

# Elmbridge shelter and isolation scheme: questions and answers

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## What is the Elmbridge Shelter and Isolation Scheme and who will use it?

The scheme will provide temporary accommodation for people who have no home and are sleeping “rough” on the streets, parks and other places. The accommodation will be made up of individual, self-contained cabins.

There are two elements to the planned scheme:

Homeless people from Elmbridge Borough accommodated in a cabin for a period of up to 14 days (with the possibility of extension if demand allows it). The studio- cabins will provide respite from the cold while staff and volunteers work with individuals to link them up with services and help them secure accommodation at the end of their stay. Clients will be referred on to the scheme by Elmbridge Council and Rentstart. Cabins will be available for homeless rough sleepers from across Surrey who are symptomatic and need to isolate to prevent the spread of the virus/. Anyone with symptoms will be transferred into the cabin area by ambulance. Clients will be referred on to the scheme by any of the local authority housing departments in collaboration with the Surrey County Council Public Health Team.

## What are self-contained studio cabins?

The studio-cabins have a bed, work bench, storage and en-suite facilities. They will have electric power and heating and be plumbed to the main sewage. We will be providing each cabin with a kettle, microwave, TV and Activity Packs. Volunteers will be providing hot meals for the residents to a drop off area but will not be able to access the cabin area. There will be a cabin where the clients can have some interaction to support their mental wellbeing whilst there— this will be operated within social distancing guidelines and staff will be present to ensure clients are adhering to guidelines.

## Why is the Scheme needed?

Winter night shelters which have run in previous years with dormitory type accommodation and shared facilities are not suitable during the pandemic, as it is not possible for residents to socially distance or self-isolate if required.

The Elmbridge Shelter and Isolation Scheme is a proactive response to the change in risks and demands this year has presented, allowing some of our most vulnerable to

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be protected against the serious health risks presented by the pandemic throughout cold winter period.

The studio cabins will allow people who are sleeping on the streets, parks and other areas some respite from these risks while receiving warmth, comfort and support to access services, benefits and housing. Rough sleepers will be provided with a safe space to recover if they have COVID symptoms and reduce the risk of transmission in the community.

The 'Everyone In' directive from the government earlier this year presented a unique opportunity for services to link in with rough sleepers, with a push to find sustainable housing moving forward and end their homelessness. This scheme will allow for staff and volunteers to work closely with clients to continue this push to find them accommodation and link up with relevant services.

### How will residents be affected?

Please rest assured that our aim is to support vulnerable in our community and we will not do anything to put residents at risk. Rentstart is the local homeless charity who will be working with Elmbridge Borough Council to refer people to the studio-cabins.

We will be erecting temporary fencing with privacy screening behind the houses in Chandlers Close from Ray Road to the rear of the Foodbank and the entire adjacent perimeter fence adjacent to the school. A video access system will be in place at Ray Road.

### Who will be managing the scheme?

Transform Housing and Support is overseeing the overall management of the scheme, with the support of partnership agencies. A Transform member of staff is available Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm. Transform will work with clients to link them up with local support services to address health and social needs and will work to find suitable accommodation when their stay at the shelter comes to an end.

The Molesey Churches Night Shelter Team will be supporting the project in the evenings and weekends. Many volunteers have been supporting the Molesey Winter Night Shelter for some years. A volunteer coordinator and project support worker will be arranging activities although unlike other years the volunteers will not be able to access the cabin areas. The Molesey Churches Night Shelters Team will focus on social support, as well as managing the provision of hot meals every day and making the site homely before the residents arrive.

For provide additional reassurance to residents and the people occupying the studio – cabins security will be provided and managed by former military personal during the evenings, night and at weekends. This company has provided security to reassure residents and protect the homeless population in other locations in Surrey during the pandemic.



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### Who will be in the studio–cabins?

The residents in the studio-cabins will have had their own reasons for sleeping rough. Recent examples from Surrey include female victims fleeing family breakdowns, a male carer who lost his accommodation when his employer passed-away, people from industries affected by the pandemic who could not keep up with payments for properties. Regardless of the reasons, the people are vulnerable and require care and support. The footfall around the studio - cabins will be minimized and the area kept calm. Wrap around care and support will be provided as required. Elmbridge Council will be working with Rentstart for referrals.

As always there are rules that resident in the cabins must adhere to.

### How will the project prevent transmission of the virus?

People without a home are walking in the streets during the day. You may not recognise them as homeless because specialist local charities and other agencies work tirelessly to support them with food, clothing, shoes and a search for accommodation. The studio – cabins will help us to oversee their locations, provide them with support and care and assist them into a on onward solution

The nature of the accommodation means that, in comparison to traditional winter shelters, there is reduced risk of transmission of the virus. Each rough sleeper will be accommodated in their own cabin, furnished with a bed and en-suite facilities. We are providing each cabin with a kettle, microwave and TV and arranging for meals to be delivered by volunteers to a safe central point. All project staff and volunteers will be briefed on COVID regulations and will not be able to attend site if they have a positive test or are symptomatic.

If someone needs to isolate, they will not be permitted to leave their cabins – phones, laptops and activity packs will be provided so that clients are able to stay in contact with services and support networks. Staff will arrange for medication deliveries if required.

Cabins will be cleaned down and disinfected between clients with changes in bedding and donated food items. Full infection control procedures will be put into place during and after occupancy.

### When will the studio-cabins arrive?

The nights are dark, bitterly cold and frequently wet. Our homeless population require care as soon as possible. We are working with in collaboration with surveyors, highways department and other agencies to arrange road access. The aim is that they are delivered by the end of November 2020. A utility company is on standby to work on erecting privacy fencing, access control systems. Without the current lockdown we would have invited the local community to view the studio cabins. We can't do that for now, so we have put a picture below.



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Thank you for supporting this initiative

A sincere thank you to everyone who has offered support for the project. We will shortly be releasing an address for offers of volunteers and further donations.



External  
View  
Bunkabins

Bunkabins Internal View

