



THEME OF THE MONTH
FEBRUARY 2021

HOMELESSNESS



UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS

There is no single reason why someone can end up without a home. Personal circumstances and wider factors both play their part.

CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

The most common reasons people give for losing their accommodation is that a friend or relatives are no longer able to provide support or because of relationship breakdown. However, there are often a wide number of factors at play. Individuals can arrive at the point of homelessness following other life events.

INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Some factors and experiences can make people more vulnerable to homelessness: these can include bereavement, poor physical health, alcohol and drug issues, mental health problems, experience of care, and experience of the criminal justice system.

WIDER FORCES

Structural factors can include poverty, inequality, housing supply and affordability, unemployment, welfare and income policies.

COMPLEX INTERPLAY

Individual issues can arise from disadvantages such as poverty or lack of education. While personal factors, such as family and social relationships, can also be put under pressure by structural forces such as poverty.

HELP FOR PEOPLE FACING HOMELESSNESS

If you or someone you know is homeless, please reach out to get the support you need.



CONTACT YOUR COUNCIL

The first thing you should do is contact your local council's housing team. Under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, councils have a duty to find a home for families or individuals who are found to be homeless and to meet 'priority need' criteria. Councils must also help prevent or relieve the homelessness of all eligible people threatened with homelessness within 56 days.

USE ADVICE LINES AND ONLINE HELP

Shelter, the housing charity has a wealth of information on their website about your rights and the support you can expect, depending on your personal circumstances. They also run a free housing advice line - 0808 800 4444 - and an online chat service.

Citizen's Advice offers practical, impartial information online - at adviceguide.org.uk - over the phone and face to face in their local advice centres.

Samaritans are available to listen to you 24/7 on 116 123.

THE IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS

Not having a home can make it harder for individuals to find a job, stay healthy and maintain relationships.

ON INDIVIDUALS

With people often experiencing feelings of isolation, homelessness can also increase the chances of them taking drugs or experiencing physical or mental health problems.

Evidence suggests that the longer someone is in this position the more difficult it can become to get back on their feet.

As someone's problems become more complex, anti-social behaviour, involvement with the criminal justice system and acute NHS services become more likely.



ON COMMUNITIES

Homelessness can often have a negative impact on local communities. From a study on the experiences of homeless people with complex problems, there is a:

- 77% chance that someone could sleep rough
- 53% chance that someone could be involved in street drinking
- 32% chance that someone could beg
- 10% chance that someone could be involved in prostitution.

ON THE TAX-PAYER

Addressing the immediate and long-term costs of homelessness, can be significant. Putting in place services which prevent homelessness in the first place, and which help people quickly if they find themselves needing support, can help stop these costs escalating.

Research indicates that:

- The average cost of an A&E visit is £147; 4 out of 10 experiencing homelessness have used A&E in last six month
- £1,668 is the average cost per arrest; 7 out of 10 homeless ex-offenders are reconvicted within one year
- £26,000 is the estimated average cost of a homeless person each year to public purse
- £1 billion is the estimated annual cost of homelessness



FACTS ABOUT HOMELESSNESS IN BRITAIN 2020

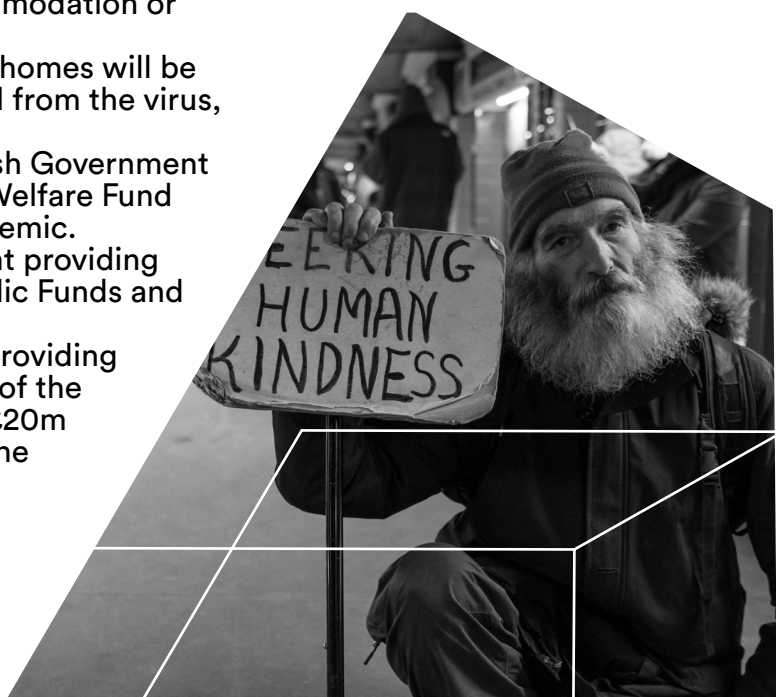
Experts worry about a looming crisis of homelessness. These are the rough sleeping figures and homelessness facts you need to know.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE HOMELESS?

- There were 4,266 people estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night in England during the last official rough sleeping count in autumn 2019. This is down by 411 people from 2018 and down 10 per cent from the peak in 2017.
- But official figures show 2,498 more people living on the street than in 2010, a rise of 141 per cent.
- The majority of people sleeping rough in England are male, aged over 26 years old and from the UK.
- However, the figures from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government are thought to be an underestimate as they are based on single-night snapshot accounts and estimates. The London-only Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) figures are considered to be more accurate and show that 10,726 people were seen on the streets in London by outreach workers in 2019/20
- In Wales, official rough sleeping statistics show that 405 people slept rough across the country between October 14 and 27, 2019.
- And while Scotland doesn't use the same method as England and Wales, data from the Scottish Household Survey suggests just over 700 people bedding down on the streets in a single night.
- As for wider homelessness in England, 288,470 households were owed assistance from councils to prevent or relieve homelessness in 2019-20.
- For Wales 9,993 households needed support for homelessness.
- In Scotland, there were 18,645 applications for homelessness assistance between April and September 2019 – a decrease of two per cent compared to the same six-month period in 2018.

HOMELESSNESS AND COVID-19

- The UK government has spent around £700m on homelessness and rough sleeping during the Covid-19 pandemic
- That has helped 29,000 vulnerable people, including 15,000 helped into hotels emergency accommodation during the Everyone In scheme and 19,000 people provided with settled accommodation or move-on support
- The government has promised 6,000 long-term homes will be made available to help rough sleepers protected from the virus, including 3,300 by next March
- In Scotland, £50m has been spent by the Scottish Government on hardship funding and £22m on the Scottish Welfare Fund to tackle homelessness during the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, more than £875,000 has been spent providing support for people who are No Recourse to Public Funds and cannot claim benefits
- The Welsh Government's initial spent £10m on providing accommodation to over 800 people at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. This was followed up with £20m to ensure that people did not have to return to the streets once the pandemic has ended



HOMELESSNESS AND HEALTH

- Three quarters of homeless people quizzed in a 2014 Homeless Link survey reported a physical health problem
- Meanwhile, 80 per cent of respondents reported some form of mental health issue, while 45 per cent had been officially diagnosed with a condition
- 39 per cent said they take drugs or are recovering from a drug problem, while 27 per cent have or are recovering from an alcohol problem.
- 35 per cent had been to A&E and 26 per cent had been admitted to hospital in the six months before they took part in the survey

SPENDING ON HOMELESSNESS

- Local authority expenditure on homelessness-related services has reduced significantly as compared to expenditure ten years ago; in 2008/9, £2.9 billion (in current prices) was spent on homelessness-related activity, while in 2018/19, £0.7 billion less was spent (Homeless Link)
- In 2018/19, nearly £1 billion less was spent on support services for single homeless people than was spent in 2008/09 (Homeless Link)

CHARITIES THAT SUPPORT HOMELESSNESS

CENTREPOINT

Offers advice to anyone in England aged 16-25.

<https://centrepoin.org.uk/>

0808 800 0661 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm).

CRISIS

<https://www.crisis.org.uk/get-help/>

THE SALVATION ARMY

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/homelessness>

EMMAUS

<https://emmaus.org.uk/>

0300 303 7555

contact@emmaus.org.uk

ST MUNGOS

<https://www.mungos.org/>





MORE INFORMATION

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