

18 August 2011

Homelessness Prevention and Relief: England 2010/11

Experimental Statistics

- In 2010/11, a total of **188,800 cases of homelessness prevention or relief** are estimated to have taken place outside the statutory homelessness framework in England. Of these cases 163,800 (87 per cent) were preventions and 24,800 (13 per cent) were cases of relief.
- This is the first time year-on-year comparisons can be made. The total number of cases of homelessness prevention or relief **increased by 14 per cent** when compared to 2009/10. This is mostly due to an increase in prevention cases, which increased by 16 per cent, whilst cases of relief increased by only 2 per cent.
- Care should be taken when making annual comparisons as more comprehensive reporting by local authorities over time is known to be a contributing factor to the rise in activity seen in the past two years.
- In 2010/11, **57 per cent** of cases of homelessness prevention and relief involved the household being assisted to obtain alternative accommodation. The remaining **43 per cent** involved the cases being assisted to remain in their existing home. This compares to 61 and 39 per cent respectively in 2009/10.
- The most common action taken to prevent or relieve homelessness was the use of landlord incentive schemes to secure private rented sector accommodation. In 2010/11, **30,800 cases (29 per cent)** were assisted in obtaining alternative accommodation this way, though this was a decrease in activity of 15 per cent compared to 2009/10.
- The amount of homelessness prevention and relief activity varied across the regions. Yorkshire and the Humber had the highest rate of cases of **prevention and relief** with 10.8 cases per 1,000 households. The North East (10.4 cases per 1,000 households), East Midlands (10.2) and London (10.1) also had high rates of prevention and relief. The East of England, with 6.6 cases per 1,000 households, had the lowest rate.

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housing

Introduction

This annual release presents experimental official statistics on homelessness prevention and relief in England that took place outside the homelessness statutory framework in 2010/11. This is the third year figures on homelessness prevention and relief have been published by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Homelessness prevention means 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** is where 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.

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.

In this release 'cases' refers to households or individuals.

Further information on homelessness prevention and relief can be found in the *Definitions* and *Background* sections, towards the end of the release.

Total homelessness prevention and relief activity

An estimated total of **188,800** cases of homelessness prevention or relief took place outside the statutory homelessness framework in England during 2010/11.

Of the total cases, **164,100 (87 per cent)** were preventions and **24,800 (13 per cent)** were cases of relief.

Outcomes of the prevention cases were split evenly with 82,300 assisted to obtain alternative accommodation whilst 81,800 were able to remain in their existing home.

For the first time, year-on-year comparisons can be made as this is the second year that national and regional figures contain estimates for missing local authority data. Although the two years' figures are comparable, care should be taken drawing any conclusions based on increases in activity. More comprehensive reporting by authorities over time, including recording and reporting of activity carried out by partner organisations, is known to be a contributing factor to the rise in activity seen in the past two years. Further information can be found in the *Data source and quality* section on page 16 of this release.

Table 1 - Outcome of homelessness prevention and relief, England, 2009/10 and 2010/11

	Total cases of prevention and relief	Number of cases of relief	% of grand total	Number of cases of prevention	% of grand total	of which prevention cases where household			
						assisted to obtain alternative accommodation	% of prevention total	able to remain in existing home	% of prevention total
2009/10	165,200	24,300	15%	140,900	85%	76,500	54%	64,400	46%
2010/11	188,800	24,800	13%	164,100	87%	82,300	50%	81,800	50%

The total number of cases of homelessness prevention or relief increased by 14 per cent when compared to 2009/10. This is mostly due to an increase in prevention cases of 16 per cent, whilst cases of relief increased by only 2 per cent. Of the prevention cases, cases where the household was assisted to obtain alternative accommodation increased by 8 per cent whilst cases able to remain in their existing home increased by 27 per cent.

See Live Table 787 published alongside this release for further information, including quarterly figures. Please note the issues discussed in the *Data source and quality* section when making comparisons using these figures.

Type of homelessness prevention and relief activity

(i) Cases assisted to obtain alternative accommodation: 57 per cent of total activity

Although overall the number of cases of prevention and relief rose between 2009/10 and 2010/11, there was a drop in the proportion of activity carried out that assisted households to obtain alternative accommodation (from 61 per cent to 57 per cent). The number of cases of prevention and relief that assisted households to obtain alternative accommodation increased from 100,800 to 107,100 between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

The largest group (30,800 cases, 29 per cent of cases obtaining alternative accommodation), was assisted by means of private rented sector accommodation with a landlord incentive scheme provided by the local authority or partner organisation – for example, by means of a cashless bond, “Finders-Fee” scheme where a payment is made to a landlord, deposit payment scheme, rent in advance, landlord insurance payment scheme, or a combination of the above. Although this was still the most common method of finding alternative accommodation, this was the only activity to see a major fall in the number of cases, with a decrease of 15 per cent compared to 2009/10. The decrease was driven by lower activity of this type in London and the South East. In London, cases assisted by means of private rented sector accommodation with a landlord incentive scheme decreased by 24 per cent from 10,600 to 8,100 cases. In the South East, cases decreased by 22 per cent, from 7,100 to 5,500.

20,600 cases (19 per cent) were assisted to secure social housing, in the form of a Part 6 offer of the local authorities’ own accommodation or nomination to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), an increase in activity of 21 per cent compared to 2009/10.

14,800 cases (14 per cent) were assisted to obtain private rented sector accommodation without a 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 direct or on a specific accreditation scheme. This is a small increase in activity of 2 per cent but the same proportion of cases assisted to obtain alternative accommodation as in 2009/10.

13,300 cases (12 per cent) took up Supported Accommodation, for example supported lodging schemes, or successful referrals to supported housing projects, an increase in activity of 15 per cent compared to 2009/10.

12,100 cases (11 per cent) were assisted to take up accommodation in hostels or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), with support (for example, hostel support package or supporting people) or without. This might include arrangements where the hostel stay may be less than 6 months but move-on accommodation will be provided as part of the ‘exit strategy’. It includes night shelter and crisis short-stay accommodation for rough sleepers, such as emergency assessment centres. This is an increase in activity of 28 per cent compared to 2009/10.

The number of cases where accommodation was arranged with friends or relatives, increased to

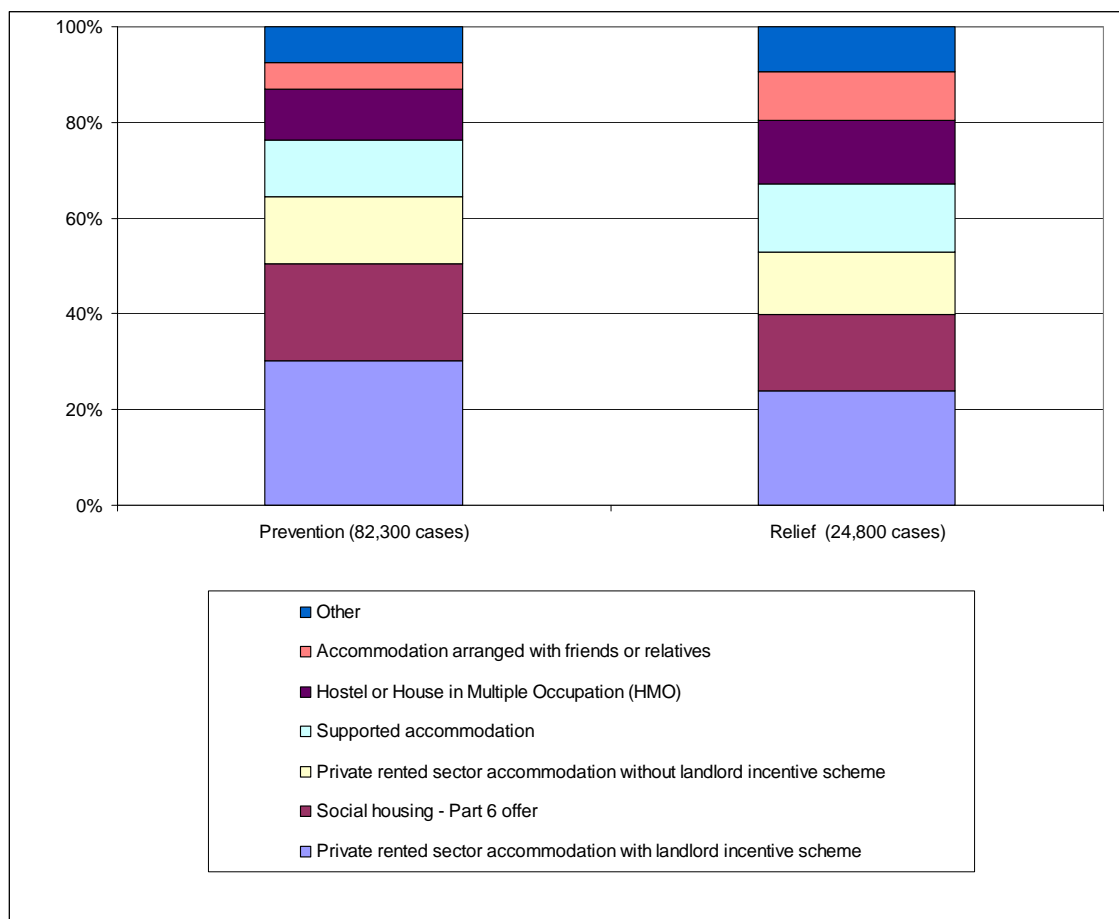
7,000, up 36 per cent compared to 2009/10.

The remaining 8 per cent of cases assisted to obtain alternative accommodation were done so through other means, including other social housing (negotiation with an RSL outside of a Part 6 nomination arrangement) (2,700 cases, 3 per cent), a management move of an existing LA tenant (1,600 cases, 2 per cent), or low-cost home ownership schemes or market housing solutions (100 cases, less than 1 per cent).

Live Table 789, published alongside this release, breaks down those cases assisted to obtain alternative accommodation further into cases of prevention or relief. Prevention actions accounted for 77 per cent of cases that were assisted in finding alternative accommodation and cases of relief accounted for 23 per cent, similar to last year.

Chart 1 shows the distribution of the types of prevention and relief taken in assisting cases to find alternative accommodation. The types of action taken are broadly similar for relief cases (where a household is homeless) and prevention cases (where a household is assisted to avoid homelessness) but there are some differences. Local authorities (and their partner organisations) more frequently assist prevention cases than relief cases by means of private rented sector accommodation with a landlord incentive scheme and relief cases are more frequently assisted to take up accommodation in hostels or HMOs or accommodation arranged with friends or relatives.

Chart 1 – Type of actions taken in assisting cases to obtain alternative accommodation, 2010/11



(ii) Cases able to remain in their existing home: 43 per cent of total activity

The number of cases able to remain in their existing home increased from 64,400 to 81,800 compared to 2009/10, driving an increase in the percentage of all prevention and relief activity where cases were assisted to remain in their own home (from 39 per cent to 43 per cent).

The largest category (16,800 cases, 20 per cent of cases who were assisted to remain in their existing home) was able to do so as a result of the provision of assistance (not involving negotiation or advocacy) which enabled the household to remain in their private or social rented sector accommodation. Examples of assistance include the resolution of anti-social behaviour, tackling disrepair through action against landlords or grants to improve conditions and adaptations to property. This was an increase in activity of 23 per cent compared to 2009/10.

8,500 cases (10 per cent) involved negotiation or legal advocacy that ensured that households could remain in accommodation in the private rented sector. This includes: negotiation with private landlords who have, or have threatened to issue a section 21 notice to resolve problems; actions to resolve a threat of illegal eviction or to reinstate illegally evicted tenants; 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; and 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. This is an increase in activity of 30 per cent compared to 2009/10.

7,700 cases (9 per cent) were able to remain in their home as a result of the provision of debt advice. This includes casework covering debt advice, including negotiation with creditors and advice on budgeting and money management. This is an increase in activity of 44 per cent compared to 2009/10.

7,800 cases (9 per cent) involved the resolution of housing benefit problems. This includes: 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; and making a discretionary housing payment. This is an increase in activity of 46 per cent compared to 2009/10.

6,400 cases (8 per cent) involved mortgage arrears intervention or mortgage rescue, including, but not exclusively, the government's mortgage rescue schemes. This includes: negotiation with mortgage lenders and banks to reschedule debt payments or payment terms or offer a repayment break period; providing support to enable re-mortgage; conversion to an interest-only mortgage to reduce outgoings; conversion to shared ownership. This is an increase in activity of 75 per cent compared to 2009/10.

6,100 cases (7 per cent) involved sanctuary schemes for domestic violence. This comprises measures to enable a victim of domestic abuse or harassment to remain in their home with

professionally installed security measures, and also includes cases where someone is assisted to take legal action to protect their right to remain safely within the home. This is an increase in activity of 16 per cent compared to 2009/10.

5,900 cases (7 per cent) involved conciliation, including home visits where someone may be at risk of homelessness due to a threat of exclusion from parents, other relatives, or friends. It also includes conciliation work by a partner organisation, such as youth counselling. This is a small increase in activity of 2 per cent but the category accounts for a smaller proportion of the cases able to remain in their existing home compared to 2009/10.

The remaining 28 per cent were assisted to remain in their own home through other means. These include: resolution of rent or service charge arrears in the social or private rented sector (6 per cent); mediation using external or internal trained family mediators (6 per cent); crisis intervention and the provision of emergency support (4 per cent) and financial payments from a homeless prevention fund (3 per cent).

Regional homelessness prevention and relief activity

Regional figures in this release include estimates for missing local authority data.

Homelessness prevention and relief activity varied across the regions. In 2010/11, London had the highest total prevention and relief activity of all the regions with 32,900 cases, 17 per cent of the national total, but a small drop compared with 20 per cent of the total in 2009/10. The South East had the next highest level of activity with 28,000 cases whilst the North East had the lowest with 11,500 cases.

Chart 2 – Outcome of homelessness prevention and relief by region, 2010/11

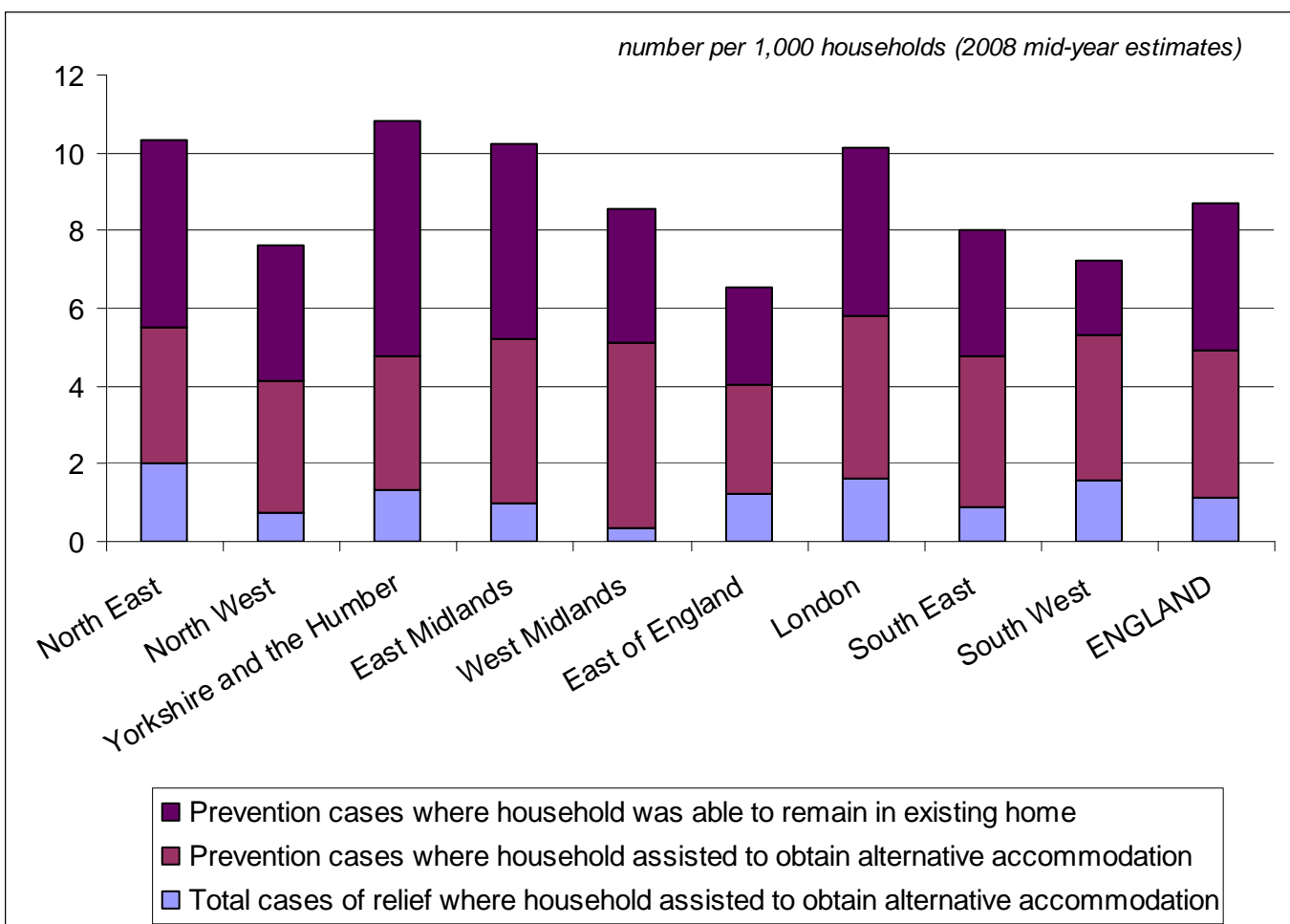


Chart 2 compares the rates of prevention and relief per 1,000 households in each region. The figures underlying this chart can be found in Live Table 790 accompanying the release.

Yorkshire and the Humber had the highest rate of cases of **prevention and relief** with 10.8 cases per 1,000 households. The North East (10.4 cases per 1,000 households), East Midlands (10.2) and London (10.1) also had high rates of prevention and relief. The East of England, with 6.6 cases per 1,000 households, had the lowest rate of prevention and relief of the English regions.

Rates of **preventions** alone followed a similar pattern, with Yorkshire and the Humber having the highest rate at 9.5 cases per 1,000 households and the East Midlands, London, North East and West Midlands having high rates of 9.2, 8.5, 8.3 and 8.2 cases per 1,000 households respectively. The East of England had the lowest rate with 5.4 cases per 1,000 households.

There were also differences between the types of actions undertaken in different regions to prevent homelessness. Yorkshire and the Humber and the North East had the highest proportions of total prevention cases helped to remain in their existing home, with 64 per cent and 58 per cent respectively. The South West had a substantially lower proportion than any other region with 34 per cent of cases helped to remain in their existing home and 66 per cent helped to find alternative accommodation.

Unlike preventions, the rate of **relief** amongst the regions in 2010/11 was similar to the previous year. The North East had the highest rate of cases of relief with 2.0 cases per 1,000 households, followed by London and the South West each with 1.6. This is in contrast with the relatively low prevention rate for the South West region. The West Midlands had the lowest rate of relief with 0.3 cases per 1,000 households, half of the rate for 2009/10 in the region.

The proportion of all cases that involved relieving homelessness differed by region. The South West, North East and the East of England had the highest proportions of all activity that was relief with 22 per cent, 19 per cent and 18 per cent respectively. The West Midlands (4 per cent) and the North West (9 per cent) had the lowest proportions of cases which involved relieving homelessness.

Compared to 2009/10, the West Midlands had a large increase in prevention and relief activity, from 11,000 cases to 19,200 cases (comprised of an increase in prevention activity from 9,700 cases to 18,400 cases and a decrease in relief activity from 1,300 cases to 700 cases). Through communication with local authorities it has become apparent that a large proportion of this increase is due to local authorities improving their reporting systems. This is particularly the case in Birmingham and Wolverhampton, who saw increases from 1,202 to 4,832 and 228 to 2,208 cases respectively. Further information can be found in the *Data source and quality* section on page 16 of this release.

Other regions which saw large increases in prevention and relief activity when compared to 2009/10 were the North West (an increase of 28 per cent) and Yorkshire and the Humber (an increase of 21 per cent). The South East saw a 5 per cent reduction in cases, caused by an 8 per cent reduction in prevention cases, outweighing an increase in relief cases of 11 per cent.

Further details on the types of homelessness prevention and relief activity undertaken at regional level can be found in Live Tables 790 and 791, published alongside this release.

Comparison with statutory homelessness

Generally, in 2010/11, regions with the highest rates of households accepted as owed a main homelessness duty also had high rates of prevention and relief activity. There were some exceptions: the West Midlands, with the highest rate of acceptances at 3.8 per 1,000 households, had a prevention and relief rate just below the national rate (8.7); the North East, which had an acceptance rate below the national rate, had the second highest rate of prevention and relief; and the East of England, which had the lowest rate of prevention and relief but a similar rate of acceptances as for England as a whole.

Table 2 – Homeless households accepted as owed a main homelessness duty and total cases of prevention and relief, by region, 2010/11 (Rate per 1,000 households)

	Acceptance rate	Prevention and relief rate
North East	1.7	10.4
North West	1.3	7.6
Yorkshire and the Humber	2.0	10.8
East Midlands	1.8	10.2
West Midlands	3.8	8.6
East of England	1.8	6.6
London	3.1	10.1
South East	1.3	8.0
South West	1.5	7.2
ENGLAND	2.0	8.7

For further information on statutory homelessness the most recent statistical release is available at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/homelessstatistics/publicationshomelessness/>

Live tables

The following supplementary tables can be downloaded electronically via this link:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/homelessnessstatistics/livetables/>

- Table 787 Outcome of homelessness prevention and relief, England, 2009/10 and 2010/11
- Table 788 Type of homelessness prevention and relief, England, 2009/10 and 2010/11
- Table 789 Cases assisted to obtain alternative accommodation broken down by prevention and relief, England, 2009/10 and 2010/11
- Table 790 Outcome of homelessness prevention and relief by region, England, 2009/10 and 2010/11
- Table 791 Total cases of homelessness prevention and relief by type and region, England, 2009/10 and 2010/11
- Table 792 Outcome of homelessness prevention and relief by Local Authority, England, 2009/10 and 2010/11

Definitions of types of 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 where training in mediation has been provided.
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 recorded in this section.
4. Debt advice: Include casework covering debt advice, including negotiation with creditors and advice on budgeting and money management.
5. Resolving housing benefit problems: Include actions to resolve housing benefit problems including 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. Housing benefit resolutions should be recorded at Row 5.
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. Include also 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:

- negotiation with private landlords who have or have threatened to issue a section 21 notice to resolve problems.
- actions to resolve a threat of illegal eviction or to re instate illegally evicted tenant.
- 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
- 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

- resolving anti-social behaviour,
- tackling disrepair through action against landlords or grants to improve conditions,
- adaptations to the property

11. Mortgage arrears interventions or mortgage rescue: This includes

- negotiation with mortgage lenders and banks to reschedule debt payments or payment terms or offer a repayment break period;
- 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 HMO with or without support (including arrangements where the hostel stay may be less than 6 months but move-on accommodation will be provided as part of the 'exit strategy') (Excludes 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 direct or 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 LA tenant)
7. Social housing (a Part 6 offer of LA own accommodation or nomination to an RSL)
8. Social housing (negotiation with an RSL outside Part 6 nomination arrangements)
9. 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:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/homelessnessstatistics/publicationshomelessness/>

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 enable a planned and timely move and help sustain independent living. All persons who fall 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, authorities are encouraged to take steps to relieve homelessness and 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 2010/11 financial year, most authorities reported some form of checking on all data items in the return.

A - Response rate

The following refers to the prevention and relief section of the P1E form only.

Full returns for the whole of 2010/11 were provided by 322 out of the 326 local authorities. With the additional partial returns in each quarter, the overall response rate in 2010/11 was **99.5 per cent**. This is an improvement on last year when overall response was just under 98 per cent. (Full response was 96.2 per cent in 2009/10 compared with an average full return of 99.1 per cent in 2010/11). The table below gives a further breakdown by quarter.

	<i>percentage of LAs</i>		
	Full return	Partial return	Overall response
Apr - Jun	98.8%	0.3%	99.1%
Jul - Sep	99.4%	0.6%	100.0%
Sep - Dec	99.1%	0.3%	99.4%
Jan - Mar	99.1%	0.6%	99.7%
Total	99.1%	0.5%	99.5%

B - Comparisons with other years

This year is the second year that estimates for missing local authority data have been made and there are now two comparable years' worth of figures. Figures published for 2008/9 were as reported by local authorities, based on an overall 93 per cent response rate, and no estimates were made for missing data. Therefore national figures for 2008/09 and the two most recent years are not directly comparable.

More comprehensive reporting by local authorities over time, including recording and reporting of activity carried out by partner organisations, is known to be a continuing contributing factor to the rise in activity we have seen in the past two years. Several authorities reported that the large increases recorded were due to improvements in reporting the actions of partners rather than increases in activity. Thus, it is difficult to estimate the real increase in the volume of prevention and relief activity

taking place across the country between the two years and care should be taken when analysing the time series.

C – Possible issues

Possibility of under-reporting

It is possible that the figures include some under-recording of prevention and relief activity in cases where authorities have been able to accurately collate and report their own activity, but do not yet 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 evidence that recording of partner organisation activity by local authorities has improved since the previous year.

Quarterly Fluctuations

Through communication with local authorities it has become apparent that some local authorities have experienced backlogs of cases and reported these in a particular quarter, despite the activities occurring in previous quarters. This is a common situation when recording-systems of partner organisations have improved and local authorities are able to provide information on prior activities that had not previously been known about. It is for this reason quarterly figures have not been published below national level and caution should be exercised interpreting the quarterly national series.

Live table 787 shows that the estimated total number of cases of homelessness prevention and relief has continued to increase in each successive quarter of 2010/11, from 42,700 in the first quarter to 51,700 in the final quarter of the year. The increase is a result of increased cases of prevention from 36,900 in quarter 1 to 45,000 in quarter 4 and in particular an increase in the number of cases assisted to remain in their existing home, from 17,800 to 23,600 over the year. By contrast total cases of relief remained static over the period at around 6,000 per quarter, although the last quarter of 2010/11 saw an increase to 6,800.

Consistency in reporting between local authorities

This was the third year in which authorities were asked to collect and record cases of homelessness prevention and relief, achieved by the authority and partner organisations.

The subject is complex and initially there were differences in interpretation across authorities. In November 2009, the Department for Communities and Local Government issued more detailed guidance summarising responses to queries received over the first year of data collections. In addition, the Department for Communities and Local Government ran regional workshops for local authorities throughout the second half of 2009/10 in order to guide authorities on completing their quarterly returns and to provide a platform for discussing any issues. The guidance and the workshops, along with further work by DCLG statisticians to chase and verify anomalous returns, have improved the quality and consistency of reporting by local authorities. More authorities provided

full (rather than partial) returns in 2010/11 than in 2009/10 and recording of partner organisation activity has improved.

Local authorities with no cases of relief

As in 2008/9 and 2009/10, many local authorities reporting cases of homelessness prevention reported zero cases of homelessness relief perhaps indicating they were unable to distinguish between these two categories. All local authorities contacted by statisticians to discuss this issue confirmed that their reported figures were correct, that is the authority or partner organisations had only undertaken prevention activity in their local area.

Methodology

1. **Rates per 1,000 households** have been calculated using the 2008-based household projections produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government. These projections were published on 26 November 2010 at the following link:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/householdestimates/>

2. National and regional figures in the text and accompanying tables are presented rounded to the nearest 100 households or applicants. Local Authority figures provided in the supplementary tables are as reported and unrounded.

3. The map in live table 792 is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office:

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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 <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statisticalnoticerevisionspolicy>). 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.

Scheduled Revisions

Local authorities can update their P1E returns following publication of the data. At the end of each financial year the figures for the previous year will be reviewed for revision. A decision on whether to revise will be made based on the impact of any change and the effect it has on the interpretation of the time series. Provisional figures are labelled in the tables with a "P".

Revisions to historic data (all data older than that currently due for scheduled revision) should only be made 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.

No revisions have been made to the 2009/10 data published in this release.

Related Links

Last year's Homelessness Prevention and Relief statistical release, providing summary figures for 2009/10, was published on 26 August 2010 and can be downloaded electronically from the Department for Communities and Local Government website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/homelessnessprevention200910>

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:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/homelessnessstatistics/publicationhomelessness/>

Rough sleeping statistics can be found at the following link:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/roughsleepingcounts/>

Statistics on Local Authority revenue expenditure and financing in England can be found at the following link. Revenue Outturn 4 relates to Housing Services and includes information on local authorities' expenditure on homelessness activities:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/localregional/localgovernmentfinance/statistics/revenueexpenditure/revenue200910/localauthoritydata/>

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 can be found in the "Notes and Definitions" section of the Department's website:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/homelessnessstatistics/notesdefinitions/>

Devolved administrations

The scope of this data collection and statistical release is limited to prevention and relief activities carried out in England. Scotland publishes information on prevention and relief activity at the following link:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/07155415/7>

The other devolved administrations do not publish prevention and relief statistics.

Uses of 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 consultation

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.

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

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/engagementstrategystatistics>

Other Information

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:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/researchandstatistics/statistics/nationalstatistics/>

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

Enquiries

This statistical release, as well as previous releases, can be accessed and all text, tables and charts downloaded electronically, from the Department for Communities and Local Government website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/homelessnessstatistics/publicationhomelessness/>

Further details on this statistical release are available from Mark Pearson, Department for Communities and Local Government, Zone 4/J2, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU. Telephone 0303 444 4172. E-mail: homelessnessstats@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

Media Enquiries:

office hours: 0303 444 1136

out of hours: 0303 444 1201

e-mail: press.office@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Public enquiries:

For further details on this statistical release, or if you would like to comment please use the following details:

telephone: 030 3444 4172

email: homelessnessstats@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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

www.statistics.gov.uk.

Information about the Department for Communities and Local Government is available via the Department's website: www.communities.gov.uk.

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August 2011

ISBN: 978-1-4098-3085-6