

<b>Practice number</b>	Practice 113.1
<b>Practice title</b>	Responding to reports of homelessness

## Practice purpose:

To guide Town staff on responding to reports of people experiencing homelessness in the Town.

## Practice definitions:

### Homelessness

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) definition states 'that when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate;
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.'

### Rough sleepers

Rough sleepers is the term used to describe homeless people who are sleeping without shelter, in locations that are not designed for habitation. People sleeping in parks or other public areas, or in sheds, car parks or other areas surrounding private buildings are considered rough sleepers.

## Practice statement:

### Practice principles

1. Town staff are expected to align with the policy principles contained within Policy 113 Homelessness – The Town's role when responding to reports of people experiencing homelessness in the Town:
  - a. Compassion
  - b. Access to public spaces
  - c. Right to housing
  - d. Whole-of-community response
  - e. No wrong door

### Practice response

2. The practice responses guide Town staff on their responsibilities in order to comply with the following policy commitments contained within Policy 113 Homelessness – The Town's role:
  - a. Clause 6. The Town will play an active role in homelessness prevention through providing information on services, resources and facilities to assist people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
  - b. Clause 8. The Town will proactively ensure public spaces and amenities are safe and inclusive
  - c. Clause 9. The Town will collect accurate data to understand, monitor and respond to trends regarding homelessness in the community

### Receiving reports of rough sleepers or left belongings

<b>CRM category</b>	N/A
<b>Action officers</b>	Customer Service Team



Special interest officers

N/A

- 3. Receive customer report of rough sleeping
  - a. Response 1
    - Ask the customer if anyone is in danger – e.g. does the person appear to be suffering from a mental health crisis? Is the person acting aggressively or violently? Is there evidence of alcohol or drug use?
      - i. If the customer says yes, advise them to call the police immediately on 000 if an emergency or 131 444. The police have the ability to intervene and/or direct individuals into mental health services. No CRM action is required
      - ii. If the customer says no, please continue to Response 2
  - b. Response 2
    - Ask the following questions to the customer and record in the appropriate CRM category:
      - i. Where are they located? If a public area – create CRM category ‘Rangers – Rough sleeper/homelessness – Public areas’. If private property – create CRM category ‘Community Development – Rough sleepers/homelessness – Private property’
      - ii. Further questions for ‘Rangers – Rough sleeper/homelessness – Public areas’
        - 1. Is it an individual or group of people?
        - 2. How long have they been there?
        - 3. Thank customer and advise that the Town’s Rangers will make contact with the person/s to provide information and support to access services
      - iii. Further questions for ‘Community Development – Rough sleepers/homelessness – Private property’
        - 1. Is it an individual or group of people?
        - 2. How long have they been there?
        - 3. Is the property a private/residential building or a commercial building?
        - 4. What is the condition of the property – e.g. is there any damage, broken windows, etc.?
        - 5. Thank customer and advise that the Town will make contact with the property owner. However, advise that the Town is limited in its ability to take any action and encourage the customer to call the WA Police Force.
- 4. Receive report of left belongings
  - a. Create CRM category ‘Waste – Rangers – Illegal Dumping’ and record any information provided by the customer that may be related to the potential owner
- 5. Receive report of someone begging
  - a. Advise customer that begging is not against the law, and that the Town works with local service providers to assist people who beg into accessing services. Advise customer that aggressive, intimidating or violent behaviour is a criminal offence, and if they have witnessed this behaviour, to call the police immediately on 000 if an emergency or 131 444. No CRM action is required
- 6. Provide additional information to customer on Town approaches to begging, anti-social behavior, rough sleeping and left belongings as appropriate, using the following table:

Community education

Begging

As the Town’s Albany Highway district has a high flow of foot traffic, some people choose to use the area to beg.

Some people who beg may be homeless, while other may have access to stable accommodation but are from low-income households.



	<p>Begging is not against the law. However, the Town works with local service providers to assist people who beg into accessing services.</p> <p>Aggressive, intimidating or violent behaviour is a criminal offence. If you have witnessed this behaviour, call 000 if an emergency or 131 444.</p>
Anti-social behaviour	<p>Anti-social behaviour is a criminal offence.</p> <p>If you have witnessed any anti-social behaviour – e.g. drug/alcohol use or aggressive, intimidating or violent behaviour, call 000 if an emergency or 131 444.</p>
No evidence of sleeping	<p>Public spaces are open and accessible to the whole community.</p> <p>The Town does not take any action where people are using parks for recreational purposes.</p>
Ranger response to rough sleeping – public areas	<p>The Town does not have the authority to ‘move on’ rough sleepers.</p> <p>The Town’s Rangers make contact with rough sleepers to provide information and support to access services to meet their needs.</p> <p>Where possible, the Town will also refer the person to a homeless outreach service.</p> <p>In most cases, rough sleepers tend to move on, on their own accord after contact with the Rangers and/or a homeless outreach service within 14 days.</p> <p>The Town will involve the police if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rough sleeper is experiencing a mental health crisis, as the police have the ability to direct individuals into mental health services</li> <li>• There is evidence of anti-social behaviour – e.g. drug/alcohol use or aggressive/violent behaviour</li> <li>• The rough sleeper refuses to leave the area, and has erected semi-permanent structures, demonstrating an intent to camp or remain in the area for an extended period of time</li> </ul>
Ranger response to rough sleeping – private property	<p>The Town does not have the authority to ‘move on’ rough sleepers, in public areas or on private property.</p> <p>The Town will make contact with the property owner to alert them to the rough sleeper.</p> <p>Any action taken is at the discretion of the property owner.</p>
Ranger response to left belongings	<p>The Town’s Rangers investigate left belongings as soon as possible. If unattended Rangers will leave information on local support services, and a sticker advising that the items will be removed in 48 hours.</p>

### Responding to reports of rough sleeping – public areas

<b>CRM category</b>	Rough sleeping – public area
<b>Action officers</b>	Rangers Team



**Special interest officers**

Safer Neighbourhoods Officer  
Families, Youth and Homelessness Officer

7. Receive internal notification of rough sleeping in a public area
8. Attend location
  - a. Person/s are in attendance
    - i. If evidence of illegal activity or the person/s appear violent or threatening, call 000 or 131 444 if not an emergency
    - ii. Provide Support for You and Your Family brochure, and discuss local support services if appropriate
    - iii. Advise that camping is not permitted, and that they will need to find alternate accommodation
    - iv. If person/s indicates they need further support, contact Families, Youth and Homelessness Officer to arrange an outreach worker to attend (where available)
    - v. Update CRM with action
  - b. Person/s are not in attendance
    - i. If evidence of illegal activity, call 000 if an emergency or 131 444 if not an emergency
    - ii. If left belongings, begin left belongings process
    - iii. Update CRM with action
9. Revisit location four to six days later
  - a. Repeat above step
  - b. Inform person/s that the Town's Rangers and the WA Police Force will attend in another four days' time to instruct they find alternate accommodate
  - c. Update CRM with action
10. Drive past or re-visit location two days later to check if person/s are still in attendance
  - a. Person/s in attendance
    - i. Contact Safer Neighbourhoods Officer to coordinate visit with WA Police Force
    - ii. Update CRM with action
  - b. Person/s are not in attendance
    - i. Monitor location over the next two days and contact Safer Neighbourhoods Officer if evidence of person/s still camping in the area
    - ii. If left belongings, begin left belongings process
    - iii. Update CRM with action
11. Attend location with WA Police Force four to eight days later (pending WA Police Force availability)
  - a. Instruct person/s to leave
  - b. If the person/s refuse to leave, WA Police Force to issue a notice
  - c. Update CRM with action
12. Close CRM action (approx. 14-21 days)

Responding to reports of rough sleeping – private property

<b>CRM category</b>	Rough sleeping – private property
<b>Action officers</b>	Safer Neighbourhoods Officer
<b>Special interest officers</b>	Principal Environmental Health Officer Principal Building Surveyor Compliance Officer Place Planning Team

13. Receive internal notification of rough sleeping on private property
14. Safer Neighbourhoods Officer contacts property owner to advise of complaint and gain further information about the property
  - a. Person/s have permission to be in property
    - i. Update CRM and close job
  - b. Person/s do not have permission to be in property, and property owner is willing to secure their property
    - i. Provide advice to property owner on securing property
    - ii. Ask property owner if they would like information on future planning of the area and/or development advice
      1. It yes – request relevant Place Leader call property owner
    - iii. Contact WA Police Force to advise of squatting at the property
    - iv. Update CRM and close job
  - c. Property owner is not willing to secure their property
    - i. Site visit by Safer Neighbourhoods Officer and representatives from Environmental Health, Compliance, Building and Place Planning
    - ii. Photograph building, and determine whether further action needs to be taken by the Town if in a condition deemed unsafe, a risk to public health or against local laws
    - iii. Update CRM with course of action determined
    - iv. Complete action, update CRM and close job

#### Responding to reports of left belongings

<b>CRM category</b>	Left belongings
<b>Action officers</b>	Rangers Team
<b>Special interest officers</b>	Safer Neighbourhoods Officer Families, Youth and Homelessness Officer

15. Receive internal notification of left belongings
16. Attend location
  - a. Person/s are in attendance
    - i. Begin rough sleeper process
    - ii. Update CRM with action
  - b. Person/s are not in attendance
    - i. If evidence of illegal activity, call 000 if an emergency or 131 444 if not an emergency
    - ii. Photograph items, leave sticker notifying belongings will be impounded in 48 hours, and a Support for You and Your Family brochure
    - iii. Update CRM with action
17. Revisit location 2 days later
  - a. Person/s are in attendance
    - i. Begin rough sleeper process
    - ii. Update CRM with action
  - b. Person/s are not in attendance but evidence they have attended the location in the last 48 hours
    - i. Begin rough sleeper process
    - ii. Update CRM with action
  - c. Person/s are not in attendance and no evidence they have attended the location in the last 48 hours

- i. Impound personal items and dispose remaining waste items
- 18. Revisit location intermittently over 7 days to find owner of the goods.
  - i. Update CRM with action and close job
- 19. Close CRM action (approx. 7-14 days)
- 20. Set reminder to dispose of goods after two months

## Related documents

[Policy 113 Homelessness – The Town’s role](#)

<b>Responsible officers</b>	Principal Environmental Health Officer Principal Building Surveyor Compliance Officer Place Planning Team Rangers Team Community Development Team Customer Service Team
<b>Practice manager</b>	Manager Community
<b>Approval authority</b>	CEO
<b>Next evaluation date</b>	

## Revision history

Version	Action	Date	Authority	TRIM Reference
1	Adopted	07/01/2021	CEO	D21/1425