

Westminster Outreach:

Providing support to those on the street throughout the pandemic

Over the year we ran **26** outreach services in eight cities and towns, including London where we worked in **11** different boroughs. After the Government's instruction to not go out unless necessary, our outreach teams continued to head out in order to support those who have no homes and were sleeping rough. Tom from our Westminster Outreach Service reflects on a year like no other.

At the beginning of the pandemic a lot of our clients without access to the news were hearing rumours about a 'killer virus', causing a lot of fear. Information we received ourselves about the service we could offer was changing day-to-day because no-one had been in this situation before. Clients were scared and uncertain, and we tried to be the voice of reassurance.

Everyone In gave us a unique opportunity to source accommodation for people sleeping rough, but it also came with challenges. We had to work flexibly and innovatively.

Some of us continued to find and support people on the streets. It was eerie seeing major landmarks completely empty. While looking after our clients, it was also crucial our staff were safe.

Others from our team worked in hotels, rising to the challenge to support clients at a very uncertain time. In the hotels we worked to address clients' ongoing homelessness, as well as providing for practical needs like food and clothing.

We developed a bespoke through care service, providing support to people not just as they progress from the emergency hotels into longer-term homes, but also after they are housed to help them sustain tenancies.

The number of people sleeping on the streets in Westminster has dramatically reduced. Over the last year we supported 1,452 people off the streets. The response during the pandemic showed that with the dedication of our team and local authority partner, and the right resources, rough sleeping in Westminster can be solved.



Ella and Faz,
Rapid Intervention Workers



"It was surreal; it was like a dystopian movie. London was completely deserted, I remember going to Buckingham Palace and it was completely empty except for me and one other outreach worker. Now I look back on it, I'm really proud of what we did."

**Zak, Rapid Intervention Worker,
Westminster**

Our impact in 2020-21

Our Westminster outreach team supported

1,452

people into accommodation.



In January we counted

106

people on the streets of Westminster, the lowest figure since we began recording in 2015.

