

Snapshot Estimates



Some common
scenarios and
possible solutions

Snapshot Estimates

FAQs for Local Authorities

You're having difficulty recruiting an Independent Partner to take part in your rough sleeping snapshot.

Or

The person who has been an Independent Partner in previous years is no longer eligible because they are now employed or funded by the local authority or county council

Do you have a homelessness forum in your area? Are any of the members non-commissioned/funded?

Would someone from any of the following fit the bill?

- a forum for people with lived experience of homelessness
- a renters/tenants/residents association
- a local parish council you have links with?

Your Independent Partner doesn't have to be from a homelessness background. They can be from e.g. Scouts, Guides, amateur sports teams, a local charitable foundation

They can also be from outside your local authority area

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At the last minute, your Independent Partner cancels due to sickness and can't attend your count or estimate meeting.

You still need to have an Independent Partner at your count or estimate meeting for your rough sleeping snapshot to be QA rated 'assured'

Are you able to recruit a stand-in Independent Partner using the suggestions on the previous slide?

Are colleagues in other teams / services across the local authority able to put you in touch with anyone?

Have you contacted Homeless Link for support? (verifiers@homelesslink.org.uk)

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A group of counters return from their patch, including members of the local outreach team. They have not counted any rough sleepers on the patch

The outreach team, who are familiar with the area, expected to see one particular client at his regular site

The outreach team ask if they can go out a little later to see if this particular rough sleeper has bedded down

The count team could go out again to revisit the sleep site if they are able to return before the last count group return

Remind the counters that unless an individual is seen bedded down they cannot be counted – refer back to the rough sleeping definition

Has there been any pre-count activity e.g. by police or street cleaning moving rough sleepers on or clearing sleeping sites?

Local Authorities should consider the timing of their count, perhaps starting later to give a better chance of counting people when bedded down (e.g. 2-4am)

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A group of counters return and report a row of tents in their patch

They have included 5 people on their form because they spoke to them a few times earlier in the week

They didn't make contact with people in the tents during the count because they were worried one person might become aggressive

Tents cannot be counted as a proxy for people

Information gathered outside the count-based estimate can't be used in place of seeing, or making contact with, people on the night

People in tents don't have to be seen but they must speak to the counting team in order to be included

If the team knew that there was a safety risk, this should have informed the choice of approach. An evidence-based estimate might have been appropriate if there was clear evidence who was in the tent but it wouldn't be safe to make contact during the night.

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All count teams are back at the base and forms have been reviewed

One of the counters goes home, and calls shortly after to say they have seen 2 more people bedded down who weren't there earlier during the count

The count has to have a finish time

The extra 2 people can't be included as the count has ended

The people might already have been included in the count at a different site

It may be that the count started too early if people were not yet bedded down

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Count team finds someone who is covered up and doesn't wake in response to them

The person is breathing regularly

They can't work out gender, age or nationality

They could ask Police to wake the person if necessary and if there are safety concerns

But, there is no requirement to wake people

Safety comes first

Respect people's need to rest!

It's completely fine to record the person's demographics as 'not known'

Ideally, an outreach team will look for them again next day to offer support

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On the “typical night” SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) is active and provision is available for all rough sleepers to come in off the streets

The count should be cancelled or rearranged. It could be unsafe to send count teams out in severe weather. It is no longer a typical night.

If the count takes place, the count figure can be used as intelligence for an evidence-based estimate. An estimate figure can be submitted for those counted and those accessing the SWEP provision

Conducting counts and/or estimate meetings earlier on in the snapshot estimates period might reduce risk of SWEP being active – e.g. during October

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Counters have decided to visit areas before midnight, and before the start of the count, as part of a 'pre-count' to see who is out

Some individuals were found rough sleeping during this 'pre-count' and were offered emergency accommodation and they accepted this offer

Counts should not start before midnight and anybody seen before this time would not be counted

Pre-count activity creates a risk of disruption

Any individuals accommodated during the 'pre-count' may be required to be included in your final figure as they would otherwise have been counted if found later that night

If outreach teams usually contact individuals during earlier evening 'pre-counts' because they are not visible at night, for example, then an evidence-based estimate, including a spotlight count would be appropriate

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Counters find a person sleeping in a caravan on private land

The person is not interested in any help from the outreach team or local authority

If the caravan is structurally sound, weatherproof and the person living there has access to adequate facilities e.g. to cook and clean, this would not be counted as rough sleeping. The individual would therefore not be included in the snapshot estimate figures

However, if the caravan was derelict and did not offer adequate protection from the weather, this would be classified as rough sleeping, whether the caravan was on private land or not

Living in a tent or a car *would* be defined as rough sleeping, whether it was on private land or not

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Counters find a person sleeping in a car on a driveway outside a house

The person says they have permission from the homeowner to park their car on the drive. They can sometimes use the bathroom in the house to wash and change

The person is in between tenancies and is hoping to move into a new flat within a week

Having to sleep in a car even only temporarily and on private land, falls under the definition of rough sleeping

The person may be confident that it is only a temporary measure and they can resolve their housing situation on their own. Nonetheless, if they have no other options but to bed down in a car on the typical night, they should be included in the snapshot estimate total

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A homelessness service attends the estimate meeting with a list of individuals known to rough sleep and are accessing their services

Some of the individuals identified have not disclosed their sleeping sites

People have good reasons for sleeping in hidden locations

What circumstantial evidence is there that someone is rough sleeping (habits e.g. carrying luggage, attending day services to eat, wash, for support with benefits)?

Engage local agencies, services and businesses to find out about rough sleeping hot spots which can be considered alongside voluntary sector intelligence during the estimate meeting

Promote StreetLink before the 'typical' night and look at referrals to identify rough sleeping hotspots

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A individual identified during the estimate meeting is found to hold a current tenancy

Look at what evidence there is to suggest that the individual was rough sleeping rather than in their property on the night of the estimate. Were they seen bedded down? Were they with known associates/friends?

Check the definition of rough sleeping and take into account the time they were seen as they might be involved in street activity but not sleeping rough

If the individual was seen bedded down on the night of the estimate they should be included in the final estimate figure

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A homelessness organisation presents a large list of individuals at the estimate meeting without robust evidence that those identified are currently rough sleeping

What evidence can be used to establish if they were sleeping rough on the typical night chosen?

Clarify in advance with partners what information is needed so the estimate meeting is productive

List of hostel residents and people turned away by hostels/shelters on that night

Hot spot counts/visits on night of/morning after estimate, including park wardens

Who was in custody that night – Police or probation intelligence

Services ask clients for more information on sleep sites ahead of the estimate night

Intelligence from other support services

Some evidence can be sourced following the estimate meeting

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

[@HomelessLink](https://twitter.com/HomelessLink)