

Information factsheet

Sleeping rough and street sex working in Southampton: safety advice for women

This factsheet is about what to do if you find yourself sleeping rough and street sex working. It includes useful contact information and safety advice.

This factsheet is not designed to tell you to stop what you're doing. It is about how to do it in the safest way.

I am at risk of sleeping rough. What should I do?

If you find yourself at risk of sleeping rough, contact the Street Homeless Prevention Team. They can help you get into accommodation.

Street Homelessness Prevention Team

Telephone: **023 80 832343**

Email: **streethomeless@southampton.gov.uk**

In the meantime, try your best to stay with family or friends. If this is not an option you may find yourself having to sleep rough. Even one night on the streets is an incredibly scary experience but there are things that you can do to make yourself safer.

Some people may not want or be ready for accommodation, but we'd still recommend following the safety advice in this factsheet.

Staying safe while sex working

- Make sure someone knows when and where you are working and ask if they can call you at regular times to check on you
- You can get condoms at Cranbury Avenue Day Centre and many pharmacies. Use them for each different interaction with every client. Ideally, use condoms while giving oral sex, because you can still catch diseases this way.
- If you're not on contraception, consider starting it. If this is something that you would like to do, the Homeless Healthcare Team (HHCT) at Cranbury Avenue can support you with this.
- If you are assaulted physically or sexually (even if it happens while you are working) report it to the police. It can be an incredibly hard thing to do but this is the best way to keep yourself and others as safe as possible. There are officers trained in these kinds of attacks who can help you. **Just because you street work does not mean you deserve to be assaulted.** You can be supported to prosecute if that's what you want.
- Most importantly, if it feels unsafe, it probably is. Be careful.

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Staying safe while you sleep

- Try to find somewhere sheltered from rain or wind. Keeping warm is key.
- Protect yourself against the cold by having a sleeping bag and/or blankets (you can pick these up from the Cranbury Avenue Day Centre or Patrick House).
- Avoid sleeping directly on the ground, by putting cardboard or blankets down first, for example. It's the ground that will make you colder.
- Sleep where others are sleeping (but only if they are people that you know and trust).
- Be careful in visible places. Be aware of risks from the general public.
- Make contact with the outreach teams when you see them. They can keep an eye on you and often bring round hot drinks in the morning.

Cranbury Avenue Day Centre

Cranbury Avenue Day Centre is currently only open for people with appointments to see the Street Homeless Prevention Team or Homeless Healthcare Team. If you don't have an appointment, they may still be able to provide you with clean clothes or sleeping bags.

The Day Centre can provide access to IT and phone services, and referrals to other agencies. They do not provide accommodation

Your health

- Try to eat as regularly as possible. You'd be surprised just how many places around Southampton give out free meals to homeless people; churches, temples, and a Facebook group that give food daily in the Shopmobility carpark – talk to others to find out where the best food is! A lot of these meals are provided in the early evening and are still available despite the Coronavirus situation.
- You might find that rough sleeping and sex working triggers a mental health condition or makes any mental health condition you already have worse. If this is affecting you, speak to the Homeless Healthcare Team or another GP if you are registered with them. If your feelings become overwhelming, Samaritans are available to talk 24/7.

Homeless Healthcare Team

Telephone: **0300 128 8991**

Samaritans

Telephone: **116 123** (calls are free)

- You can always call NHS 111 to talk about your health. They now employ trained mental health nurses for mental health support 24/7.

NHS 111

Telephone: **111** (calls are free)

- If you have self-harmed and need immediate medical assistance, or you feel like you are going to hurt or kill yourself, telephone phone **111** or **999**, or go to the urgent treatment centre at the Royal South Hants Hospital. If it's a major medical emergency, go to the emergency department at Southampton General Hospital.
- When you are street working, sexual health is very important. Use condoms where possible and get regular sexual health check ups, especially if you notice any changes (such as blood when there wasn't any before, discharge, pain when peeing).

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- There is a sexual health clinic based at Royal South Hants hospital. Due to COVID-19 restrictions there are no walk-in appointments. You will need to telephone the clinic to book a face-to-face appointment.

Royal South Hants sexual health clinic

Telephone: **0300 300 2016**

Opening hours: 8am to 8pm, seven days a week

Homeless Healthcare Team

The Homeless Healthcare team is based at Cranbury Avenue Day Centre and acts as a GP surgery for anyone who is experiencing homelessness and is not registered with a Southampton GP. The team also includes registered mental health nurses.

They have appointments available from Monday to Friday. If you have any health problems, book an appointment as soon as possible, as sleeping rough and sex working can make health problems worse. There are also walk-in appointments available from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.

Benefits

- Managing a universal credit claim while you are sleeping rough can be incredibly difficult but it's very important as it will help you to secure accommodation in the future. It's also a way to get a regular income without the risks that come with street working.
- Tell your job coach that you are rough sleeping. This will mean that they can be more lenient with your appointments, job search, or sanctions. If you can trust your job coach enough to tell them that you are street working, it may mean that they can schedule appointments for times of the day that are easier for you.
- It's so important to keep or remember your login and personal security number (PSN). If you're worried about forgetting it, you could ask the staff at the Cranbury Avenue Day Centre to keep a copy of it for you.
- If you lose your phone or don't have one, tell your job coach and ask that they call the Cranbury Avenue Day Centre and leave a message for you there if they need to get hold of you urgently.
- Once you have accommodation, update your universal credit account as soon as possible. If you don't, you can be sanctioned.

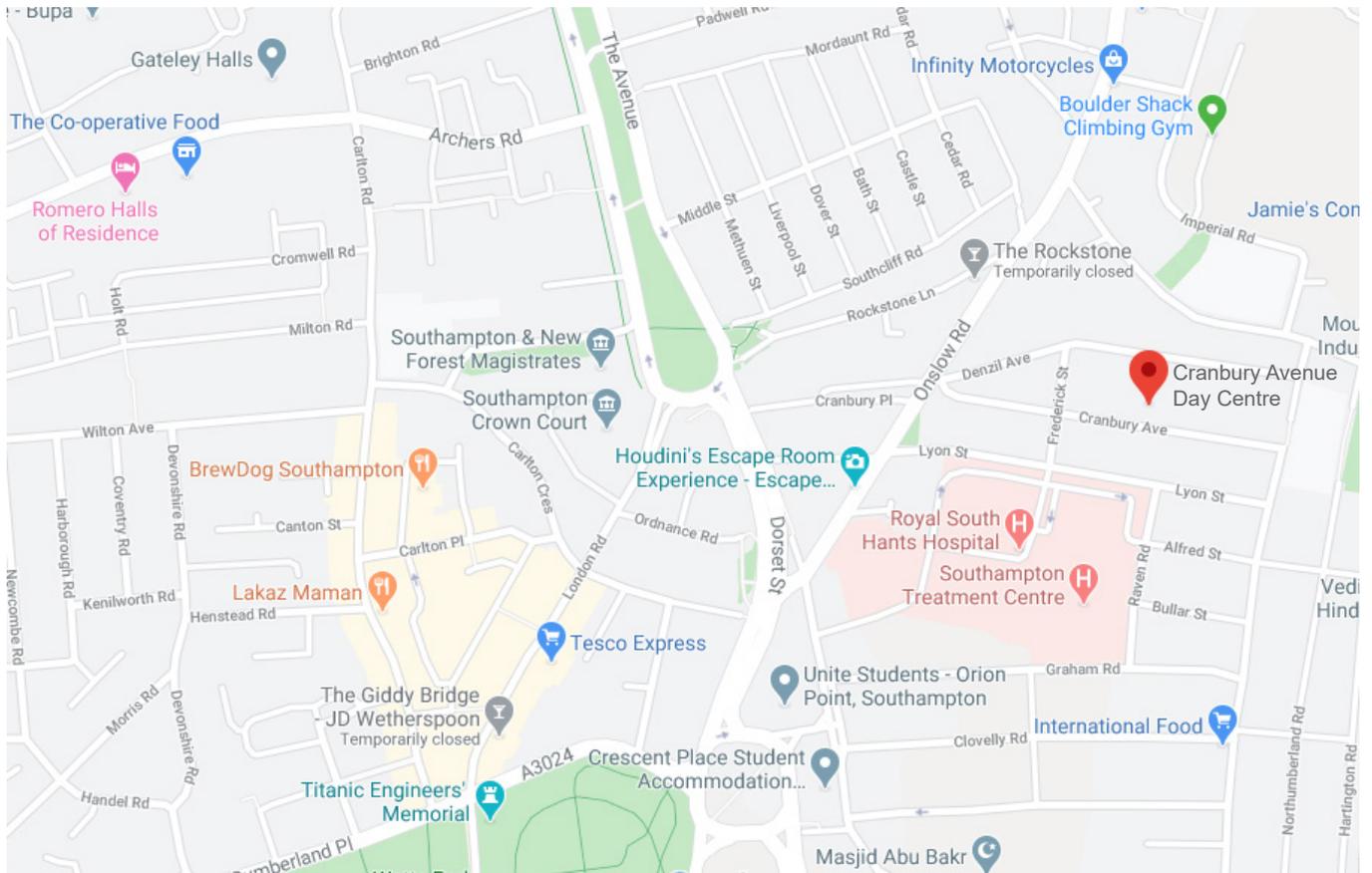
Substance abuse (if applicable)

- Keep in contact with Change Grow Live (CGL). Work with your key worker on reducing your use or risks, if that is something you want to do. CGL are now on London Road.
- Clean needles and sharps bins can be picked up from CGL and many pharmacies. Remember to dispose of your dirty works. Don't reuse needles or share any works with any one. You can take your full bin back to CGL for safe disposal.
- Use clean water when cooking heroin. Small capsules of sterile water can be collected from CGL. They can also do Hep C testing.
- If you use heroin, make sure you have a naloxone pen with you at all times and tell your friends where you keep it. It could save your life or someone else's.
- If you are alcohol-dependent, make sure you budget enough money so that you don't end up without alcohol for a long period of time. Alcohol withdrawal can make you very unwell and in some cases can be fatal.

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How to find Cranbury Avenue Day Centre

30 Cranbury Avenue, Southampton SO14 0LT
(near the Royal South Hants Hospital)



Opening hours

Monday to Thursday: 9am to 4.30pm

Friday: 9am to 4pm

For a translation of this document, or a version in another format such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please telephone **023 8120 4688**.

For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalneeds

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Version 1. Published August 2020. Due for review August 2023. 2634