

## How we calculate the number of rough sleepers in Northampton

We are open six days a week and each day a significant number of people come in, and we find out where they live; if they are street homeless (inc stairwells, cars, garages, tents, crack houses); what's called a sofa surfer, someone who sleeps on a friend or family member's bed or floor, in temporary or hostel accommodation; are housed, or just passing through.

Some are somewhere between the various categories: they sleep on a sofa one night, then on the street, then back on another sofa. It's often a fluid lifestyle. For some desperate women, and a few men, that temporary night inside might be conditional on sexual favours expected by their host, which sometimes, out of desperation, to avoid bitter cold, other exploitation or violence outside, they accept.

Our Saturday service is focused on people who are NFA, which gives us a specific opportunity to talk with and count this group.

In addition when we ran SWEP we had a significant number of people sleeping on our floor. All of them were street homeless, not sofa surfers. We also knew the names of everyone who was in the Council night shelter.

We also get told about other people, sometimes in great detail, who never come in.

Triangulating this data, we can usually create a list of names who we **know** are sleeping rough at any one time.

We don't usually know where they sleep – people are cagey and fear being arrested, deported, harassed or having their tents destroyed - and it's almost certain the numbers we have are an underestimate. 60 is not an exaggeration. It's evidenced.



A tent by the A45 in Northampton in March. The man who lived there, whose name we know, never came to the centre. He was eventually housed. An example of how we come up with the numbers above.