Getting the most out of StreetLink

9th December, 11am-12pm

With:
- **Chair: Caroline Bernard, Head of Policy & Comms, Homeless Link**
- **Gareth Thomas, Senior Information Manager, Homeless Link**
- **Ffion Eirug, Service Manager (StreetLink Advice Line), St Mungo's**
- **Laura Shovlin, Service Development Manager, St Mungo's**

Let's **end homelessness** together

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Getting the most out of StreetLink:

A webinar for frontline services to find out when and how to submit the most effective StreetLink alert and for services who receive StreetLink alerts to find out how to manage them.

Chair – Caroline Bernard, Head of Policy & Communications, Homeless Link

Gareth Thomas – Senior Information Manager, Homeless Link

Ffion Eirug – StreetLink Service Manager, St Mungo's

Laura Shovlin – Service Development Manager: Outreach Services, St Mungo's

Street Link
www.streetlink.org.uk

St Mungo's
Ending homelessness
Rebuilding lives

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StreetLink

- Partnership project between Homeless Link and St Mungo's

- Launched in 2012 with funding from central and London governments (MHCLG, GLA, Welsh Govt)

- Originally conceived as a tool aimed at members of the public who see people sleeping on the streets and want to be able to help them but don't know what to do

- 24/7 phone line, website and mobile phone apps

- Connects rough sleepers with the local services that can help get them off the streets

- Covers all of England and Wales: makes referrals to 348 local authority areas

- Over 380,000 alerts made

- Supporter base of more than 230,000 people signed up via the StreetLink website

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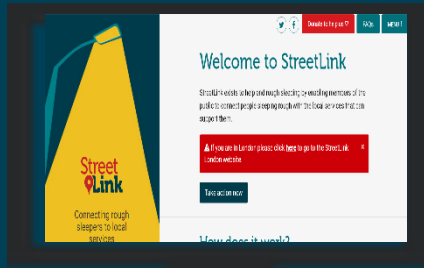
Alerts can be made to StreetLink via the websites, mobile app or phone line

Alerts are processed at StreetLink by a small staff team who are supplemented by a pool over 100 volunteers (when operating normally)
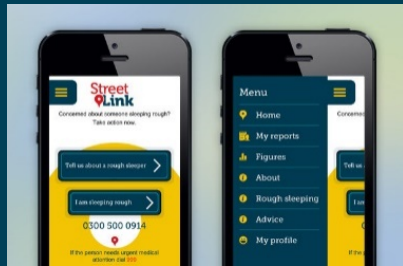
Wherever possible, we encourage alerts to be made via digital channels rather than by using the phone line. We receive thousands of calls a month even in periods that are relatively less busy, and in busy times such as periods of cold weather and during the first national COVID-19 lockdown we can be answering over 700 calls a day.
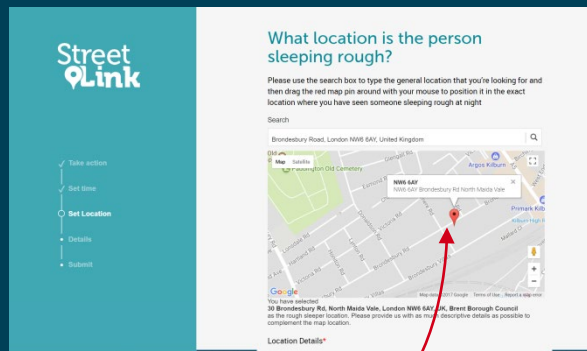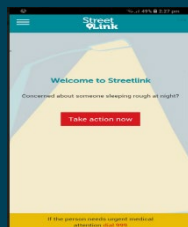
This means that it can be difficult to get through to speak to a member of the StreetLink team on the phone and we try to prioritise answering calls made directly by people sleeping rough themselves.
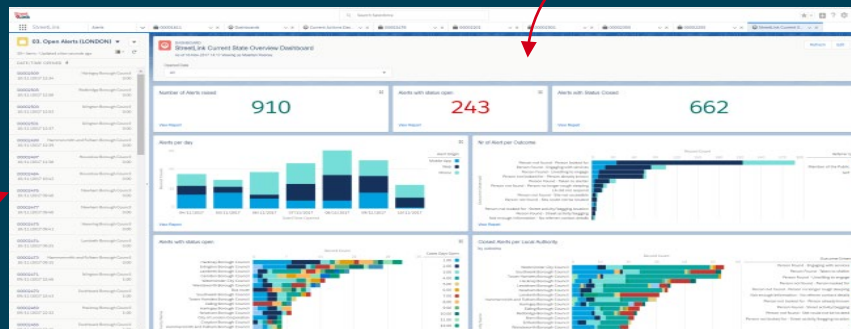
Public StreetLink websites

Mobile App

Call centre

1. Receiving of Alerts

2. Processing of Alerts

Reporting & Insights

910   243   662

Feedback to referrers

Stats and reporting to government

3. Outreach and reporting back on Alerts

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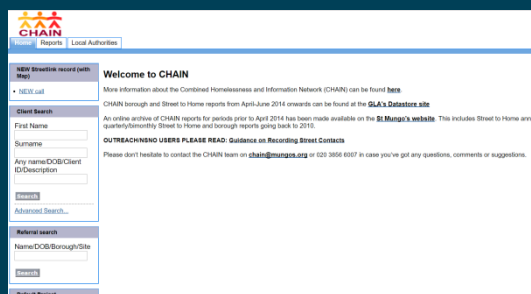
London: CHAIN integration

Email

StreetLink Community for local authorities and outreach services

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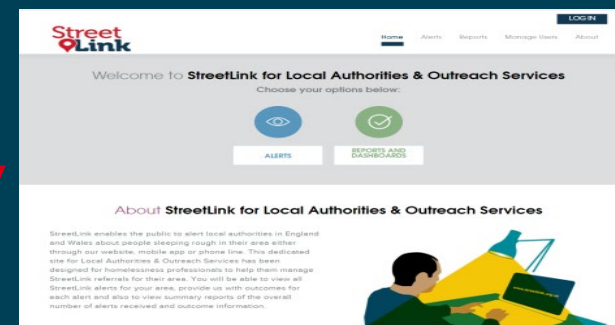
Key stats and context:

Alerts to StreetLink have steadily increased year-on-year

2015 - 23,000
2016 - 50,000
2018 - 96,000

As we all know, 2020 has been an unusual and challenging year and this is true for StreetLink as well

50% increase of self alerts by phone on the previous calendar year (with a quarter still to go) – 7.5k
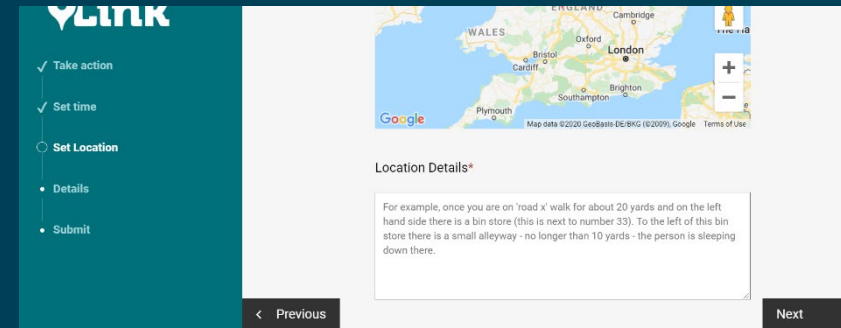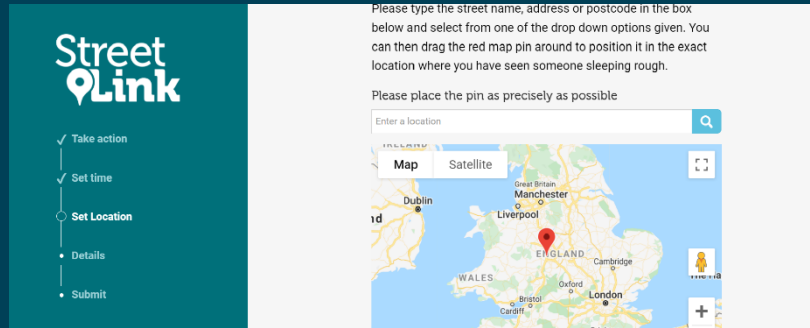
300% increase of self alerts by web on the previous calendar year (with a quarter still to go)

Important to explain the boundaries and remit of the StreetLink service and talk about best practice when using StreetLink......

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What information in needed in a StreetLink alert?

An exact location: this part of a StreetLink alert is the most important

Please type the street name, address or postcode in the box below and select from one of the drop down options given. You can then drag the red map pin around to position it in the exact location where you have seen someone sleeping rough.

Please place the pin as precisely as possible

Location Details*

For example, once you are on 'road x' walk for about 20 yards and on the left hand side there is a bin store (this is next to number 33). To the left of this bin store there is a small alleyway - no longer than 10 yards - the person is sleeping down there.

There are two elements to providing a location, firstly placing a pin in the map to generate the latitude/longitude that allows us to identify which local authority the alert falls within.

Secondly, a '*location details*' text field which provides vital contextual descriptive detail which will help outreach teams looking for the person sleeping rough.

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Why is the location of someone sleeping rough important in a StreetLink alert?

StreetLink is not a street outreach service itself and does not physically go out to find and offer assistance to people sleeping rough. Rather, StreetLink acts as the central part of the **link** that **collects information** about someone sleeping rough from a concerned member of the public, a homelessness professional trying to ensure that their client gets the right help, or someone who is sleeping rough themselves – and **passes that information** to a service who can help (usually a street outreach team).

Detailed and accurate location information is key because first a foremost a street outreach team needs to know where the person is rough sleeping in order to find them on the outreach shift and provide the support to help get that person off the streets.

The quicker StreetLink can process alerts and ensure they are sent to the appropriate contacts to respond, the better chance there is that the person sleeping rough will be found.

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What is involved in 'processing' of StreetLink alerts?

The way that StreetLink is funded, and the consistently high level of alerts made for people in London compared to other areas, means that London alerts have an added layer of manual processing by the StreetLink team.

Alerts received from **every** area in England & Wales are checked against existing **open** alerts to try to minimise duplication as much as possible.

The importance of a 'high quality' alert (accurate, detailed, specific) is true for every area but the volume of alerts received for London areas means that the StreetLink team assess all London alerts for 'quality' before deciding whether the alert is suitable to be sent to an outreach team.

The more detailed, accurate and specific an alert is, both the quicker it can be assessed and passed on to an outreach team (London) and the more helpful it is to whoever is receiving the alert (all areas).

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What is the difference between a 'high quality' StreetLink alert and one that is perhaps less helpful or even not suitable for StreetLink?

Location

Accurate - returning to information provided about where someone is sleeping rough, it is important that the map pin (geolocation) and the location description text are complimentary – it doesn't help anyone if these two elements are confusing or contradictory.

Specific – knowing exactly where someone can be found sleeping rough makes a huge difference. Alerts that say something like *'Client presented at homeless service in xxx. Asked where he would be tonight and he said he'd be in the xxx area'* are not specific enough.

Time and 'bedding down'

We ask for a time that someone has been seen sleeping / what time someone can be found at a location and look for some descriptive detail in the alert that indicates the person is bedding down there.
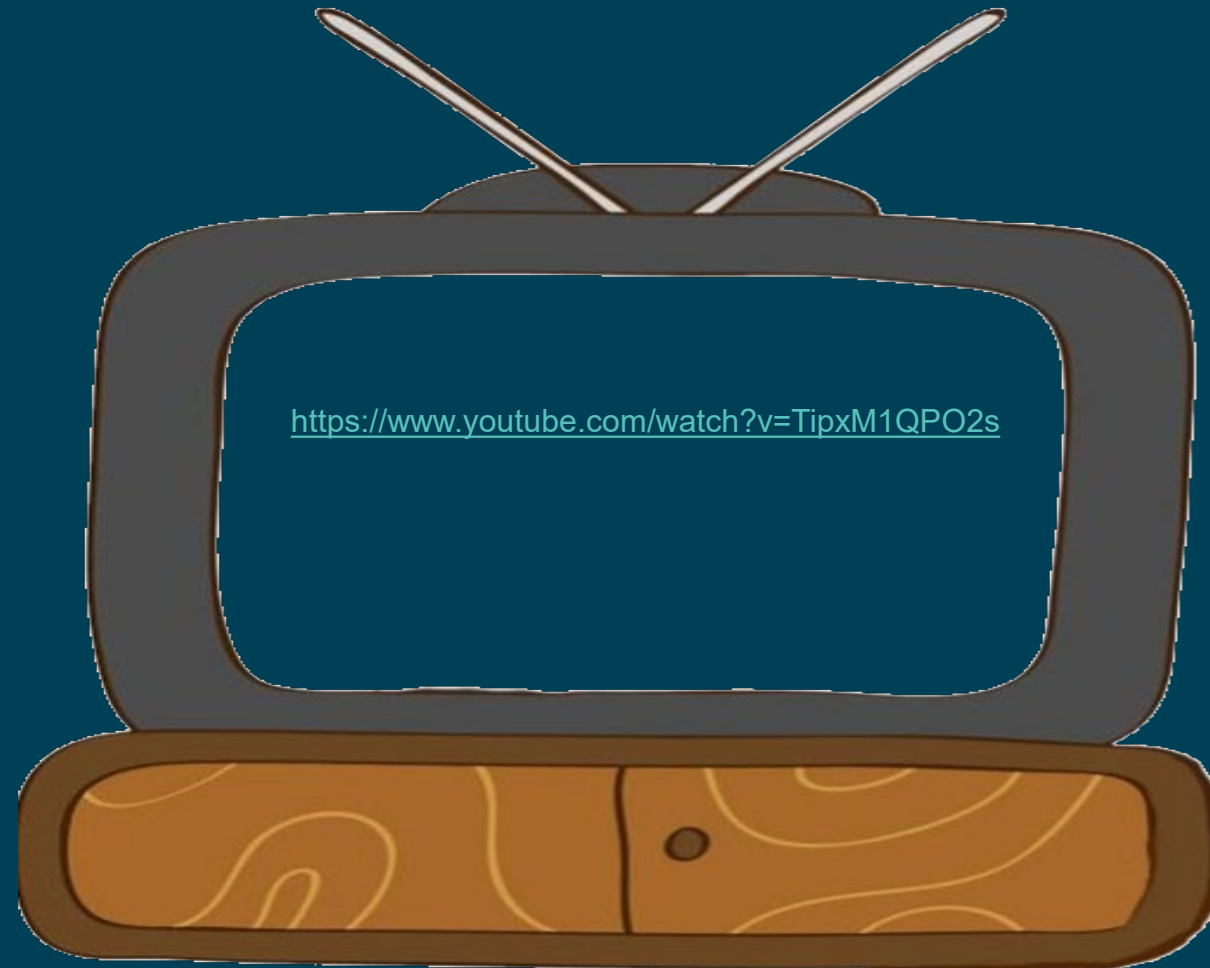
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Responding to StreetLink alerts

We set up the StreetLink Community for Local Authorities and Outreach Services in response to feedback from many areas that told us receiving StreetLink alerts by email initially and then crucially having to get back to us with an outcome **by email** can be quite difficult and time consuming

Advantages of the system:

1.) See all of your StreetLink alerts in one place so you don't need to search for them in your email inbox.
2.) **Provide the outcome** of the alerts online, triggering an automatic feedback email to the referrer if they have requested it.
3.) Saves time for you by not having to respond to individual emails and saves time for us by not having to manually process outcomes received by email.
3.) Helps to ensure that an outcome is allocated for every StreetLink referral received

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StreetLink – how does it work?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TipxM1QPO2s

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For more information or if you have any questions….

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