

How to Support a Homeless Person

It can often be distressing to see someone vulnerable on the streets. If you are concerned about someone you believe to be homeless or in crisis, there are small actions you can take that can make a big difference.

If you think that the person you are concerned about is in immediate danger, call 999. If you are reporting someone to the emergency services, it is best to stay with or close to that person until the police or ambulance crew arrive.

If it is someone you see on your street frequently and whose condition is perhaps deteriorating, engage with them. Try to understand their situation and **help that person make informed decisions; don't try to impose your decisions on them.**

The Margins Project can give immediate help and support to anyone that needs it between **11am and 2pm on Mondays and Wednesdays** at our open drop-in sessions, allowing people to access food and showers, housing and benefits advice, general support, and a warm, friendly environment. You can let people know of our drop-ins, and if you're coming along to an event at the Union Chapel you can ask a member of staff for a couple of our flyers should you wish to hand them out as you pass through the local area.

Should you wish to support someone out of our drop-in hours, The Margins Project cannot allow anyone access to the building or offer any immediate support, however in this case you may wish to call StreetLink, a service anyone can use to alert local services to someone sleeping rough. You can call **0300 500 0914**, visit www.streetlink.org.uk, or **download the Android or Apple app**. You will be asked some questions about the person you wish to help, including physical descriptions of them as well as a description of the exact location they are bedded down. It is important that you give an accurate description. The details provided by a member of the public are sent to the local authority or outreach team concerned, so they can help connect the person to local services and support. The person submitting the alert receives details of the action the local authority normally takes when they are told someone is sleeping rough. It is good to be aware that previously StreetLink passed on information on people reported to them to the Home Office, and that although this stopped in 2017 a lot of the homeless population may not want to be referred to them. It is a good idea to communicate with the person you wish to report and ask if they are comfortable with you doing so.