



BOGNOR REGIS BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Information for Businesses : Rough Sleeping

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This information has been designed to help you, as a business owner, develop a consistent, reasonable approach to rough sleepers on your business premises. This document is provided for the purposes of information only, and does not constitute legal advice.

The House of Commons Briefing Paper on Rough Sleepers and Anti-Social Behaviour (England) is a helpful reference point for further information. Please contact the BR BID if you would like us to email you a copy of the PDF, or search online for "house of commons research briefing CBP-7836".

What is being done to support rough sleepers in Bognor Regis?

There are a number of agencies involved and range of systems in place to support rough sleepers.

Support is triggered by reporting the rough sleeper's presence to Arun District Council's Rough Sleeper Team via **Streetlink.org.uk**, or, if you're signed up for the BID's Business Crime Reduction Services, you can submit a **public realm report / Rough Sleeper Location Report** through the **DISC** app.

The Rough Sleeper Outreach Team will then visit the person and advise them of the relevant support options available to them. They will also be given a printed leaflet containing details about the support available to them.

Every person brought to the Team's attention is encouraged to engage, but they cannot force someone to accept the support being offered.

Whose responsibility?

If a person is sleeping rough on public land, then any action taken is the responsibility of the council responsible for that land. In Bognor Regis, that could be West Sussex County Council (who have responsibility for the highways, including the London Road precinct) or Arun District Council (if it's in a park or car park, or one of the buildings owned by ADC in Bognor Regis, eg The Arcade).

If a person is sleeping rough on private land, then any action taken is the responsibility of the landowner. "Land" includes doorways to businesses, recessed fire escapes, and covered alleyways.

Only the landowner can take the legal steps to have a rough sleeper evicted. Without the landowner's permission, council workers cannot enter that land to remove items left behind.

Sometimes delays are caused through difficulties in tracking down the owners of private land – especially when the land is registered to a large freehold company, where a private owner's contact details are different to those on land registry records, or where the property is managed by an agent. Sometimes landowners – particularly those that don't live in the area – simply refuse to take any action, which then starts a whole new process to compel them to act.

As part of its role in the multi-agency partnership, the BR BID has committed to identifying and making contact with the owners of private land affected by rough sleeping to alert them to any issues and, where permission is given, acting on their behalf to find solutions.

What can my business do?

1. Have a plan

If you work for a national chain, check to see if your company has a corporate policy on response to rough sleeping. If you're an independent, you may find it helpful to outline an action plan.

2. Know your property boundaries

For businesses, a good first step is knowing exactly what areas of your building or land are your responsibility. Request the information from your landlord or download the documents from Land Registry (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/land-registry>). You can contact the BR BID for help with this.

3. Clearly identify your land as private property

This avoids any misunderstandings if you have to take action later. You could:

- put up a sign stating that the area is private land.
- put up a sign explaining what will happen to items left on private property.

4. Report a rough sleeper's presence

Alert ADC's Rough Sleeper Outreach Team so they can offer support. You can do this online at **Streetlink.org.uk**, or, if you're signed up for the BID's Business Crime Reduction Services, submit a **public realm / Rough Sleeper Location report** on the **DISC** app. The preference is that all reports go through Streetlink.

5. Calmly ask a person to move on

If your business premises is privately owned, you are within your rights to ask someone to leave your land or move their belongings from your land. Please note that you must not forcibly remove anybody from your private land.

If you would like help with this, you can ask for support from the Community Warden, either on the radio network or by telephoning: 07912 292406

If you are concerned that a situation may become confrontational, you can request police assistance to avoid a breach of the peace.

6.Seek independent legal advice

If a person establishes themselves as “living” on your private land, you may have to follow a legal route to evict them. Seek independent legal advice.

7.Remove abandoned items

You must first confirm that the items have actually been abandoned. Your business may have its own policy already, but an example of what’s considered reasonable is a minimum of “two separate visits over a 48-hour period to confirm that the items have been left in situ with no sign of movement or evidence of anyone living in it.” It’s a good idea to record the dates and times that you monitored the items, and ideally take photographs as evidence.

Once the items have been identified as abandoned, you should take steps to safely remove them. Please take great care if there is any potential risk to your health and safety from biological hazards or drugs paraphernalia.

You should leave a written notice stating when the items were removed, where they have been taken to, and how the person can retrieve them. It is suggested that any non-refuse items should be stored for 30 days.

Arun District Council’s Cleansing Team offer a specialist removal and storage service. Please contact the BR BID if you would like further information and contact details.

Helpful contact details:

Best option: Street link: www.streetlink.org.uk or download the Streetlink app.

DISC: Submit a report / Submit a Public Realm Report/Subject of Report: Rough Sleeper Location

Community Warden: 07912 292406

Sussex Police: 101 online

Emergency situation: 999

BR BID: Heather Allen, BID COO heather@brbid.org