

[News story: New funding for rough sleepers living with mental illness and substance misuse](#)

The Health and Social Care Secretary has announced that £1.9 million will be given to councils by Public Health England to help improve the health of rough sleepers.

The funding will be awarded to projects that improve access to health services and continuity of care for people with mental ill-health and substance misuse problems who are sleeping rough or at risk of returning to rough sleeping.

This could include:

- 'in-reach' care models where specialist substance misuse or mental health workers run sessions in hostels or day centres
- 'outreach' models where specialist workers support rough sleepers at street level
- targeted interventions such as peer health advocacy that supports individuals to access and attend health appointments

To apply for a share of the funding, applicants should read the [guidance and application pack](#) before submitting their completed expression of interest and budget template to roughsleepinggrant@phe.gov.uk. The deadline is 5pm on Friday 5 July 2019. Successful projects will be announced in the summer.

Many people who are sleeping rough experience mental and physical illness and have substance misuse needs.

Rough sleepers face more barriers accessing health services, particularly those living with mental illness or substance misuse.

This can contribute to a 'revolving door', leaving individuals repeatedly in and out of stable accommodation.

Of the people seen sleeping rough in London in 2017 and 2018:

- 50% had mental health needs
- 43% had alcohol misuse problems
- 40% drug misuse problems

The government's [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) was announced last August and aims to halve rough sleeping by 2022.

The NHS Long Term Plan also committed to spending up to £30 million extra over 5 years to meet the health needs of rough sleepers to ensure better access to specialist homelessness NHS mental health support.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock, said:

Most of us can only imagine what it is like to sleep rough and it is devastating that so many aren't getting the right access to healthcare. Living with a mental health condition or substance misuse while homeless can lead to a vicious cycle of crisis where people can't get their lives back on track and their health issues remain unsupported.

Today's announcement, along with our NHS Long Term Plan, will provide a crucial lifeline to those at risk of being left with nowhere to go and is an important step towards achieving this government's goal of ending rough sleeping for good.

Inequalities Minister, Jackie Doyle-Price, said:

Everyone should have a roof over their head and access to the right health services, no matter who they are. We are determined to stamp out this injustice once and for all.

Understanding the factors that can lead to homelessness and the triggers that can trap people in a pattern of addiction and sleeping rough, coupled with a lack of support for their mental health, is crucial. This funding will help better equip local authorities to protect society's most vulnerable and ensure no one slips through the net.