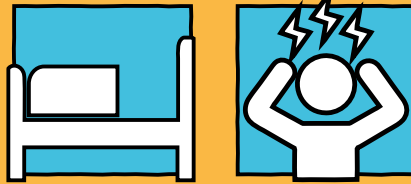


Groundswell

Out of homelessness

Health guide Sleep



Lots of people struggle to sleep. When you are experiencing homelessness, this is likely to be an ongoing struggle and can have a big impact on your life. For example:

- How we get on with other people.
- Our mood and concentration.
- Our productivity.
- How we look after ourselves.
- Our energy levels.
- If poor sleep is ongoing it can lead to depression and anxiety.



What causes poor sleep?

There is no one cause to sleeping badly, but causes can often be:

- Feeling stressed or anxious.
- Drugs or alcohol.
- Too much caffeine (e.g. coffee, energy drinks).
- Noise disturbances or antisocial behaviour.
- A lack of routine.
- Physical or chronic pain.
- Hunger.
- Blue light from screens and TVs.
- Not having a safe, comfortable place to sleep with the right levels of temperature and light.
- Trauma (night tremors, hearing voices, intrusive thoughts and flashbacks) often has a negative impact on sleep.

If you experience any of these symptoms you should contact your GP who can refer you to the most relevant help.



When you are experiencing homelessness, it can be difficult to improve your sleep as many causes are out of your control. Here are some things you could try:

- ✓ Drink less caffeine, particularly close to when you want to sleep.
- ✓ Reduce your drug and/or alcohol use, particularly close to when you want to sleep. Try to avoid relying on drugs and/or alcohol to sleep.
- ✓ Develop a routine – try to go to sleep at the same time if you can.
- ✓ If possible, try to find somewhere you feel safe or being near others who help you feel safe
- ✓ Try not to use screens (tv, phone) before you go to sleep.



In a hostel or other shared accommodation?

It can be difficult adjusting to living in somewhere that can be small, noisy, and cluttered. If you have previously slept rough it is a big change to sleep indoors. Why not discuss with staff and fellow residents if you could:

- ✓ Encourage people to be quieter in the evenings after a certain time.
- ✓ Adjust doors to prevent slamming.
- ✓ Offer alternative hot drinks options to coffee.
- ✓ Replace worn pillows, duvets or mattresses that may be uncomfortable.
- ✓ Wear ear plugs – there are many cheap options.

Quotes from peers with experience of homelessness:

"I used to drink 15 cups of coffee a day and could never sleep. I've cut down now and my sleep is much better."

"My room is really hot and I'm used to the cold, so I find it hard to stay asleep."

"My day was upside down on the street. Kept having to move on at night. Got a few snoozes in the day. It's hard to get used to being sort of safer at night."

If your problems with sleep continue you should talk to a GP.

Everyone has the right to see a GP. You do not need ID or a fixed address to register with a GP and your immigration status does not matter.

Other support:

Call the National Sleep Helpline to speak to specialist sleep advisors on 03303 530 541 between 7pm and 9pm on Sunday's, Monday's, Tuesday's, or Thursday's or between 9am – 11am on a Wednesday.



www.groundswell.org.uk

Socials: @ItsGroundswell

Everyone has the right to good health and to access healthcare. People experiencing homelessness face health inequalities, they are often excluded from information and services. That's why Groundswell produces accessible health guidance for people experiencing homelessness, so they can make informed decisions about their health.

All our health guides are created alongside people with experience of homelessness and reviewed by relevant professionals.