



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

# Rough Sleeping Statistics Autumn 2015, England

- This is the sixth annual statistical release following the introduction of revised guidance on evaluating the extent of rough sleeping in September 2010.
- The autumn 2015 total of rough sleeping counts and estimates in England is 3,569.
- This is up 825 (30%) from the autumn 2014 total of 2,744.
- London had 940 rough sleepers in autumn 2015, which is 26% of the national figure, down from 27% in autumn 2014.
- The number of rough sleepers has increased by 27% in London and 31% in the rest of England since autumn 2014.
- All 326 local housing authorities in England provided a figure. The total comprises counts provided by 44 local authorities and estimates provided by 282 local authorities.

## Homelessness *Statistical Release*

25 February 2016

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### **Date of next publication:**

To be announced

# Introduction

This is the sixth annual statistical release presenting [rough sleeping](#) counts and estimates following the introduction of revised guidance in September 2010 on evaluating the extent of rough sleeping.

Rough sleeping counts and estimates are single night snapshots of the number of people sleeping rough in local authority areas. Local authorities decide whether to carry out a count or an estimate. They are encouraged to gain intelligence for street counts and estimates from local agencies such as outreach workers, the police, the voluntary sector and members of the public who have contact with rough sleepers on the street.

The release provides national summary information on rough sleeping counts and estimates carried out by local authorities between 1 October and 30 November 2015. An accompanying table, showing figures for each local authority from 2010 to 2015, is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2015>

The rough sleeping figures are now established as a consistent time series and provide a reliable way of assessing changes over the years. Their robustness is enhanced by the provision of detailed guidance to authorities on how to conduct counts and estimates, by the involvement of partner agencies, and by the work of Homeless Link to verify all local counts and validating local estimates. Nevertheless, accurately counting or estimating the number of rough sleepers within the area of a local authority is inherently difficult, and the figures are subject to some limitations which are explained in the Data Quality section on page 8.

## Latest Rough Sleeping Statistics

The autumn 2015 total of street counts and estimates in England is 3,569. This is an increase of 30% from the 2014 figure of 2,744.

The autumn 2015 total comprises a figure from every local housing authority in England, with 44 authorities conducting a count and 282 providing an estimate. This compares to 49 and 277 respectively in 2014, and 48 and 278 respectively in 2013. The 44 authorities conducting a count reported 823 rough sleepers (23% of the total) while those compiling an estimate reported 2,746 rough sleepers (77% of the total).

The autumn 2015 total of street counts and estimates in London is 940. This is an increase of 27% from the 2014 figure of 742.

London accounted for 26% of the total England figure, compared to 27% in 2014 and 22% in 2013.

The autumn 2015 total of street counts and estimates for the rest of England is 2,629, an increase

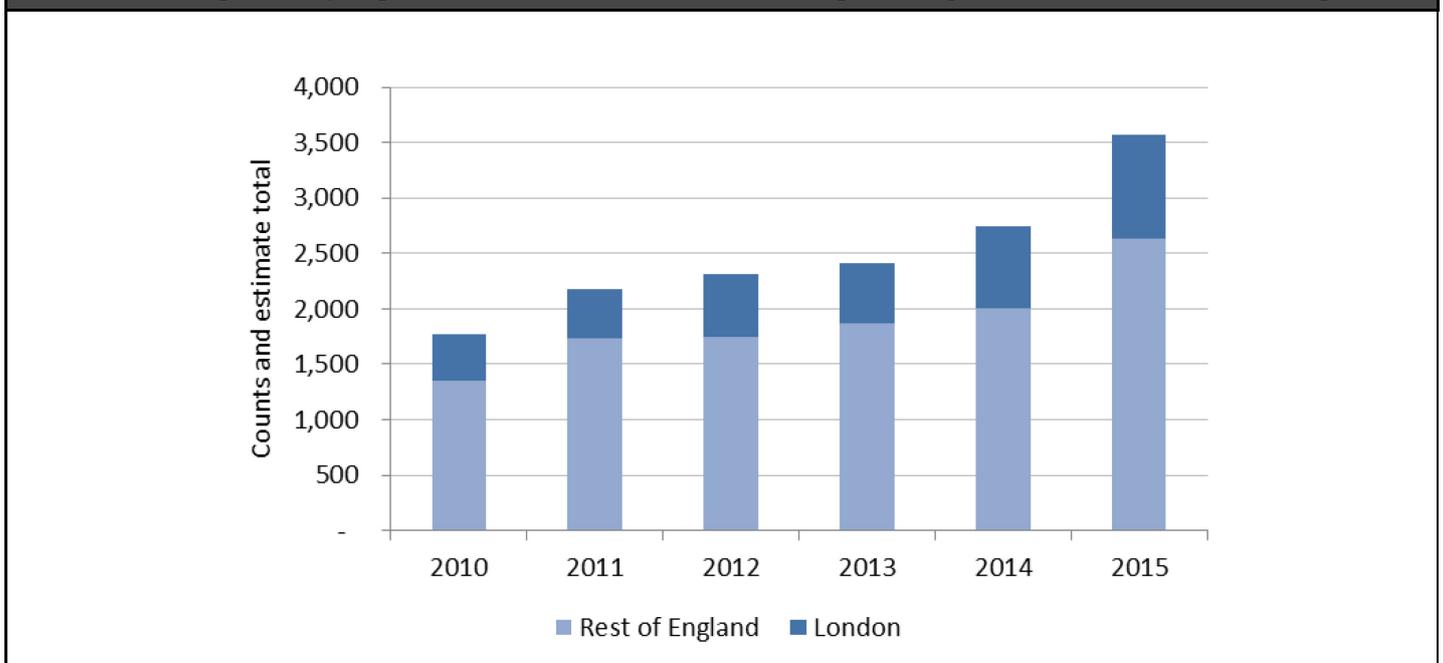
of 31% from the 2014 figure of 2,002.

Figures for England, London and the rest of England are shown in Table 1 and Chart 1.

**Table 1: Rough sleeping counts and estimates for England, London and Rest of England, 2010 to 2015**

	<b>England</b>	<b>% change</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>% change</b>	<b>Rest of England</b>	<b>% change</b>
2010	1,768		415		1,353	
2011	2,181	23%	446	7%	1,735	28%
2012	2,309	6%	557	25%	1,752	1%
2013	2,414	5%	543	-3%	1,871	7%
2014	2,744	14%	742	37%	2,002	7%
2015	3,569	30%	940	27%	2,629	31%

**Chart 1: Rough sleeping counts and estimates for England by London and rest of England**



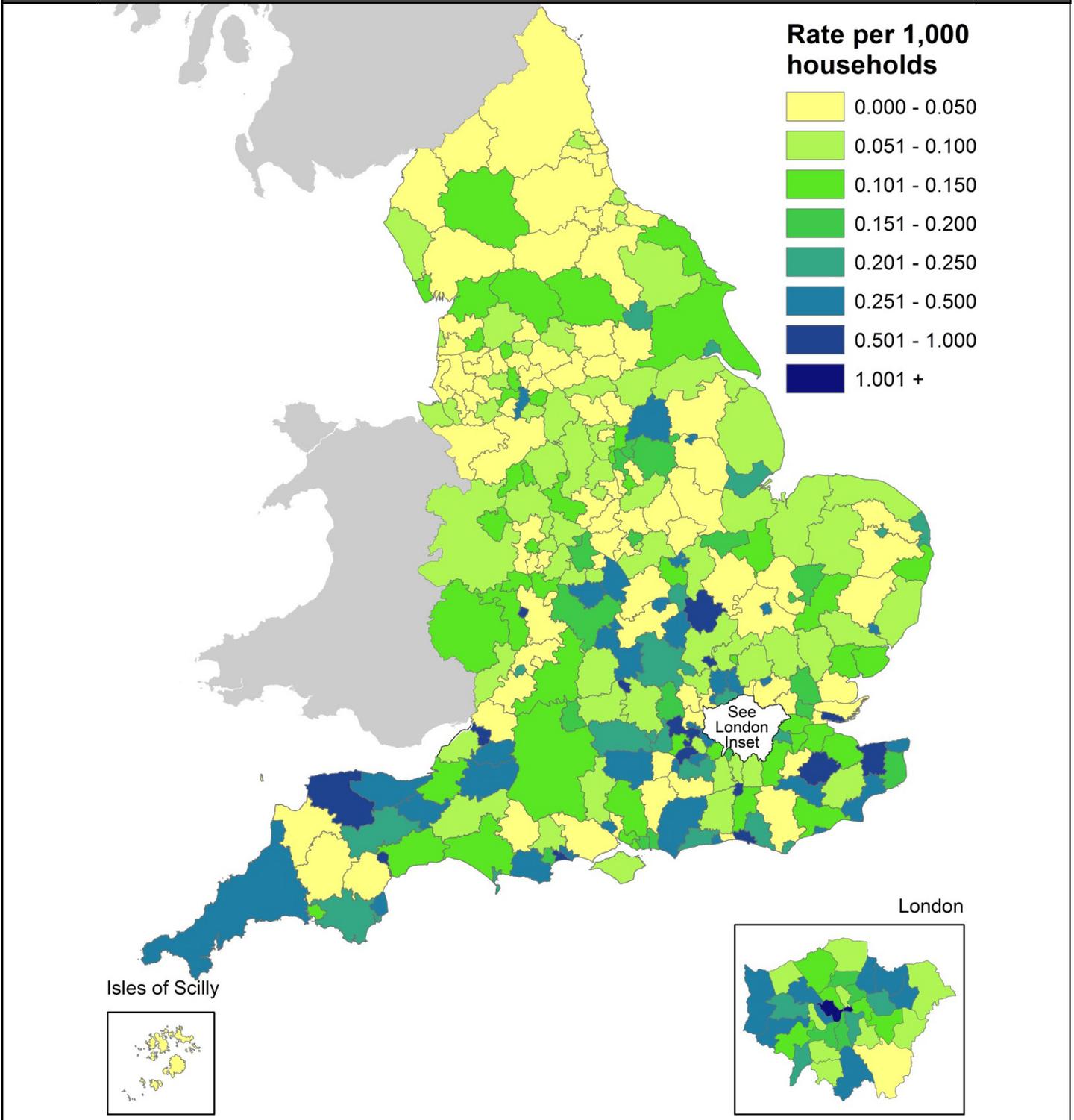
The ten local authorities with the largest numbers of rough sleepers in autumn 2015 are shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Top ten highest local authority rough sleeping counts, autumn 2015**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Total Count or Estimate</b>	<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Total Count or Estimate</b>
Westminster	265	Brent	55
Bristol	97	Luton	53
Brighton and Hove	78	Bedford	51
Manchester	70	Croydon	51
Cornwall	65	City of London	48

The rate of rough sleeping per 1,000 households stands at 0.16 for England, 0.27 for London and 0.14 for the rest of England. This compares to 0.12 for England, 0.22 for London and 0.10 for the rest of England in 2014. The rates per 1,000 households by local authority are shown in Map 1.

**Map 1: Rough sleeping rate by local authority, Autumn 2015**



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**Data Sources**  
OS Boundary-Line

# Accompanying Table

An accompanying table is available to download alongside this release. This is:

**Table 1** Total of rough sleeping counts and estimates, by local authority, autumn 2010 to autumn 2015

This table can be accessed at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2015>

Related DCLG statistical releases are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>

## Related information for London: Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN)

The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) is a multi-agency database recording information about people seen rough sleeping by outreach teams in London. CHAIN is used by people working with rough sleepers in London and is managed by St Mungo's, a London-based homeless charity. Information is recorded onto the CHAIN database by people who work directly with rough sleepers in London (e.g. workers in outreach teams, day centres, hostels, resettlement teams). CHAIN does not cover 'hidden homeless' groups, such as those who are squatting or staying in places which are inaccessible to outreach workers.

The latest CHAIN financial year report shows that a total of 7,581 people were seen rough sleeping by outreach workers in London during 2014-15, an increase of 16% compared to 2013-14.

The CHAIN data is not comparable to the single night snapshot counts and estimates presented by this release, as it is a count of all individuals who were seen sleeping rough on the streets of London on at least one night during the year between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015. The CHAIN figure of 7,581 rough sleepers during 2014-15 compares to a London single night snapshot figure of 742 for autumn 2014.

The CHAIN database records identifying and demographic information about rough sleepers. Their 2014-15 report shows that:

- 67% of rough sleepers were new, meaning they were seen for the first time in 2014-15,
- 21% of 2014-15 rough sleepers had also been seen in 2013-14 and
- 12% were returning after not having been seen during 2013-14.

Of the total recorded rough sleepers for 2014-15, 57% were seen rough sleeping only once during the year, while 6% were seen rough sleeping more than ten times during the year. Of the new rough sleepers, 67% were seen only once in the year.

The proportion of all recorded rough sleepers who were female was 14%, while 12% were aged under 26 and 9% were aged over 55. Of the rough sleepers for whom nationality information was available, 43% were recorded as having United Kingdom as their nationality, while 36% were from Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004 or 2007. A more detailed breakdown by nationality is in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: CHAIN data, Nationality of rough sleepers in London, 2014-15**

Nationality (or continent)	Number	%
United Kingdom	3,212	43.3
<b>Rest of Europe</b>		
Poland	639	8.6
Romania	1,388	18.7
Lithuania	227	3.1
Republic of Ireland	132	1.8
Latvia	106	1.4
Portugal	115	1.6
Hungary	90	1.2
Czech Republic	55	0.7
Slovakia	57	0.8
Bulgaria	119	1.6
Estonia	11	0.1
Slovenia	3	<0.1
Other Europe	478	6.4
<i>Of which CEE countries that joined the EU in 2004 or 2007<sup>(a)</sup></i>	2,695	36.4
<b>Rest of the world</b>		
Africa	393	5.3
Asia	309	4.2
Americas	72	1.0
Australasia	7	0.1
<b>Total non-UK</b>	4,201	56.7
<b>Total for which information exists</b>	7,413	100.0
<i>Not known</i>	168	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	7,581	-

(a) Central and Eastern European Countries joining the EU in 2004 or 2007 are also known as the A10 countries. They are all the individual countries listed under 'Rest of Europe' except the Republic of Ireland, Portugal and those included in the 'Other Europe' row.

Source: CHAIN Annual Report, April 2014 – March 2015 available at:

<http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports/resource/dd12fe65-0a44-465d-96e6-5339fc5c505d#>

Of those rough sleepers who had a support needs assessment recorded, 41% had alcohol support needs, 31% drug support needs and 45% mental health support needs, with 13% having all three needs and 28% having none of these three needs. No support needs assessment was recorded for 31% of rough sleepers.

More information about the CHAIN data collection is available at:

<http://www.mungos.org/chain>

Latest figures from CHAIN are published at:

<http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>

## Rough Sleeping Statistics Definitions

### **Rough Sleepers**

Rough Sleepers are defined as follows for the purposes of rough sleeping counts and estimates:

*People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or “bashes” which are makeshift shelters, often comprised of cardboard boxes).*

The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or travellers.

### **Bedded down**

Bedded down is taken to mean either lying down or sleeping. **About to bed down** includes those who are sitting in/on or near a sleeping bag or other bedding.

# Technical notes

## Data collection

Since 1998, rough sleeping has been measured by street counts in areas with a known or suspected rough sleeping problem. Local authorities had been asked to conduct an annual count if they estimated there were more than ten rough sleepers in the area. In June 2010, to supplement the counts, local authorities that had not conducted a street count were asked to provide an estimate of the number of rough sleepers on a given night. Results of the June 2010 estimates and a time series of rough sleeping counts since 1998 are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-in-england-total-street-count-and-estimates-2010>

Following the publication of these figures, a public consultation on evaluating the extent of rough sleeping was run over the summer 2010, and new guidance for local authorities was published in September 2010 explaining how to carry out rough sleeping counts and estimates. The guidance and form can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluating-the-extent-of-rough-sleeping--2>

The changes that were made to the methodology and the definition of rough sleepers mean that figures produced in line with the September 2010 guidance are not directly comparable with previous statistics. The impact of these methodological changes cannot be separated from changes in the level of rough sleeping between autumn 2010 and earlier time periods. A technical note setting out and explaining the differences between the autumn 2010 rough sleeping statistics and previously published figures was published alongside the autumn 2010 release on the DCLG website:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7379/1846366.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7379/1846366.pdf)

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-household-projections>

## Data quality

All rough sleeping returns submitted by local authorities are independently verified by Homeless Link to ensure they are robust. Homeless Link are the national membership charity for organisations working directly with people who become homeless in England:

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/about-us>

Homeless Link provide additional guidance to local authorities on conducting counts and estimates:

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/counts-and-estimates-evaluating-extent-of-rough-sleeping>

The Department chases late returns and conducts further validation checks to ensure overall response is as complete and accurate as possible.

Local authorities providing estimates are asked to provide details of agencies that have been consulted in deriving the estimate. 99.6% of authorities that provided estimates reported that they had consulted with at least one type of local agency. Of the 282 authorities that consulted in this way, the numbers consulting with particular types of agency were, in descending order:

Voluntary sector	263
Police	255
Outreach workers	249
Faith groups	197
Substance misuse	185
Mental health agencies	164
Drugs and alcohol treatment teams	143
Local residents/businesses	91

These counts exclude authorities who conducted a street count but also consulted an agency.

There are many practical difficulties in counting the number of rough sleepers within the area of a local authority. It is not possible to cover the entire area of a local authority in a single evening, so counts will be targeted to areas according to local intelligence. Rough sleepers may bed down at different times meaning that some may be missed. Some places of rough sleeping may be difficult or unsafe for those conducting the count to access. For these reasons, the figures in this release are subject to some uncertainty. In addition to the difficulties in capturing an accurate number, various factors can affect the numbers of rough sleepers on any given night, such as the availability of alternatives such as night shelters, and the weather.

The Department's statistical quality guidelines are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-dclg-quality-guidelines>

The UK Statistics Authority has published an assessment report covering the Department's homelessness and rough sleeping statistics here:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/statistics-on-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-in-england-department-for-communities-and-local-government/>

The Department's Statistics Head of Profession wrote to The Authority's Director General for Regulation responding to the report:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/statistics-on-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-in-england/>

As part of its response to the Authority's report, the Department is planning to enhance its user engagement processes, including holding meetings with key users to discuss future developments in rough sleeping statistics.

## 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 revisions 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.

Where a local authority notifies DCLG of an error in the information they have submitted after publication of the release a decision on whether to revise will be made based upon the impact of any change and the effect it has on the interpretation of the data.

### Scheduled Revisions

We do not currently have scheduled revisions for this release.

## Uses of the data

The data in this statistical release form the basis of evidence on rough sleeping in England. They will be 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 will be 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 will use the data to track progress, benchmark against other authorities and plan and commission services to prevent and tackle rough sleeping. The voluntary sector will also use 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 Mike Young at:

[roughsleepingstatistics@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:roughsleepingstatistics@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

The Department's engagement strategy to meet the needs of statistics users is published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/engagement-strategy-to-meet-the-needs-of-statistics-users>

## Notes

The scope of this data collection and release is limited to a single night snapshot of rough sleeping in England. This release does not contain data on other forms of homelessness, for example local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation. The Department publishes quarterly statistics on statutory homelessness and annual statistics on homelessness prevention and relief here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/homelessness-statistics>

Details of officials who receive pre-release access to the Department's rough sleeping statistical release up to 24 hours before release can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics#pre-release-access-to-official-statistics>

It is expected that autumn 2016 Rough Sleeping Statistics will be published in early 2017. The date will be pre-announced on the UK Statistics Authority publication release calendar.

This statistical release does not include any regional totals except for London following the consultation on the publication of regional statistics. Further details are given in the Written Ministerial Statement of 18 September 2012, which is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/statistics-for-local-enterprise-partnerships-and-upper-tier-local-authorities>.

Figures are given for London because they relate to the area covered by the Greater London Authority.

## Devolved administration statistics

The devolved administrations publish their own statistics on homelessness and details of their releases which contain information on rough sleeping are provided below.

The Scottish Government publishes figures on the number of households applying for assistance under homelessness legislation who say they have slept rough the previous night or have reported their housing situation as 'long term roofless'. The latest annual figures are published here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/06/7213>

In 2007 and 2008, local authorities in Wales undertook rough sleeping street counts to gauge the extent of rough sleeping in Wales.

The Welsh Government has introduced an annual rough sleeping count, with the first count taking place in November 2015. These are currently published as experimental statistics. Results can be found at the following link:

<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/national-rough-sleeping-count/?lang=en>

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Information on Official Statistics is available via the UK Statistics Authority website:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>

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

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics)

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