



Homeless Link

Rough Sleeping Snapshot Estimates

Choosing Your
Approach



Snapshot Estimates

Choosing Your Approach

What are your options?

There are three available approaches, and you can choose to follow any of the three.

Your choice depends on your local context and rough sleeping in your area.

Count-based estimate: a full count of every person seen sleeping rough in the local authority on a 'typical' night.

Evidence-based estimate: an assessment of evidence by partners leading to a single snapshot figure representing the number of people thought to have slept rough in the local authority on a 'typical' night.

Evidence-based estimate including a spotlight count: as above, but the evidence sources include a street count that may not be as extensive as a full count-based estimate.



Snapshot Estimates

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Things to remember

Your annual rough sleeping snapshot estimate is separate to any other rough sleeper counts you complete the rest of the year.

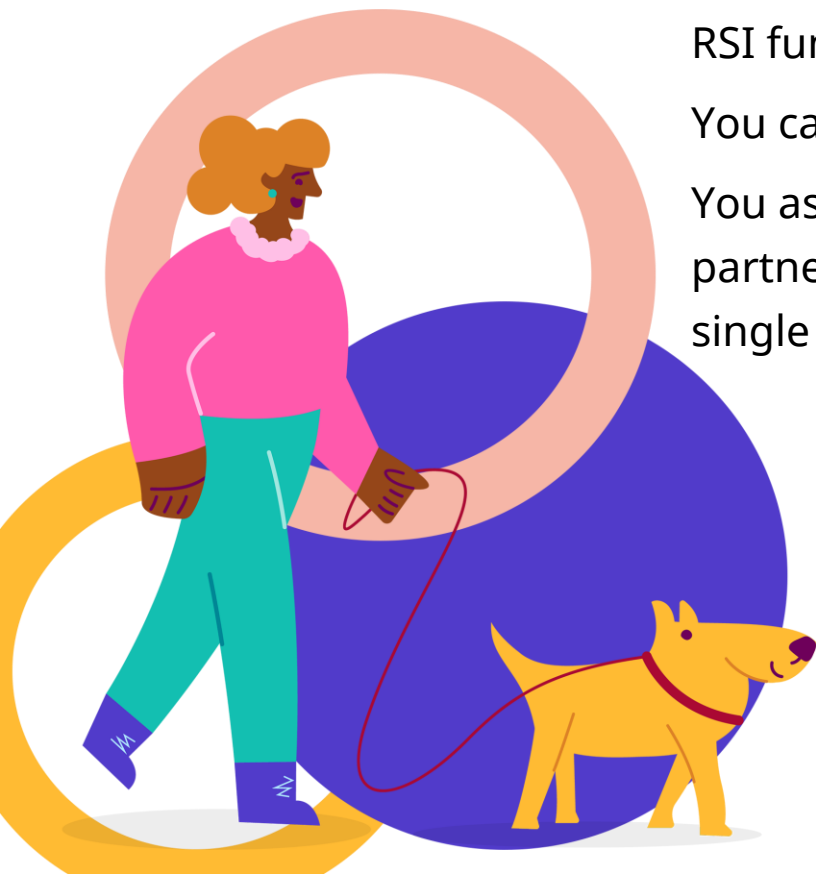
RSI funding does not affect your choice of approach

You can choose the approach you feel best suits your area.

You as the local authority, in agreement with your local partners, need to choose your 'typical' night, which is a single date between 1st October and 30th November.

When choosing your 'typical' night think about e.g. the night-time economy, planned football matches, bonfire night, or other events.

A spotlight count or count-based estimate cannot begin before midnight on your 'typical' night.



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Reasons to choose a **COUNT-based estimate** approach

- People sleeping rough are in sleep sites that will be visible and accessible at night
 - bear in mind that you can only include people in a count-based estimate total who can be seen by your street-count teams
- There are changes in the number, population or location of people sleeping rough and their sites are visible.
- It would be difficult to form an evidence-based estimate based on the information you have available to you.
- There is a significant disagreement between agencies about the numbers of people sleeping rough.

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Reasons to choose an **EVIDENCE-based estimate** approach

- Sleep sites are inaccessible, hidden or dangerous to access at night, e.g. in woods, derelict buildings, etc.
- You would not be able to arrange safe access to known rough sleeping sites during a street count e.g. parks, tower blocks, riversides, canal paths.
- Regular intelligence gathering is in place by agencies and they are happy to share their intelligence with the local authority.
- Numbers of people sleeping rough are consistently low, they are already in touch with services, and partner agencies agree this is the case (i.e. there are rarely new or returning people to the streets).
- You are able, via partner agencies, to gather sufficient and reliable intelligence on people sleeping rough on the typical night.
- Partner agencies agree to collect information for an agreed night and to share this information with you for the purpose of the estimate.

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Reasons to choose an **EVIDENCE-based estimate including a SPOTLIGHT COUNT** approach

- You have a mix of visible/accessible and hidden/inaccessible locations in your local authority area.
- There are frequent changes to individuals sleeping rough or overall numbers of people sleeping rough in visible/accessible sleep sites.
- Your partners hold conflicting views on which approach is right for the area.
- You are confident your partners will be able to supply you with additional robust intelligence on the night of a planned spotlight count about people sleeping rough in hidden or inaccessible locations.

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Choosing Your Approach

What flexibility is there?

- You can adjust aspects of the approach from year to year to achieve greater accuracy, for example:
 - Choosing an earlier typical night (e.g. October) to reduce the risk of severe weather
 - Changing night of the week in response to a busier night time economy
 - Starting a street count later (e.g. 2am instead of midnight) in response to a busier night time economy or changes in the patterns of people bedding down
 - Involving new partners and/or people with lived experience to improve your evidence base/engagement, and to ensure successful a successful Quality Assurance review
 - To take into account a significant change in the local context, such as boundary changes

Snapshot Estimates

Choosing Your Approach

Why work in partnership with agencies?

- Working in partnership with agencies is essential for an accurate rough sleeping snapshot estimate.
- To get the most accurate, up to date information.
- Have patterns of rough sleeping changed in your area?
- Are there factors that will affect your 'typical' night?
- For accountability and transparency.
- To build partnerships for ongoing work.



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Choosing Your Approach

Working in partnership with other agencies

The agencies you work in partnership with in your local authority area could include:

- Outreach teams
- Hostels, day centres, night shelters
- Housing department
- Police
- Community safety teams
- Park rangers
- Specialist services e.g. for women, young people, the LGBTQ+ community
- Faith groups, soup runs, street pastors, parish councils
- Advice agencies, libraries
- Housing associations
- Social services
- Health & mental health services
- Refuse collectors, town centre management, local retail security, street wardens



Snapshot Estimates

Choosing Your Approach

Involving Independent Partners

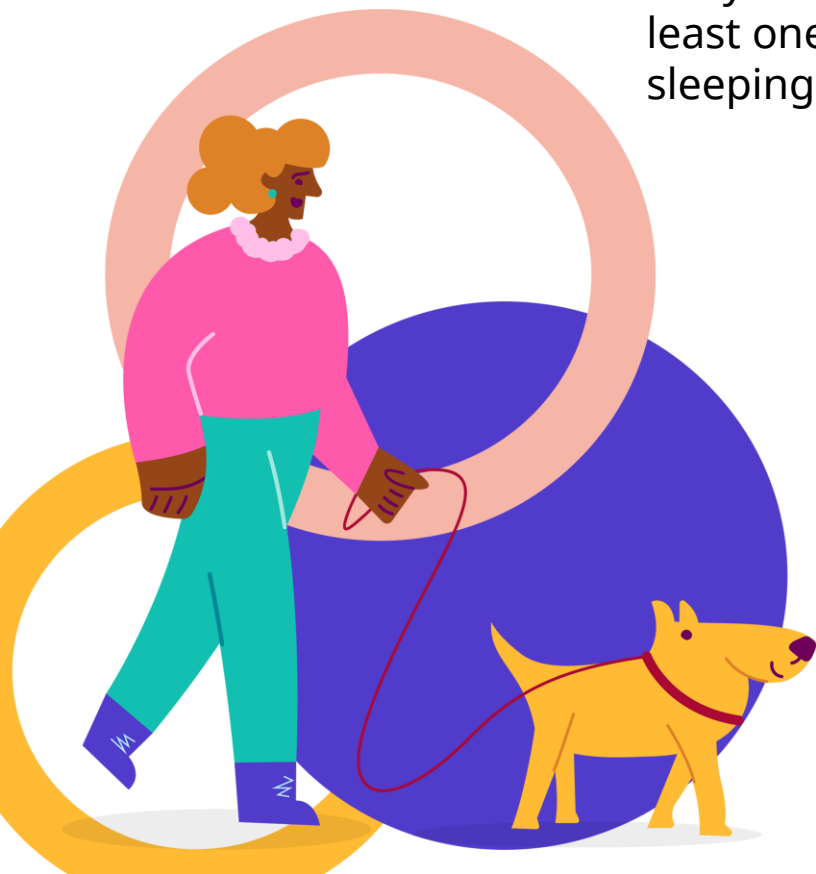
MHCLG require every rough sleeping snapshot estimate to go through a Quality Assurance process.

For your successful Quality Assurance, you must involve at least one Independent Partner in collecting the rough sleeping figures for your area.

Your Independent Partner is someone who is not commissioned, funded or employed by the local authority or county council, e.g.

- Community groups
- Faith groups
- Soup kitchens
- Volunteers from the public
- Non-commissioned charities e.g. hospices
- Other organisations on a case-by-case basis

There is a separate short video in the toolkit explaining everything you need to know about Independent Partners.



Snapshot Estimates Questions?



If you have questions about your choice of approach you can:

- **Email** the Rough Sleeping Snapshot Estimate Coordinator:
verifiers@homelesslink.org.uk
- **Phone** the Rough Sleeping Snapshot Estimate Coordinator:
07958135579
- Attend one of the weekly **live Q&A sessions**: dates and times and booking links will be sent out in the weekly project updates to LA Leads and Count Coordinators
- Find comprehensive information on the **Rough Sleeping Snapshot Estimates Toolkit** webpage on the Homeless Link Knowledge Hub

Homeless Link

What we do

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for frontline homelessness services. We work to improve services through research, guidance and learning, and campaign for policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

homeless.org.uk

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