, to better plan and commission services to identify opportunities to prevent rough sleeping. To this end, Communities and Local Government commissioned Homeless Link to develop a Prevention Opportunities Mapping and Planning Toolkit (PrOMPT). This is a report on the development of PrOMPT between April and September 2009.

2. AIM OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of the project was to develop and pilot a toolkit that will enable local authorities and their partners to identify opportunities for informed timely proactive interventions to prevent rough sleeping. As the strategic leads, local authorities should be co-ordinating and involving key agencies to this end.

As outlined in **No One Left Out: Communities Ending Rough Sleeping**, PrOMPT should promote an approach that involves people who have direct experience of sleeping rough as experts in identifying pathways into rough sleeping and the points in the journey where more effective interventions would have helped¹.

We worked to a number of objectives to help us to meet this aim:

- Ensure that the PrOMPT is accessible for local authorities, their partners, and clients and can generate analysis appropriate to their needs
- Help local authorities increase understanding of routes into rough sleeping
- Help local authorities identify opportunities for early interventions (when and where those at risk of sleeping rough approach services for help)
- Increase awareness of effective interventions (focusing on when and where interventions have been effective, and providing a basis on which to develop greater local understanding of why these interventions have been effective)
- Influence service reviews and design new interventions.

We have worked closely with local authorities and their partners in two areas to pilot the toolkit: the London Borough of Islington, and a sub-region of Norfolk comprising Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council, and Broadland District Council. In addition, a number of other local authorities and voluntary sector agencies have fed into the development of the toolkit through their guidance and comments and by allowing access to clients to test the tool.

¹ No One Left Out: Communities Ending Rough Sleeping (p.27, 2009)

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 ENDING ROUGH SLEEPING

In the last ten years there has been a focussed effort from all levels of government and voluntary services to reduce rough sleeping in England to as close to zero as possible. These services have made great progress towards this goal and have stopped large numbers of people sleeping out on our streets. We have now reached a point at which, with cooperation between services and a renewed vision, we can end rough sleeping once and for all.

In 1999, the Government launched its strategy to tackle rough sleeping in England, **Coming in From the Cold**. This strategy built on the findings and recommendations of the Social Exclusion Unit's study of rough sleeping, published in July 1998, which recommended the setting up of the Rough Sleepers Unit (RSU). It also set the target of reducing rough sleeping in England to as near zero as possible, and by at least two thirds, by 2002.

The RSU achieved this target by November 2001. However the number of people sleeping rough in England has remained roughly constant since 2003, with no further reduction. As a result of this, in 2006 Homeless Link launched a campaign to end rough sleeping by 2012, outlining 10 key things that need to happen for the vision to be achieved²:

- **Own the agenda:** Highlight Britain's achievements to date, which are a world exemplar in this field. Voice the ambition to end rough sleeping by 2012 in each local authority area and nationally
- **Access to shelter:** Give everyone an alternative to a night on the streets, without having to move out of their home area
- **A safety net for migrants:** Ensure everyone has an appropriate welfare safety net for shelter and food, regardless of their status
- **Close the routes to homelessness:** Work together across government to prevent homelessness among care leavers, prison leavers and ex-service personnel
- **Incentivise prevention:** Help public services and local authorities to work together to prevent homelessness and provide more responsive services, including reforms to housing benefit
- **Access to activity:** Give everyone a meaningful alternative to a day spent killing time. Expand the Government's Places of Change approach to all areas and back hostels and day centres that change lives
- **Matrix commissioning:** Support people to leave homelessness with a strong web of commissioned accommodation, employment, health and advice services personalised to their needs
- **Moving through hostels:** Move people on from hostels as soon as they are ready. Commit to moving on the 45% of residents that are ready to go but have no suitable housing option
- **Access to suitable housing:** Make sure quality mainstream housing is accessible to non-statutory homeless people. Build suitable permanent schemes for those with ongoing support needs
- **Track progress:** Conduct a detailed street count in every area. Measure numbers and outcomes for the non-statutory homeless population.

In December 2007 the Government announced that there would be a new rough sleeping strategy. Following a consultation in summer 2008, the strategy **No One Left Out: Communities Ending Rough Sleeping** was launched on 18 November 2008. In this strategy, the Government stated its commitment to ending rough sleeping "once and for all" in England by 2012.

There is acknowledgment within the new strategy of the results achieved by outreach services and supported accommodation pathways in helping people off the streets, and their invaluable

² Visit www.homeless.org.uk/endingroughsleeping for more information

contribution to the two thirds reduction in rough sleeping seen over the past ten years. The success over this time is the result of local authorities and frontline services working in partnership, and this remains key to future delivery.

However there is also a recognition that services need to change if we are to build on these successes and end rough sleeping “once and for all”. The street population is made up of both entrenched, long term rough sleepers and those who are new to the streets. We therefore need tailored strategic approaches that prevent the flows, support rapid moves off the streets, and support and tackle entrenched needs. The changes needed to enable these approaches take the form of:

- Prevention: Moving ‘upstream’ - from reactive, to proactive and preventative service delivery
- New solutions: for those still on the streets
- Sustainable outcomes: helping people away from homelessness.

3.2 PROMPT AND PREVENTION

PrOMPT is a toolkit aimed at assisting with the first of these changes: the move to prevention. The toolkit falls under Chapter three – the right help in the right place at the right time, of **No One Left Out: Communities Ending Rough Sleeping**.

Communities and Local Government commissioned PrOMPT under its commitment to support the development of tools to assist local authorities, their partners, and the communities they serve, to better plan and commission services to identify opportunities to prevent rough sleeping. PrOMPT is one of a number of initiatives that make up Communities and Local Government’s preventing rough sleeping toolkit³.

PrOMPT guides local authorities and their partners through four key steps, building upon the successful approach of the Homeless Link Move On Plans Protocol (MOPP)⁴:

- Partnership Building – including securing the involvement of service users locally
- Audit and Analysis– mapping routes into rough sleeping, identifying opportunities for early intervention and rapid preventative action, and identifying gaps in local services and safety nets
- Action Planning – identifying key steps to take to remodel services, commission new services and ensure prevention
- Review - monitoring progress and updating the audit and analysis

The toolkit promotes an approach that involves people who have direct experience of sleeping rough as experts in identifying pathways into rough sleeping and the points in the journey where more effective interventions would have helped⁵.

PrOMPT is not about collecting personal details such as names and support needs, nor does it provide a system for tracking individuals. Other resources exist or are in development to assist with this. These are listed at page 13. Taking part in the audit should not be a barrier to accessing any service and clients should give their consent.

This toolkit provides everything needed by a local authority and its partners to implement the process. It includes:

- R1: Implementation guidance
- R2: Partnership meeting checklist

³ No One Left Out: Communities ending rough sleeping - Good Practice Notes: Developing a strategic response to prevent and tackle rough sleeping (CLG, September 2009)

⁴ <http://www.homeless.org.uk/mopp>

⁵ No One Left Out: Communities Ending Rough Sleeping (p.27, 2009)

- R3: Process plan template
- R4: PrOMPT presentation
- R5: PrOMPT IT audit and analysis tool
- R6: Session plan – training for interviewers
 - R6.1 Interviewers' preparation sheet
 - R6.2 Practice scenarios
 - R6.3 IT system questions
- R7: Information for services
- R8: Information for interviewers
- R9: Information for clients
- R10: Questionnaire for interviews
- R11: Findings presentation example
- R12: Analysis guide
- R13: The action plan template
- Links to good practice around preventing rough sleeping.

Two staff at management level, one from the local authority and one from the voluntary sector, must take overall responsibility for the implementation of the PrOMPT. These people are referred to as 'lead contacts' in this toolkit. The purpose of this joint responsibility is to foster the approach that preventing rough sleeping is a collective duty and one that should be carried out in partnership. It also serves to ensure that the needs of both the statutory and voluntary sectors are met.

4. THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The development of PrOMPT took place between April and September 2009. The focus of the project was on developing the audit and analysis tool; this was in recognition of the fact that the partnership building, action planning and review sections of the toolkit are built on the successful approaches from the Move On Plans Protocol.

We have worked closely with local authorities and their partners in two areas to pilot the toolkit: the London Borough of Islington, and a sub-region of Norfolk comprising Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council, and Broadland District Council. A summary of this work is given below.

In addition, a number of other local authorities and voluntary sector agencies have fed into the development of the toolkit through their guidance and comments and by allowing access to clients to test the tool. These are: Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA), CAN Housing Services, City of London, English Churches Housing Group (ECHG), Liverpool City Council, Northampton Borough Council, Preston City Council, and Southend-On-Sea Borough Council,

In April and May we determined the key information that the audit and analysis tool would need to gather and the process for doing this. In addition, we spoke to a number of local authorities and voluntary sector organisations who were interested in the development of the toolkit and identified four areas to take part in the pilot project. Subsequently two of these areas were unable to meet the timescales for the project, but they have continued to feed into the development of the toolkit.

We then produced a paper-based version of the toolkit, which in June we tested with clients and amended based on their views and those of the pilot areas. With these amendments we produced a pilot version of the toolkit with accompanying guidance. During August and September the toolkit was tested by our two pilot areas. Evaluation of the toolkit has been ongoing with the pilot areas throughout this time.

We also consulted on the pilot version of the toolkit with a number of local authorities and voluntary sector organisations who had expressed an interest in the development of the project. Their views are contained within the findings of this document.

Summary: Norwich pilot

The PrOMPT pilot in Norwich was led by the Housing Strategy Officer at the City Council⁶, and the Outreach Manager at St. Martin's Housing Trust⁷. Interviews took place with 24 clients over a one-week period. The actions identified as a result of the project are feeding in to a new Rough Sleeping Strategy for the city, along with findings from the CLG's Self-Assessment Health Check⁸, and focus groups with services.

Summary: Islington pilot

The PrOMPT pilot in Islington was led by the Principal Housing Policy Analyst at Islington Council⁹, and the CEO of The Pillion Trust¹⁰. Interviews took place with 22 clients over a one-week period. A partnership group has met to review the findings and is due to meet again to produce an action plan.

⁶ Visit www.norwich.gov.uk

⁷ Visit www.stmartinshousing.org.uk

⁸ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/selfassessmenttoolkit>

⁹ Visit www.islington.gov.uk

¹⁰ Visit <http://www.thepilliontrust.co.uk>

5. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the project have been grouped below into the four steps of the PrOMPT process. Most information relates to the audit and analysis tool, as per the aim of this project.

5.1 OVERALL

5.1.2 Motivations for using the toolkit can vary hugely between areas and organisations within an area.

Examples are:

- to inform new prevention or rough sleeping strategies
- to increase the evidence base to support or refute anecdotal suppositions
- to increase understanding of where rough sleepers go for help
- to provide evidence with which to instigate more joined up working between services or between neighbouring areas
- to enhance existing partnerships between the local authority and other services in the area.

Recommendation: Homeless Link should include this information in its final guidance documents.

5.1.3 We need to be explicit about who should use the toolkit

Implementing PrOMPT can be a useful way of beginning dialogue with rough sleepers, however it can also be used where a relationship is already in place to enhance the services provided in an area. Where relationships are good, clients should be encouraged to be involved in the planning and carrying out of the audit.

Recommendation: Homeless Link should include this information in its final guidance documents.

5.2 STEP ONE: PARTNERSHIP

5.2.1 What happens at this step?

Step one of PrOMPT involves:

- Identifying two lead contacts, one from the local authority and one from the voluntary sector
- Ensuring the support of the Homelessness Strategy Partnership and any other relevant local agencies
- Deciding which services in your area (if not all of them) are to be involved
- Holding an initial meeting of the partners to discuss the benefits of the toolkit, ensure involvement, agree actions, and answer any questions
- Being clear about the purpose of the toolkit, including explaining that it is not an audit of any particular service.

5.2.2 Findings

5.2.2.1 It is vital that there is a lead contact from both the local authority and the voluntary sector.

This not only ensures joint ownership of the project, but it enables the needs of both statutory and voluntary services to be represented. Local authorities, as strategic leads in ending rough sleeping, are vital to the success of the project. Similarly, voluntary sector agencies, with their relationship with clients, are crucial to gathering meaningful information.

Recommendation: there should be a lead contact from both the local authority and a key voluntary sector organisation.

5.2.2.2 The initial partnership meeting checklist and action plan document is useful.

The document, produced as part of this toolkit, was found to be helpful in keeping partners focussed and having a productive meeting. It ensured that all key considerations were discussed and that everyone was clear on the agreed actions following the meeting.

Recommendation: partners should use this document to support the initial partnership meeting.

5.2.2.3 Getting the data sample correct from the outset is vital to getting good results.

While there should be a recognition that numbers of rough sleepers can be low, this must be balanced with the need to speak to enough clients or former clients to make the results meaningful. Partners need to think carefully about how they can contact current and former rough sleepers, including those now living in hostels or independently. For example, in the Norwich pilot all of the members of the partnership submitted names of people who could be contacted to take part in the interviews. This meant that more clients were accessed from a broader range of services.

Recommendation: partners must consider how to get as large a sample as possible.

5.2.2.4 Partnerships should also ensure that the sample is representative of the different needs within the street population.

For example, self-selecting clients will bring biases. Similarly, the way you carry out your interviews may create barriers for some clients to take part. This might include the time of day you carry them out, the place you choose to do this, or the lack of translators. For example, in the Islington pilot the interviews were carried out in a number of different locations, depending on the needs of the client. Some were held in client's homes, some in parks and some in services.

Recommendation: partnerships should ensure that the sample is representative, and take steps to minimise barriers to participation wherever possible.

5.2.2.5 It is important that the partnership has a common understanding of who is to be included in the audit to ensure that the data is consistent.

The definition of rough sleeping "People sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or "bashes")" was seen as thorough and helpful for this purpose.

Recommendation: partnerships should agree on common definitions.

5.2.2.6 In the pilots, sending a letter to all local services about the purpose and process of the toolkit was useful for ensuring that everyone was clear about what was happening and why.

Recommendation: lead contacts should aim to keep everyone informed.

5.2.2.7 The methodology for undertaking the audit and analysis should be agreed upon at the partnership meeting.

However the findings on what works are detailed in the following section.

Recommendation: partnerships need to be clear about their methodology and write it in the action plan template.

5.3 STEP TWO: AUDIT AND ANALYSIS

5.3.1 What happens at this step?

- Training for interviewers
- Carrying out the interviews
- Entering the data
- Analysing the results

5.3.2 Findings

5.3.2.1 Collecting the information requires a two-step process

To engage with rough sleepers, it quickly became clear in the pilots that the interviews had to take place on paper and be entered onto the electronic system later. However, interviewers must be familiar with the system so that they could collect the right information in their interviews.

Recommendation: interviewers should have a training session beforehand – a session plan and resources have been developed to assist with this.

5.3.2.2 The data entry method can be flexible

The data entry can be done in either of two ways. Firstly, the interviewers can enter the data following each interview, or secondly, the paper interviews can be returned to a central point to be entered. Both ways were used in our pilot and the advantages of each are outlined below:

| Input method | Advantages |
|--------------|---|
| Interviewers | Know their shorthand and what the client meant Data entry is shared among several people |
| Centrally | Data is entered consistently |

Recommendation: partnerships need to discuss and agree on the process they will use, taking capacity of services into account.

5.3.2.3 Entering data is user-friendly

Data entry on the electronic tool can be done through submitting the information via a designated URL or by logging on to the system (for lead contacts). Feedback from the pilots was that data entry was straightforward and the flexibility of methods made it work for different needs. However the system does rely on having a good internet connection.

Recommendation: include technical guidance on system requirements and common issues with the final product.

5.3.2.4 The relationship is key to gaining good information

Interviews can be carried out by a number of people: voluntary sector staff, local authority staff, peer researchers, or a combination of these groups. What is clear is that the key to

getting good information is having interviewers who already have, or are able to form quickly, a relationship with the client. This should be taken into account when deciding who will carry out the interviews. Having an existing relationship also assists with clients who are reluctant to engage and gives a more representative sample than simply having those who volunteer.

Recommendation: interviews should be carried out by people who have a relationship with the clients.

5.3.2.5 Interviewers need to be clear that their role is not to give advice to the clients.

They should explain this to the client before the interview. Where a client raises issues that suggest they need further support, the interviewer should be prepared with information on where the client can go to access this after the interview.

Recommendation: this should be included in the training session and in the information given to interviewees.

5.3.2.6 Interviews are best conducted over a short given time

The interviews should take place over a short, designated period of time, to avoid the project becoming unmanageable. Our pilot areas conducted all interviews within one week. Each interview took around 45 minutes.

Recommendation: choose a fixed period to conduct the interviews.

5.3.2.7 Incentives are not vital to the success of the project

Having some form of incentive can be a way to encourage more reluctant clients to take part. However, one of the pilot areas did not use incentives and was still able to engage a representative sample of its current and former rough sleepers.

Recommendation: the partnership should decide whether incentives will be used – and if so who will fund these.

5.3.2.8 Partnerships need to be clear on who will do the analysis from the outset.

Analysing information takes time and is the crucial step in turning the audit into action. As different partners may have different motivations for completing the toolkit, it can be useful to have a number of partners involved in the analysis.

Recommendation: be clear who will do analysis from the outset.

5.3.2.9 The electronic system is able to produce a great deal of analysis, including tailored tables and charts.

Pilot areas were able to compile presentations and key statistics easily from the tool. However this requires lead contacts to have a clear understanding of how to draw off reports. Also, any information collected by 'free text' can only be accessed by exporting the data. This requires a further understanding of how to do this.

Recommendation: detailed guidance on how to produce analysis documents, including on exporting data, needs to be produced as part of the toolkit.

5.4 STEP THREE: ACTION PLAN

5.4.1 What happens at this step?

- Collating complementary evidence
- Considering good practice from elsewhere
- Completing action plan template based on the analysis

5.4.2 Findings

5.4.2.1 PrOMPT is one of a number of tools that complement each other

Information from PrOMPT can be limited due to the small sample size of clients who take part. However, it does collect information not generated through existing means. Therefore, to produce the most effective action plan, you should consider all data sources open to you that complement the PrOMPT data. This might include one or several of the data sources available through Communities and Local Government's preventing rough sleeping toolkit. This toolkit comprises:

- Good Practice Note on Preventing and Tackling Rough Sleeping
- Using s.192(3) Powers to Prevent Rough Sleeping
- Self Assessment Checklist
- Street Needs Audit (SNA)
- Street Count Guidance
- Outreach Balanced Scorecard
- Reconnections Protocols Guidance
- Prevention Opportunities Mapping and Planning Tool (PrOMPT)
- Move On Planning Protocol (MOPP)
- Good practice notes on tackling rough sleeping amongst A8 and A2 nationals
- Champions Programme
- Specialist Advisers on Rough Sleeping

This toolkit is available at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/developingstrategicresponse>

Recommendation: partnerships should consider other data sources and resources available to them while completing their action plans.

5.4.2.2 Good practice exists to inform your action plan

To inform the development of the national strategy, in April 2008 Communities and Local Government published a discussion paper **Rough sleeping ten years on: From the streets to independent living and opportunity**. This sought views on what more could be done to reduce the number of people sleeping rough, the current problems, and any solutions that had been found. The strategy noted that "analysis of the responses showed that gaps in services in some areas were matched by examples of successful models elsewhere. It seems that every type of service needed to prevent and tackle rough sleeping can be found – just not everywhere that people need them." This indicates that local authorities and their partners should make full use of existing good practice to inform their action plans. Good practice in preventing and tackling rough sleeping can be found at Homeless Link's Rough Sleeping portal here: <http://www.homeless.org.uk/roughsleepingportal>.

Recommendation: use existing good practice to inform your action plan.

5.5 STEP FOUR: REVIEW

5.5.1 What happens at this step?

- Reviewing progress against the action plan
- Using the data collected to inform local strategies

A 12 month review period is suggested, in which partners should meet regularly to monitor progress against the action plan. As part of this review, partners should consider how to make the identified actions fit strategically with other work that is taking place in the area.