In 2014/15, a total of 220,800 cases of homelessness prevention or relief are estimated to have taken place outside the statutory homelessness framework in England. Of these cases, 205,100 (93 per cent) were preventions and 15,700 (7 per cent) were cases of relief.

The total number of cases of homelessness prevention or relief fell by 3 per cent when compared to 2013/14. This overall change includes a fall in both the number of preventions, from 209,900 (down 2 per cent) and in the number of cases of relief, from 18,500 (down 15 per cent).

In 2014/15, 51 per cent of cases of homelessness prevention and relief involved the household being assisted to obtain alternative accommodation. The remaining 49 per cent involved the cases being assisted to remain in their existing home. These proportions are the same as in 2013/14.

Of those cases who were assisted to remain in their own homes, the most common prevention action was assistance to resolve problems with housing benefit (25,900 cases, or 24 per cent).

Of those cases who were assisted to find alternative accommodation, the most common actions of both prevention and relief were to make a Part 6 offer of local authority accommodation or a nomination to a Private Registered Provider. These constituted 25 per cent of such prevention cases (24,100 cases) and 23 per cent of relief cases (3,600 cases).
Introduction

This annual release presents official statistics on homelessness prevention and relief in England that took place outside the statutory homelessness framework (see page 7) in 2014/15. Under the Homelessness Act 2002, local housing authorities must have a strategy for preventing homelessness in their district. The strategy must apply to everyone at risk of homelessness, including cases where someone is found to be homeless but not in priority need and cases where someone is found to be intentionally homeless.

Homelessness prevention involves providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness. This is done by either assisting them to obtain alternative accommodation or enabling them to remain in their existing home.

Homelessness relief occurs when an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness but helps someone to secure accommodation, even though the authority is under no statutory obligation to do so. Further definitions relating to homelessness prevention and relief can be found on pages 9-11.

Total homelessness prevention and relief activity

An estimated total of 220,800 cases of homelessness prevention or relief took place outside the statutory homelessness framework in England during 2014/15.

Of the total cases, 205,100 (93 per cent) were preventions and 15,700 (7 per cent) were cases of relief. Of the prevention outcomes, 95,900 households (47 per cent) were assisted to obtain alternative accommodation whilst 109,200 (53 per cent) were able to remain in their existing home.

Table 1 and Figure 1 set out national trends for 2009/10 to 2014/15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total cases of prevention and relief</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>% of grand total</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>% of grand total</th>
<th>Assisted to obtain alternative accommodation</th>
<th>Able to remain in existing home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>165,200</td>
<td>24,300</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>140,900</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>76,500 (54%)</td>
<td>64,400 (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>188,800</td>
<td>24,800</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>164,100</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>82,300 (50%)</td>
<td>81,800 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>199,000</td>
<td>24,200</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>174,800</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>88,800 (51%)</td>
<td>86,000 (49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>202,900</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>181,900</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>87,200 (48%)</td>
<td>94,700 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>228,400</td>
<td>18,500</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>209,900</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>98,000 (47%)</td>
<td>111,900 (53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>220,800</td>
<td>15,700</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>205,100</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>95,900 (47%)</td>
<td>109,200 (53%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: R Revised data P Provisional data
The total number of cases of homelessness prevention and relief increased by 38 per cent between 2009/10 and 2013/14 before falling by 3 per cent in 2014/15. This decrease in 2014/15 comprises a 2 per cent fall in the number of preventions from 209,900 and a 15 per cent fall in the number of cases of relief from 18,500. Of the prevention cases, cases where the household was assisted to obtain alternative accommodation and cases able to remain in their existing home each fell by 2 per cent compared to 2013/14.

See Live Tables 787, 788 and 789 published alongside this release for further information on national totals. In particular, Live Table 787 comprises the information given in Table 1 and a quarterly breakdown for each year and Live Table 788 gives a breakdown by type of action taken. Live table 789 gives a further breakdown into cases of prevention and relief of those cases assisted to obtain alternative accommodation.
Type of homelessness prevention and relief activity

Cases assisted to obtain alternative accommodation (prevention and relief): 51 per cent of all prevention and relief activity

In 2014/15 the number of prevention and relief cases that were assisted to obtain alternative accommodation decreased from 116,500 to 111,600, a fall of 4 per cent. This represents 51 per cent of all prevention and relief activity, the same as in 2013/14. Figure 2 shows the actions taken to assist cases to obtain alternative accommodation.

The most common type of alternative accommodation obtained was social housing in the form of a Part 6 offer of the local authorities’ own accommodation or nomination to a Private Registered Provider (formerly known as a Registered Social Landlord). There were 27,700 such cases in 2014/15 (25 per cent of the total, up from 22 per cent in 2013/14). The second most common type of alternative accommodation obtained was private rented sector accommodation with a landlord incentive scheme provided by the local authority or partner organisation, which assisted 21,600
cases (19 per cent of the total, down from 22 per cent in 2013/14).

Of the 111,600 cases that were assisted to find alternative accommodation, there were 95,900 cases of prevention action (86 per cent), and 15,700 cases of relief (14 per cent).

**Cases able to remain in their existing home: 49 per cent of total prevention and relief activity**

The number of cases who were enabled to remain in their existing home by prevention activity decreased to 109,200 in 2014/15 from 111,900 in 2013/14, a drop of 2 per cent. Figure 3 shows the different types of prevention activities which assisted cases to remain in their existing home.

The most common action which assisted cases to remain in their existing home was resolving housing benefit problems (25,900 cases, 24 per cent of the total, up from 22 per cent in 2013/14 and 11 per cent in 2012/13).

Figure 4 maps the rates of prevention and relief activity in each local authority, expressed as a number of cases per 1,000 households.
Rates of prevention activity are broadly similar in London (7.89 cases per 1000 households) to the rest of England (9.23 cases per 1000 households). However homelessness acceptances are much higher in London, with a rate of 5.10 per 1,000 households against 1.91 in the rest of England for 2014/15. In general the relationship between levels of statutory homelessness activity and prevention and relief activity is fairly weak. Local authority data are given in live table 792.

Note: Please note that some local authority figures include estimates where data has not been submitted.

Further information

This is the seventh year for which figures on homelessness prevention and relief have been published by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

In this release, ‘cases’ refers to households or individuals.

Questions about cases where positive action was unsuccessful in preventing or relieving homelessness were removed from the P1E form for 2013/14 because response rates for these questions were lower than for other questions.

Statutory homelessness framework:
The Housing Act 1977, Housing Act 1996, and the Homelessness Act 2002, placed statutory duties on each local housing authority to provide free advice and assistance to households within its area who are homeless or are threatened with homelessness. Where the authority is satisfied that those who apply for assistance are eligible, unintentionally homeless and fall within a specified priority need group, a ‘main homelessness duty’ is owed.

Further information on the main homelessness duty is available at https://www.gov.uk/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions

Further information and statistics on statutory homelessness are available at https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/homelessness-statistics
Accompanying tables

Accompanying tables are available to download alongside this release. These are:

**Table 787**  Outcome of homelessness prevention and relief, England, 2009/10 to 2014/15

**Table 788**  Type of homelessness prevention and relief, England, 2009/10 to 2014/15

**Table 789**  Cases assisted to obtain alternative accommodation broken down by prevention and relief, England, 2009/10 to 2014/15

**Table 790**  Outcome of homelessness prevention and relief by region, England, 2009/10 to 2011/12

**Table 791**  Total cases of homelessness prevention and relief by type and region, England, 2009/10 to 2011/12

**Table 792**  Outcome of homelessness prevention and relief by local authority, England, 2009/10 to 2014/15

* Tables that give regional totals were frozen in 2012, meaning regional data is not available after 2011/12.

**Detailed local authority level prevention and relief figures**

Spreadsheets containing detailed prevention and relief figures at local authority level are available on our website at:


Related DCLG statistical releases are available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics
Definitions of types of homelessness prevention and relief

A. Homelessness prevention - household able to remain in existing home

The following are some examples of the many different types of positive action that can prevent homelessness. The list is not exhaustive.

1. **Mediation using external or internal trained family mediators**: This could be an external mediation service such as Relate or an in-house local authority service by staff who are trained in mediation.

2. **Conciliation including home visits for family friend threatened exclusion**: This includes:
   - home visits, where someone may be at risk of homelessness due to a threat of exclusion from parents, other relatives, or friends;
   - conciliation work by a partner organisation such as youth counselling.

3. **Financial payments from a homeless prevention fund to enable someone to remain in the existing home**: There are many innovative ways that local authorities have used payments from their 'homelessness prevention fund' to resolve a risk of homelessness, including payments to landlords to resolve problems caused by tenant damage. Any payments from a prevention fund to resolve rent arrears should be included.

4. **Debt advice**: This includes casework covering debt advice, including negotiation with creditors and advice on budgeting and money management.

5. **Resolving housing benefit problems**: This includes actions to resolve housing benefit problems such as assisting a vulnerable person at immediate risk of homelessness through non-payment of rent with making a housing benefit claim; action to deal with delays in payment; housing benefit arrears; verification of claim documents where there is a delay in benefit payments leading to a risk of homelessness; backdating of benefit claims; making a discretionary housing payment.

6. **Resolving rent or service charge arrears in the social or private rented sector**: This may include case work help that supports a household to manage any arrears repayment schedule.

7. **Sanctuary scheme measures for domestic violence**: Measures to enable a victim of domestic abuse or harassment to remain in their home with professionally installed security.
measures. This may also include cases where someone was assisted to take legal action to protect their right to remain safely within the home.

8. Crisis intervention – providing emergency support: This includes cases where there is an imminent risk of homelessness because someone is unable to cope with his or her affairs and emergency intervention or crisis support is provided. Exclude cases where someone is receiving Supporting People Funded services.

9. Negotiation or legal advocacy to ensure someone can remain in accommodation in the private rented sector: This includes:

a. negotiation with private landlords who have or have threatened to issue a section 21 notice to resolve problems;

b. actions to resolve a threat of illegal eviction or to re-instate illegally evicted tenant;

c. county court advocacy or court desk work by the local authority or its partners where court representation results in a case being struck-out, dismissed or adjourned;

b. assisting someone to afford their rent by negotiating a lower rent, increasing their income through helping them make a claim for benefits or making a discretionary housing payment or charity payment.

10. Providing other assistance that will enable someone to remain in accommodation in the private or social rented sector: This includes:

a. resolving anti-social behaviour;

b. tackling disrepair through action against landlords or grants to improve conditions;

c. adaptations to the property.

11. Mortgage arrears interventions or mortgage rescue: This includes:

a. negotiation with mortgage lenders and banks to reschedule debt payments or payment terms or offer a repayment break period;

b. providing support to enable re-mortgage; conversion to an interest-only mortgage to reduce outgoings; conversion to shared ownership.
B. Homelessness prevention / relief - household assisted to obtain alternative accommodation

The following are different types of alternative accommodation that someone might be helped to obtain to prevent or relieve homelessness. The list is not exhaustive, but could include:

1. Any form of hostel or home in multiple occupation with or without support (including arrangements where the hostel stay may be less than six months but move-on accommodation will be provided as part of the ‘exit strategy’, excluding night shelter and crisis short-stay accommodation for rough sleepers such as an emergency assessment centre).

2. Private rented sector accommodation (with landlord incentive scheme provided by the local authority or partner organisation, including BOND schemes where no cash is paid up front, “Finders- Fee” schemes where a payment is made to a landlord, deposit payment schemes; rent in advance; landlord insurance payment schemes; or a combination of the above,

3. Private rented sector accommodation (without landlord incentive scheme) for example, where a local authority has built a relationship with a landlord or letting agent which enables the authority to refer households on benefit directly or to properties on a specific accreditation scheme.

4. Accommodation arranged with friends or relatives.

5. Supported accommodation including supported lodging schemes or successful referrals to supported housing projects.

6. Social housing (a management move of an existing local authority tenant).

7. Social housing (a ‘Part 6’ offer of LA own accommodation or nomination to a private Registered Provider (RP).


9. A low cost home ownership scheme or low cost market housing solution.
Background

In April 2008, the quarterly P1E form (which collects data on local authorities’ actions under homelessness legislation) was expanded to include a new section on the homelessness prevention and relief taking place outside the statutory framework. Authorities provide data on the numbers of households for whom casework and positive action took place in order to prevent or relieve homelessness, either by the authority themselves or by a partner organisation.

The Department for Communities and Local Government also publishes a quarterly statistical release, based on data from other sections of the P1E form, which provides summary information on English local housing authorities’ activities under homelessness legislation (Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996).

The most recent release on Statutory Homelessness for England is available at:


Local authorities are encouraged to offer prevention assistance to everyone who seeks housing assistance and considers they are at risk of homelessness in the near future, including single person households and others who may not appear to the authority to fall within a priority need category (however local authorities cannot use such prevention assistance to avoid their obligations under the homelessness legislation). Prevention assistance involves providing people with ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness. It includes activities which enable a household to remain in their current home, where appropriate, or which enable a planned and timely move and help sustain independent living. Everyone who falls within the scope of the authority’s scheme and for whom positive assistance was provided during the quarterly period (either by the authority or a partner organisation) should be included.

Additionally, local authorities are encouraged to take steps to relieve homelessness and to record these cases where someone has been accepted as homeless but is not owed a duty to secure accommodation under the homelessness legislation (Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996). These are cases where the authorities have been unable to prevent homelessness, but nevertheless decide to ensure the applicant secures accommodation (although under no statutory obligation to do more than ensure the provision of advice and assistance) – for example, cases where someone is found to be homeless but not in priority need and/or intentionally homeless.

Data source and quality

Local housing authorities report their prevention and relief activities by completing the quarterly P1E statistical return. All P1E returns submitted by local housing authorities undergo thorough validation and cross-checking and late returns are pursued to ensure overall response is as
complete and accurate as possible. Anomalous data are highlighted and verified by contacting the local authority.

Local authorities also provide details of any data checks they undertake. These can take the form of audits (by internal or external auditors), periodic quality checks on data extracts, or random quality checks. For the 2014/15 financial year, most authorities reported some form of checking on all data items in the return.

A - Response rate

The following refers to the section of the P1E form collection information on successful prevention and relief activity only.

Full returns for the questions on successful prevention and relief activity for all four quarters of 2014/15 were provided by 314 out of the 326 local authorities. With the additional partial returns in each quarter, the overall response rate in 2014/15 was 96.9 per cent. The table below gives a further breakdown by quarter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of local authorities</th>
<th>Full return</th>
<th>Partial return</th>
<th>Overall response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr - Jun</td>
<td>98.8%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>99.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul - Sep</td>
<td>98.2%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>99.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct - Dec</td>
<td>99.1%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>99.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan - Mar</td>
<td>98.5%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>99.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96.3%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>96.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In previous years, the overall response rate was lower for questions on the P1E form relating to unsuccessful prevention and relief activity. On average, 27 local authorities out of the 326 local authorities (8 per cent) did not report the requested quarterly totals for unsuccessful preventions and reliefs. Questions relating to unsuccessful action were removed from the P1E in 2013/14.

B - Comparisons with other years

This is the sixth year for which estimates for missing local authority data have been made. Figures published for 2008/09 were as reported by local authorities, based on an overall 93 per cent response rate, and no estimates were made for missing data. National figures for 2008/09 are not therefore directly comparable with those for the five more recent years.

The estimates for missing local authority data are made by allocating local authorities into groups based on the former government region that they are in and by type of authority. For example, the West Midlands is split into two groups, one group of district and unitary authorities, the other of metropolitan districts. London is split into Inner and Outer London. Estimates are then calculated by an automated grossing procedure which either (i) updates previously reported data based on
the changes observed in other authorities in the same group or (ii) apportions totals based on ratios reported by these similar authorities.

Although more comprehensive reporting by local authorities over time, including recording and reporting of activity carried out by partner organisations, is known to have been a continuing contributing factor to the rise in activity reported for previous years, this appeared to have levelled off over the last two years, with full responses being made by the large majority of local authorities. This was one of the main reasons for deciding, when publishing the 2011/12 figures, that these no longer needed to be regarded as ‘experimental’ statistics.

C – Possibility of under-reporting

It is possible that the figures include some under-recording of homelessness prevention and relief activity in cases where local authorities have been able to accurately collate and report their own activity, but do not have systems in place to comprehensively record activity by partner organisations (i.e. any organisation who assists the authority in tackling and preventing homelessness, and is either funded by the authority or has clients referred to them by the authority). However, there is some evidence that recording of partner organisation activity by local authorities has improved since data collection started for 2008/09.

The Department for Communities and Local Government’s statistical quality guidelines are published here:


Methodology

1. **Rates per 1,000 households** have been calculated using the 2012-based household projections for 2014 produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government. These are consistent with the household projections published on 27 February 2015 at the following link:


2. National figures in the text and accompanying tables are presented rounded to the nearest 100 households or applicants. Local authority figures provided in Live Table 792 are as reported and unrounded.

3. The map on page 6 is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office: © Crown copyright 100024857 2015.
Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official statistics and the Department for Communities and Local Government Revisions Policy (found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-dclg-revisions-policy).

There are two types of revision that the policy covers:

Non-scheduled revisions

Where a substantial error has occurred as a result of the compilation, imputation or dissemination process, the statistical release, live tables and other accompanying releases will be updated with a correction notice as soon as is practical.

Scheduled revisions

Local authorities can update their P1E returns following publication of the data. Data for the financial year 2013/14 has been revised in this publication. Data for 2014/15 is scheduled to be revised in the 2015/16 release. Revised figures are labelled in the tables with an “R”, provisional figures are labelled with a “P”.

Revisions to historic data (all data older than that currently due for scheduled revision) should be made only where there is a substantial revision, such as a change in methodology or definition. Where there are small changes that do not substantially change historic data, internal updates are maintained.

Uses of the data

The homelessness prevention and relief figures are increasingly becoming a key basis of evidence on local authorities’ homelessness activities. They are used by ministers and officials in the Department for Communities and Local Government in the formulation and monitoring of policy, the allocation of resources, performance monitoring and to support bids for funding from the Treasury. The data are used to ensure democratic accountability in answers to Parliamentary Questions, ministerial correspondence, Freedom of Information Act cases and queries from the public.

Local housing authorities are both providers and users of the statistics and use the data extensively in order to plan services, allocate resources, monitor performance and benchmark against other authorities. The voluntary sector also uses the statistics to monitor and evaluate housing policy and for campaigning and fundraising purposes.
User engagement

Users are encouraged to provide feedback on how these statistics are used and how well they meet user needs. Comments on any issues relating to this statistical release are welcomed and encouraged. Responses should be addressed to the "Public enquiries" contact given in the "Enquiries" section below.


Related links

The Department’s policy priorities on responding to homelessness are set out at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/providing-housing-support-for-older-and-vulnerable-people/supporting-pages/dealing-with-homelessness](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/providing-housing-support-for-older-and-vulnerable-people/supporting-pages/dealing-with-homelessness)

The latest quarterly Statutory Homelessness statistical release, which provides summary information on local housing authorities’ activities under homelessness legislation, can be downloaded electronically, from the Department for Communities and Local Government website at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/homelessness-statistics#publications](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/homelessness-statistics#publications)

The Department’s rough sleeping statistics can also be found at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/homelessness-statistics#publications](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/homelessness-statistics#publications)

Statistics on local authority revenue expenditure and financing in England can be found at the following link. The Revenue Outturn (RO)4 return relates to Housing Services and includes information on local authorities’ expenditure on homelessness activities: [https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing)

Local housing authorities report their activities to prevent and relieve homelessness to the Department for Communities and Local Government by completing the quarterly P1E statistical return. The latest form and guidance note can be found in the “Notes and Definitions” section of the Department’s website: [https://www.gov.uk/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions](https://www.gov.uk/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions)

Devolved administrations

The scope of this data collection and statistical release is limited to homelessness prevention and relief activities carried out in England. Scotland publishes information on prevention and relief
activity at the following link:
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables

In Wales, information on homelessness prevention is published as one of the National Strategic Indicators for local government (indicator HHA/013) at the following link:

Homelessness prevention and relief statistics are not published for Northern Ireland.

Pre-release access

Details of officials who receive pre-release access to the Department for Communities and Local Government Homelessness Preventions and Relief statistical release up to 24 hours before release can be found at:

The Homelessness Prevention and Relief statistical release is published on an annual basis.
Enquiries

Media enquiries:
office hours:  0303 444 1168 or 0303 444 1159
out of hours:  0303 444 1201
Email: press@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Public enquiries and Responsible Statistician:
Mike Young
Email: homelessnessstats@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Information on the UK statistical system is available via the UK Statistics Authority website:
http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system/index.html
Information about statistics at DCLG is available via the Department's website:

This Statistical Release, as well as previous releases, can be accessed and all text, tables and charts downloaded electronically, from the Department's website at:

Information about DCLG is available via the Department's website:

The publication date for the 2014/15 Homelessness Prevention and Relief is to be announced.