



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Statutory Homelessness, January to March (Q1) 2019: England

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 commenced on 3 April 2018. The aim of the HRA is to have a greater focus on preventing homelessness and helping more people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The HRA amended the Housing Act 1996, creating new prevention and relief duties for local authorities with statutory homelessness responsibilities in England.

The statistics in this report are published as Experimental Official Statistics. This is the fourth statistical release since commencement of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) using new case level data. Figures in this release are not directly comparable with data for previous years. These are provisional figures and will be revised in the next publication. We are continuing to work with local authorities to improve the quality of this new data.

- This quarter's figures are based on full or partial returns for 319 out of 326 local authorities (97.9% response rate). Partial responses mean the completeness and quality of data varies by section and are specifically highlighted in this release.
- Between January to March 2019, 70,430 households were initially assessed as threatened with homelessness or homeless. This is up 10.7% from 63,620 households in the previous quarter.
- 37,690 households were initially assessed as **threatened with homelessness**, up 10.2% from 34,190 in the previous quarter. 32,740 households were initially assessed as **homeless**, up 11.2% from 29,430 in October to December
- Between January to March 2019, 31,180 households who were owed assistance for being threatened with homelessness or homeless, secured accommodation for 6 months or more. This is up 1.3% from 30,780 the previous quarter
- Between January to March 2019, 7,570 households were accepted as owed a **main homelessness duty**. This decreased 1.4% from 7,680 during October to December.
- On 31st March 2019 the number of households in **temporary accommodation** was 84,740, up 1.4% from 83,610 on 31st December 2018.

Housing

Experimental Statistical First Release

12th September 2019

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Responsible Statistician:

Homelessness Statistical
Data Team

0303 444 2867

Statistical enquiries:

Office hours:

homelessnessstats@communities.gov.uk

Media Enquiries:

0303 444 1209

newsdesk@communities.gov.uk

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1. Introduction

What data is used in this release

The data used in this release are from the Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC) data system. This system is used as a reporting requirement of local authorities to provide data on statutory homelessness for those approaching local authorities for help with homelessness. From 1st April 2018 H-CLIC replaced an aggregated data return (collected using the P1E form). The replacement of the aggregated return coincided with the introduction of new legislation, the HRA 2017. This new system collects more detailed data on activities undertaken by local authorities to help prevent or relieve homelessness and the outcomes of these activities. The data collected in this release show total activity over the quarter except for data on temporary accommodation which is a snapshot at the end of the quarter.

What is homelessness?

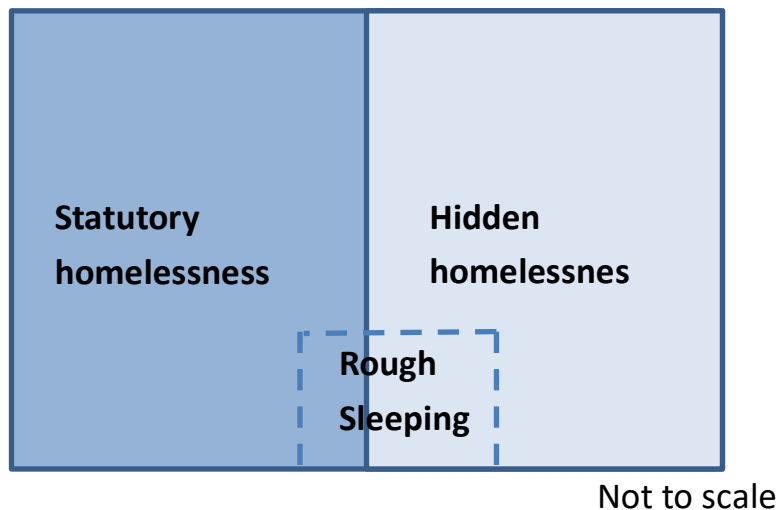
A person is homeless if they have no accommodation available which they are entitled to occupy. A person is also homeless if they have accommodation but it is unfit for occupation, entry cannot be secured or the accommodation consists of a moveable structure which has no permission to place somewhere or reside within.

Homelessness covers a broad range of living circumstances. This makes it difficult to provide an accurate estimate of all homelessness across England. There are different types of homelessness; rough sleeping, statutory homelessness and hidden homelessness. This publication covers statutory homelessness; that is the homelessness applications taken and decisions made by local authorities according to their legal duties.

Not all rough sleepers will appear in this publication as not all rough sleepers approach the local authority for assistance. Information on rough sleepers who approach the local authority can be found from the fields: accommodation of the household at the time of approach or the support needs of households. Rough sleepers in this publication may have slept rough one night or across several nights.

The term 'hidden homelessness' can refer to households living in overcrowded, insecure or uninhabitable conditions and is difficult to quantify because some people in these situations will have not made a homelessness application through which their circumstances and needs were assessed. The increase in single households being helped under the 2017 HRA amendments has improved knowledge of those previously classed as hidden homeless. In January to March, there were 18,750

single adult households owed an initial prevention duty and 23,680 single adult households owed an initial relief duty, of which a proportion would have previously been hidden. The proportion of those previously classed as hidden homeless now being owed a statutory duty is difficult to quantify. The diagram below shows an illustration of this and further information on hidden homelessness can be found in Related links and statistics.



Statutory homelessness

A household is considered statutorily homeless if a local authority decides they do not have a legal right to occupy accommodation that is accessible, physically available and which would be reasonable for the household to continue to live in. The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, Localism Act 2011 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017¹) determines the legal duties on local authorities towards homeless households and households threatened with homelessness.

The data in this release excludes anyone who has not approached their local authority for assistance who would otherwise be considered homeless. It also excludes anyone who has approached their authority but whose threat of homelessness falls outside the legal 56-day prevention duty, who may have been offered some assistance.

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) significantly amended homelessness legislation. The Act introduced a number of changes including:

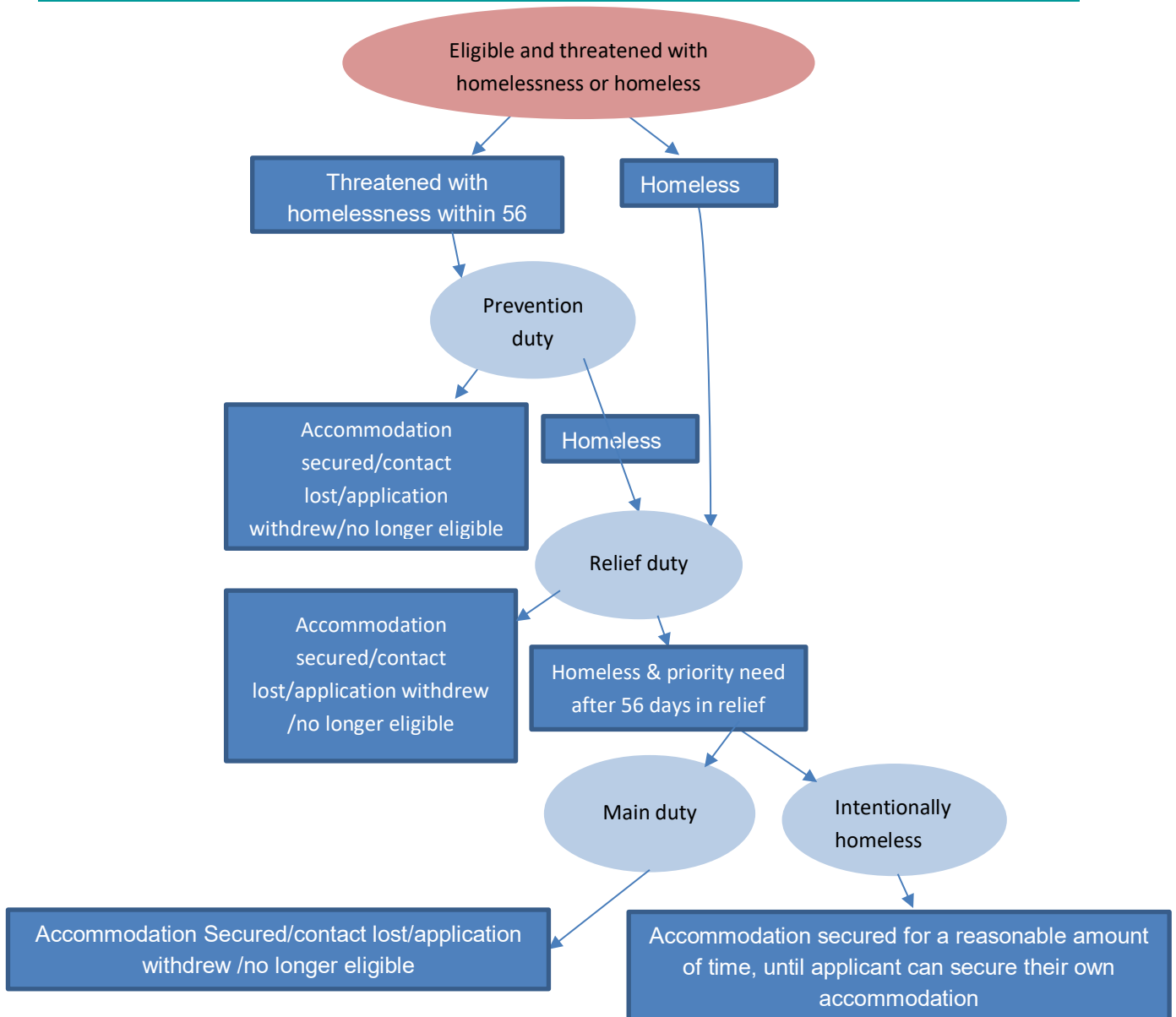
- A strengthened duty to provide advisory services
- An extension to the period during which an applicant is considered

¹ See Definitions in Section 9

'threatened with homelessness' from 28 to 56 days

- New duties to assess all homeless eligible applicants and to take reasonable steps to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- These steps will be set out in a personalised housing plan which, wherever possible, must be agreed between the local authority and the applicant.

Data flows



Households who are statutorily homeless are owed duties that fall into three main categories:

Prevention duties include any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness within 56 days from becoming homeless. This would involve activities to enable an applicant to remain in their current home or find alternative accommodation in order to prevent them from becoming homeless. The duty lasts for 56 days but may be extended if the local authority is continuing with efforts to prevent homelessness.

Relief duties are owed to households that are already homeless and require help to secure settled accommodation. The duty lasts 56 days, and can only be extended by a local authority if the households would not be owed the main homelessness duty.

Main homelessness duty describes the duty a local authority has towards an applicant who is unintentionally homeless, eligible for assistance and has priority need¹. This definition has not been changed by the 2017 HRA. However, these households are now only owed a main duty if they did not secure accommodation in the prevention or relief stage. This means a household owed a main duty is no longer a household that is threatened with homelessness. In addition a minimum of 56 days now has to have elapsed from a household approaching the local authority to being owed a main duty.

Households who approached their authority before the 3rd April 2018 can still be owed a main duty through a delayed assessment or reapplication duty.

Temporary accommodation The majority of households in temporary accommodation have been placed under the main homelessness duty to secure suitable accommodation until the duty ends. However, the numbers also include households owed a relief duty and provided with interim accommodation, households provided with accommodation pending a decision on their homelessness application, households pending a review or appeal to the county court of the decision on their case, or possible referral to another local authority, and households found to be intentionally homeless and in priority need who were being accommodated for such period as would give them a reasonable opportunity to find accommodation for themselves.

Duty to refer requires specified public bodies to refer, with consent, users of their service who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to a local housing authority of the individual's choice.

Experimental statutory homelessness data

This release includes data on the actions of 319 of the 326 lower tier local authorities in England under their legal duties towards homeless households² and households threatened with homelessness, from January to March 2019. This data is likely to be revised in future quarters as local authorities update and improve their records. This release includes recent quarter updates on the number for those threatened with homelessness within 56 days and owed a prevention duty, or the number for those who are homelessness and owed either a relief or main duty (see definition below). Further information on the circumstances and needs of these households along with their outcomes at the end of each new duty is also provided. Data in this release is collected through our [H-CLIC](#)³ case level return on [DELTA](#)⁴

Data in this release are intended to be used to monitor the introduction of the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act and the activities of local authorities with responsibilities under homelessness legislation. The release is currently Experimental due to the introduction of new legislation, new case management systems and methods of reporting data to the Department. Caution should be taken when comparing this data as there may be quality issues and omissions that drive trends or affect comparability between local authorities. Where issues have been identified these are marked and explained in the relevant data tables and the main release. The supporting [Technical note](#) also provides more detailed information on the H-CLIC data flows, including quality assurance processes.

As this is the first full year of H-CLIC data, the quality of data in this publication are continually being improved. The publication is currently labelled as experimental to reflect the new methods being used to aggregate case level information to provide summary outputs. New methods are also being developed to impute for missing data, where a local authority has not provided data for certain sections of the form or when the data provided is not consistent. The purpose of publishing these statistics as experimental is to allow users to review the statistics with an understanding of the statistics' quality and limitations and make qualified use of them before they are fully developed. Please see the [User engagement section](#) for a link to user survey and details of future user events. We advise that only temporary accommodation and main duty data are comparable to previous quarters but with caution as there may be quality issues that have not yet been identified or resolved. Further information on planned development work is included in the Technical note.

² Households can comprise of only one individual

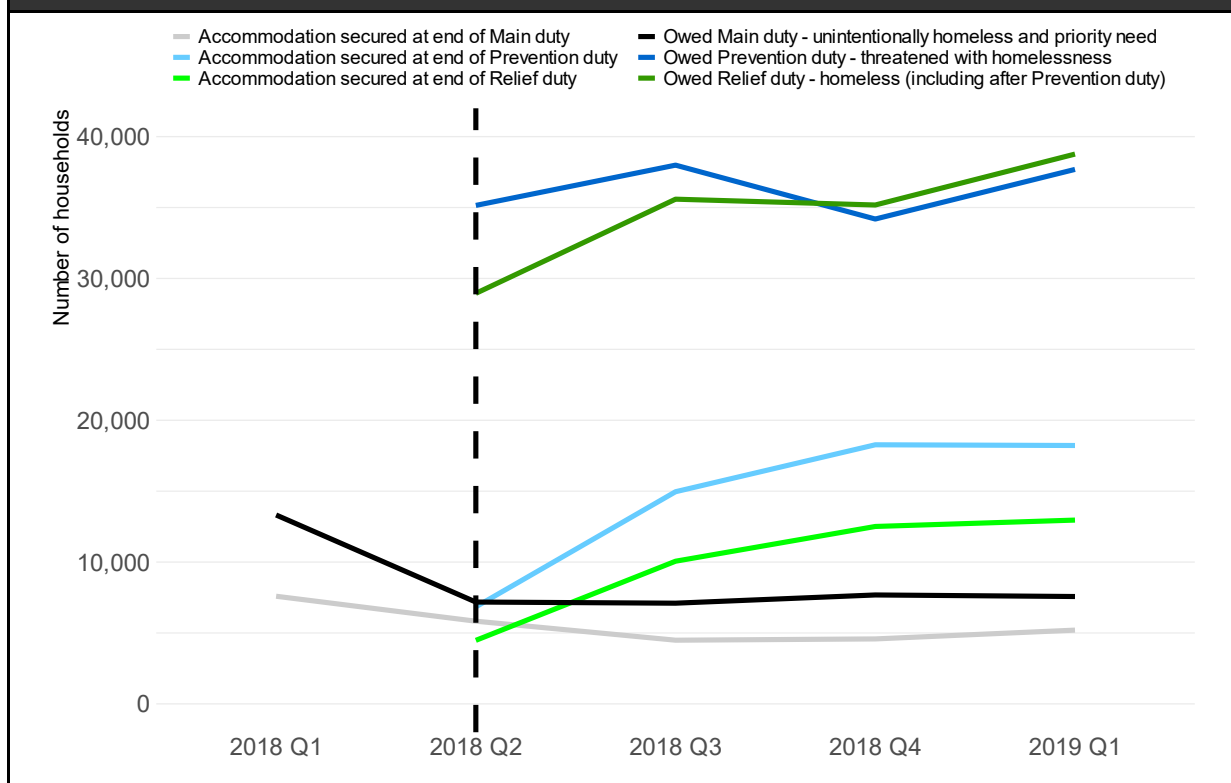
³ MHCLG homelessness statistics user forum <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/user-facing-pages/mhclg-homelessness-statistics-user-forum/>

⁴ DELTA <https://delta.communities.gov.uk/about-delta>

2. Annual summary

In this first year following commencement of the HRA 2017 we anticipated a steady increase in the number of reported outcomes from the prevention and relief duties as applicants passed through the stages of duties owed. Each duty lasts up to 56 days, and in some circumstances can be extended, so there is a time lag in recording eventual outcomes.

Figure 1: Trends of those owed assistance for being threatened with homelessness or being homeless



Over the year from April to June 2018 to January to March 2019 the number of prevention duties owed increased 7.2%, from 35,150 to 37,690. The number of households where prevention duty ended more than doubled from 11,030 to 31,930. Of which the number of households who ended the prevention duty with secure accommodation over the year also more than doubled from 6,840 to 18,220. 58% of the 100,800 prevention outcomes during 2018/19 were for accommodation secured. 20% of the outcomes were because the household were homeless. Table 1 summarises the breakdown of outcomes each quarter in 2018/19.

From April to June 2018 to January to March 2019 the number of relief duties owed from the initial assessment increased 23.6%, from 26,480 to 32,740. The number of households that were homeless at the end of the prevention duty and would be owed a relief duty has more than doubled from 2,470 to 6,030. The number of households

where the relief duty ended more than doubled from 7,920 to 32,270. Of which the number of households who ended the relief duty with secure accommodation over the year from April to June 2018 to January to March 2019 has also more than doubled from 4,480 to 12,960.

43% of the 93,200 relief outcomes during 2018/19 were for accommodation secured. 32% of the outcomes were because 56 days had elapsed and the household was still homeless. Table 1 summarises the breakdown of outcomes each quarter in 2018/19.

In the first quarter of 2018/19, main duty acceptances fell. From April to June 2018 to January to March 2019 the number of households owed the main duty has increased 5.4%, from 7,180 to 7,570. This figure has increased over the year due to the lag in households progressing through either/both the prevention and relief duty before reaching an assessment for main duty.

Table 1: Outcome of the prevention and relief duty				
	April-June 2018	July-Sep 2018	Oct-Dec 2018	Jan-March 2019
Prevention duty owed	35,150	37,990	34,190	37,690
Households where prevention duty ended*	11,030	26,410	31,470	31,930
<i>Of which prevention duty ended</i>				
Secured accommodation for 6+ months	6,840	14,960	18,270	18,220
Homeless (including intentionally homeless)	2,470	5,540	5,750	6,030
Other ⁵	1,730	5,910	7,440	7,670
Relief duty owed	26,480	30,050	29,430	32,740
Households where relief duty ended*	7,920	23,010	30,020	32,270
<i>Of which relief duty ended</i>				
Secured accommodation for 6+ months	4,480	10,060	12,510	12,960
56 days elapsed	1,410	7,000	10,100	11,530
Other ⁶	2,040	5,950	7,410	7,790

*Sum may be different due to rounding

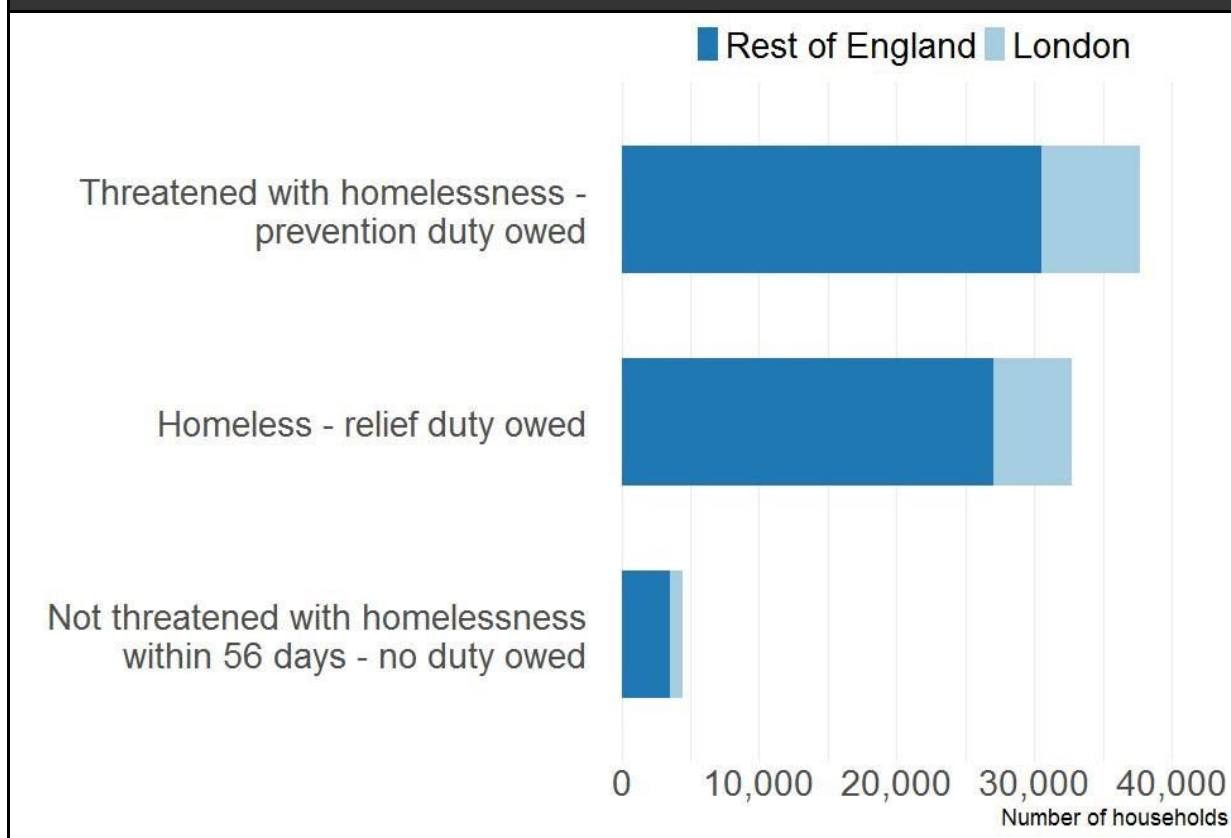
⁵ Includes: refused suitable accommodation offer, refused to cooperate, contact lost, withdrew application / applicant deceased, 56 days elapsed and no further action, no longer eligible, not known

⁶ Includes local connection referral accepted by other LA, intentionally homeless from accommodation provided, refused final accommodation, notice served due to refusal to cooperate, contact lost, withdrew application / applicant deceased, no longer eligible, not known

3. New duties owed

This section of the release covers the initial assessment of people who are threatened with homelessness or who are already homeless between January to March 2019. This section does not cover secondary relief duties owed to a household where the applicant has not managed to secure accommodation whilst being threatened with homelessness. It also does not cover main duty assessments as these are included under [main duties owed](#).

Figure 2: Initial assessment of homeless duties owed to households, January to March 2019, England



9 local authorities were unable to provide initial assessment information. 5 of these were missing in previous quarters. These are highlighted and referenced in the live tables. Comparisons with previous number of initial duties accepted indicate that the impact of this is small. For 5 of the authorities that failed to provide this information their data was imputed from previous returns in 2018/19. There may be seasonal trends in this data, which is not currently adjusted.

Between January to March 2019, 74,860 homelessness assessments were made under the new duties, and 70,430 or 94.1% households were initially assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days and owed a statutory homelessness prevention or relief duty. This increased 10.7% from 63,620 in the previous quarter. London accounted for 12,870 or 18.3% of the initial assessments that resulted in a duty owed this quarter.

Of the 70,430 households initially assessed as owed a duty, 37,690 or 53.5% were threatened with homelessness within 56 days and owed a prevention duty. The number of households owed an initial prevention duty has increased 10.2% from 34,190 in October to December. 4,840 households or 12.8% of prevention duties were owed because the household had been issued with a **section 21** notice. The number of prevention duties owed due to the issue of a section 21 notice have increased 19.8% from 4,040 households in October to December 2018.

Of the 70,430 households initially assessed as owed a duty, 32,740 households or 46.5% were assessed as already homeless and owed a relief duty. Households initially owed a relief duty increased 11.2% from 29,430 in October to December.

4,430 of the 74,860 households that underwent an initial homelessness assessment between January to March were found to be not homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days. A fall in the number assessed as not homeless this year is in part due to improvements in data quality that have exaggerated the trend. Some local authorities in early quarters stated that they had included households who sought local authority help for other reasons than statutory homelessness, and it has not been possible to identify the homeless applicants from within these (see the [technical note](#))

4. Accommodation and common causes of statutory homelessness

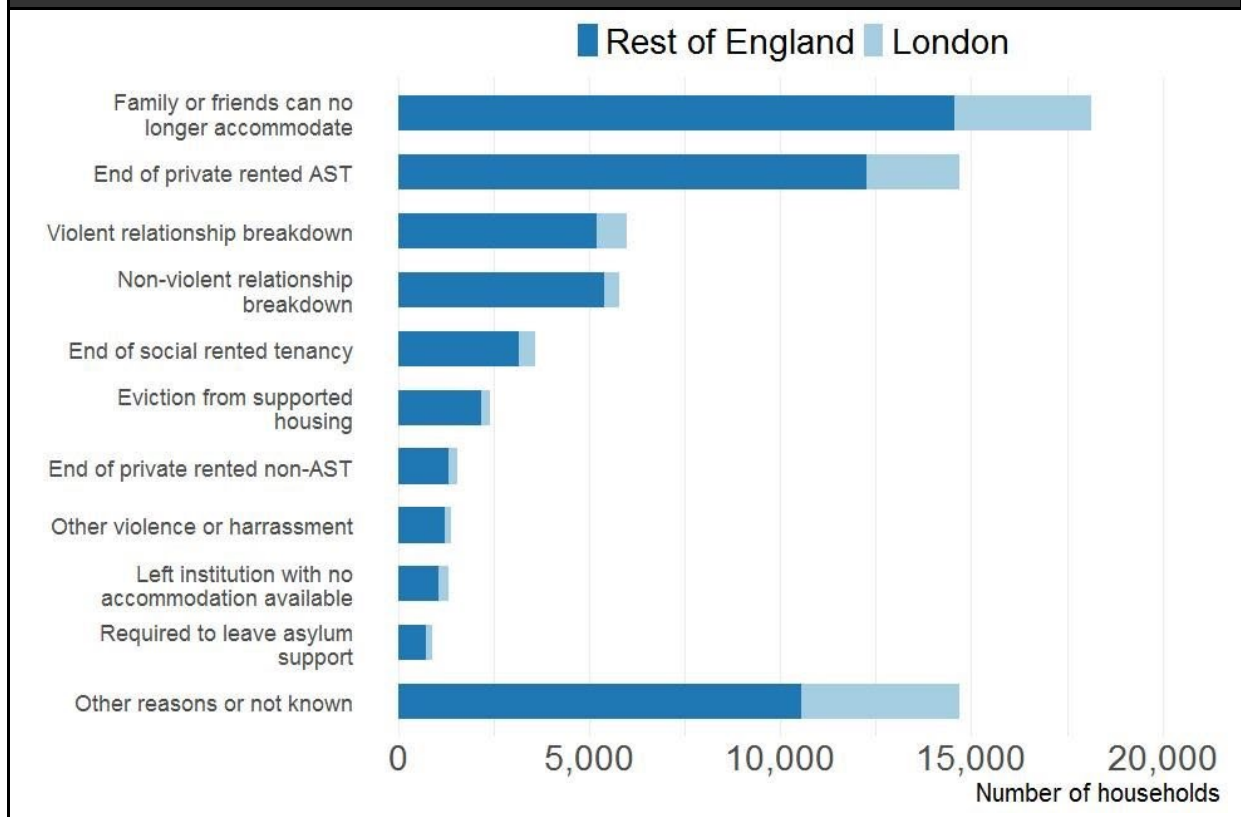
Common causes of homelessness

Users should note in this section 'other' is a large category overused by some local authorities who we are working with to improve their reporting. The overuse of the category 'other' will impact on the numbers represented in every other category with the potential for this impact to be disproportionate. All % breakdowns in this category are quoted including 'other' which represented 20.9% of reasons provided.

The reason for loss of last settled home is a good indication of the common causes of homelessness. Between January to March 2019, the most common reason for loss of last settled home was friends or family no longer willing or able to accommodate which accounted for 18,150 households or 25.8% assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. The second largest category not including 'other' was termination of an assured shorthold tenancy (AST), 14,700 households or 20.9%.

ASTs can end for a range of reasons, such as difficulty budgeting, a recent change in financial circumstances, a breach of the tenancy agreement or landlord evictions both legal and illegal. 6,900 or 46.9% of AST terminations were due to the landlord wishing to re let or sell the property. Other than unknown or other reasons, the second largest reason for termination of AST was tenant difficulty budgeting, which accounted for 1,480 households or 10.1%.

Figure 3: Reason for loss of last settled home, January to March 2019, England



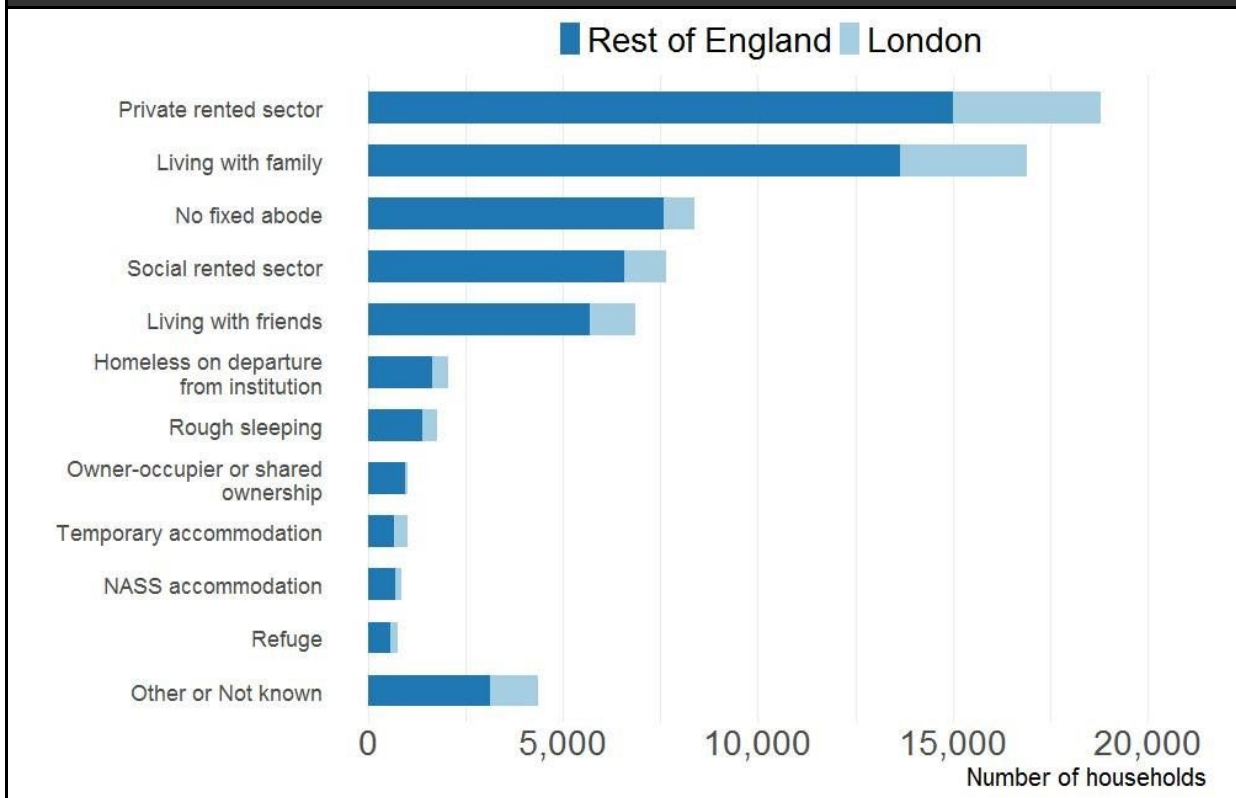
Accommodation at time of application

Current accommodation is used to identify the settled accommodation types of households who could be prevented from becoming homeless and the unsettled accommodation or no accommodation types of households requiring relief. Households living with friends or family are considered either settled or unsettled accommodation types depending on the individual circumstances. This is because these households may be living in what have been long term stable arrangements, for example adult sons or daughters who have been living with parents, or may be in short term arrangements such as staying temporarily with friends due to a relationship breakdown whilst looking for accommodation. This will include people referred to as sofa surfers.

Caution: it is believed that ‘no fixed abode’ has been overused by data providers as a category in the return where living with friends or family would have been more appropriate. ‘No fixed abode’ should not be used as a proxy for rough sleeping as this category can include people who are temporarily staying at multiple addresses but not sleeping rough. It is also believed that the category ‘homeless on departure

from institution' was underreported as many people leaving custody typically move in with friends or family for a few days and this latter category has been used instead. In addition, other or unknown is overrepresented and will have led to underreporting in some or all non-other categories.

Figure 4: Accommodation type at the time of first local authority approach, January to March 2019, England



As shown in Figure 4, the most common accommodation type at the time of approach was private rented sector 18,820 or 26.7% households, followed by living with family, 16,910 households or 24.0%. Other notable groups included social housing, 7,660 households or 10.9% and living with friends, 6,850 households or 9.7%. 13,030 or 18.5% were living in unsettled accommodation, such as refuges, prison, temporary accommodation, no fixed abode, hospitals, prisons or National Asylum Seeker Support (NASS) accommodation.

Rough sleeping

1,780 households were rough sleeping at time of application, 380 of which were in London and 1,400 in the rest of England. This is a 5.8% decrease from the 1,890 households reported in October to December 2018. Rough sleepers are defined as

those who were, in the judgement of the assessor, rough sleeping when they approached a local authority for help. This is lower than the 3,230 households with support needs because of a history of sleeping rough, who may have been living in other settled or unsettled accommodation at the time of approach. And both figures are lower than the 4,677 rough sleepers recorded as sleeping rough on a single night in England in 2018. This difference is expected as different methodologies have been used to collect the data. There will be some overlap between the individuals in these two datasets so they should not be merged. The breakdowns of the rough sleeping numbers on a single night can be found [here](#).

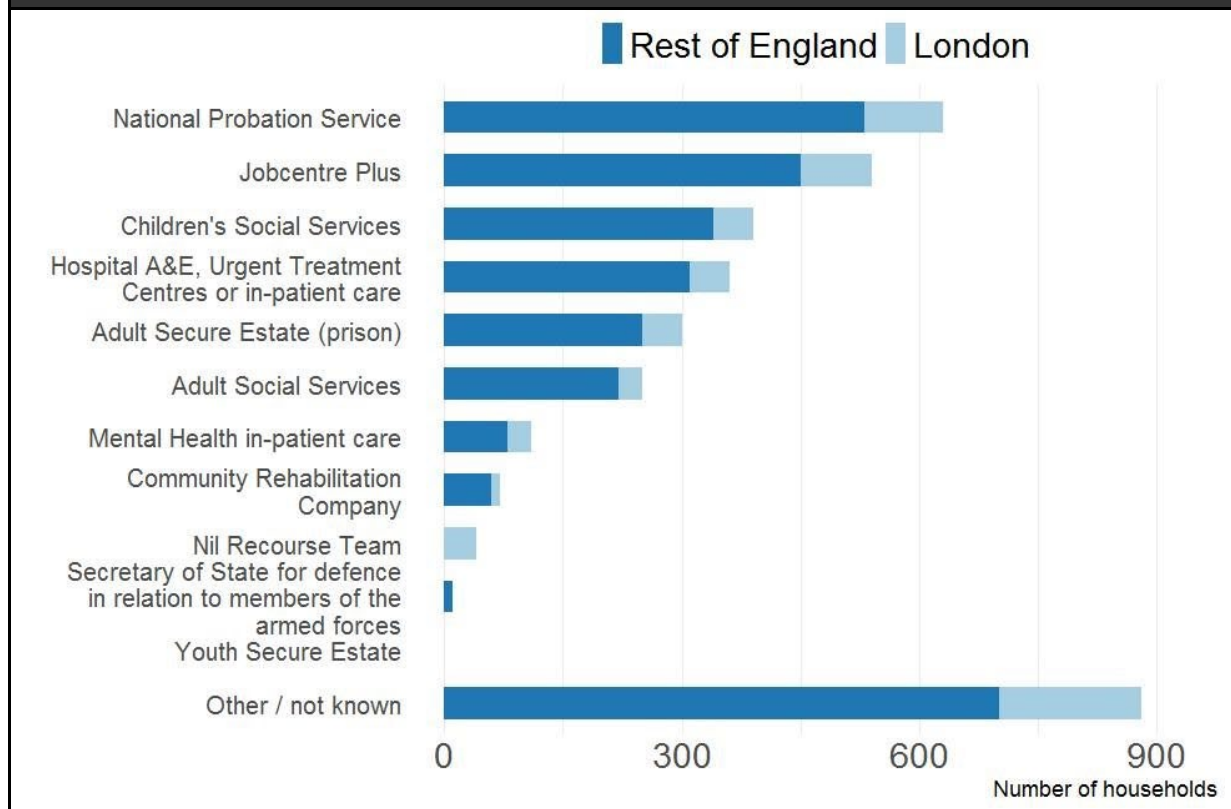
The annual figure for 18/19 of the number of households rough sleeping at the time of application in this data collection is 6,980 of which 1,490 were in London. A further source of data on rough sleeping is from the Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) which is a multi-agency database recording information about people seen rough sleeping by outreach teams in London. This collects rough sleeping figures collectively over the year instead of a snapshot in time. The number of rough sleepers reported is higher compared to figures in this statutory homelessness release because it includes people who have accessed services instead of people that have gone to their local authority for assistance out of homelessness. In 2018/19, CHAIN found 8,855 people were seen sleeping rough in London. Further information on the latest CHAIN figures can be found: <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>

Referrals

From October 2018, a number of public authorities were given legal responsibilities to refer users of their service who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to a local housing authority of the individual's choice. This information is captured and reported by local authorities when the referral results in a new homelessness application. This duty is new and became effective from the 1st October 2018 after the introduction of the HRA. The operational processes to refer people are still being refined and there may be underreporting of these numbers if a referral is not made quickly enough.

Authorities with legal responsibilities under this duty and the number of referrals made during January to March are provided in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Authorities' referrals in January to March 2019, England



Some local authorities indicated that a household had been referred to them under a duty to refer but failed to identify the referring authority for 880 households. This means the referrals from some or all of the public authorities may be underestimated. MHCLG are working with local authorities to improve reporting of this information in future quarters.

During January to March, there were 3,580 referrals made under the duty to refer. The National Probation Service made the most referrals with 630 or 17.6% of the total. Jobcentre Plus made the second highest number of referrals with 540 or 15.1%. These two authorities represent around one third of referrals under the duty to refer.

Households can also be referred to local authorities by public bodies without a duty to refer e.g. GP practice, police or housing associations. During January to March 2019 2,720 referrals were made by other organisations, public or private without a legal duty to refer. 300 additional referrals were made by other local authorities.

5. Characteristics of those homeless or threatened with homelessness

Household composition

Data in this section shows the household composition of those who were initially assessed as owed either a prevention or relief duty during January to March 2019. **Single households** is a term used for households without children, which will include couples and households with two or more adults. Before the HRA 2017 most single households were not provided with assistance unless they had a priority need other than living with dependent children. Measuring single homelessness is therefore important as there is very little information previously known about this group. Before the introduction of the HRA most of the single households reported here would have been classed as 'hidden homeless'.

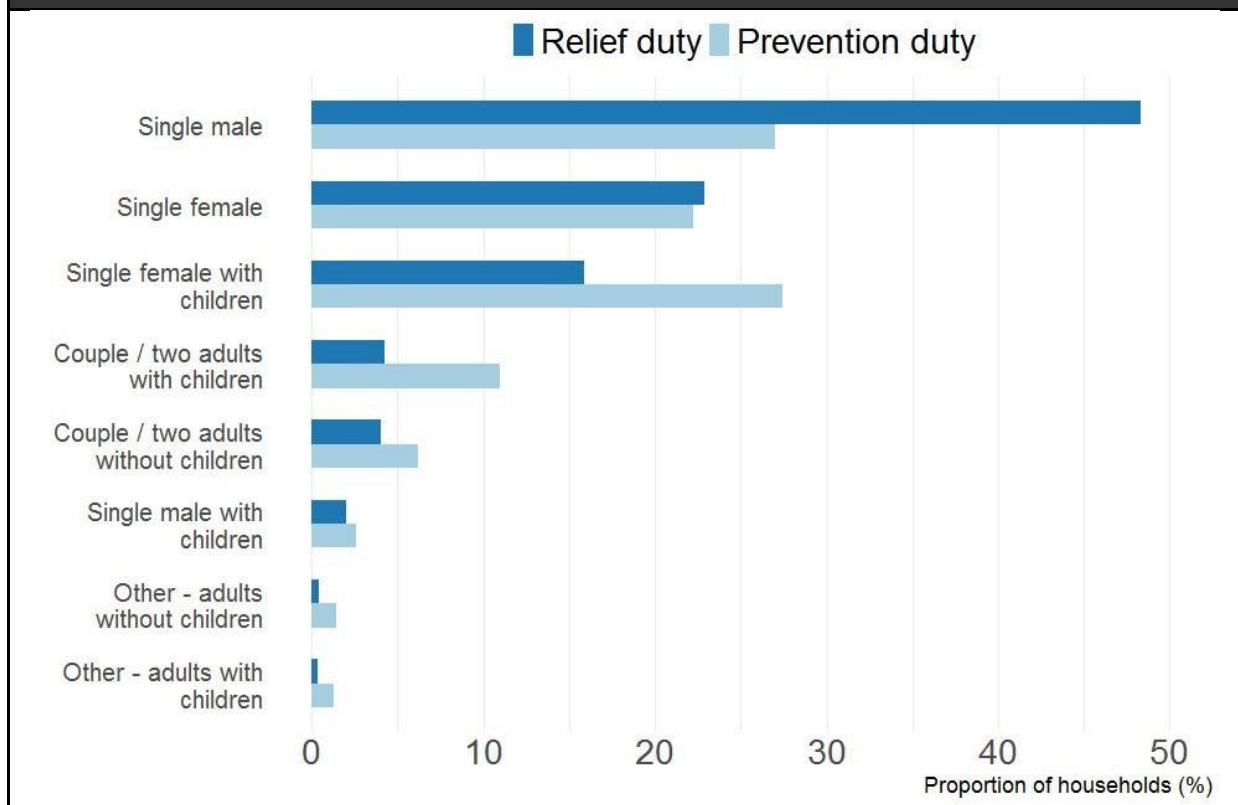
Data for most authorities is included here, however, it should be noted that a small number of authorities only provided information on one member of the household. 9 local authorities reported more than 95% of their homeless households in the prevention duty as single adult households and 13 local authorities reported more than 95% of their relief duty homeless households as single adult households. This concerned 868 households in the prevention duty and 1,304 households in the relief duty. This means that single member households are overstated compared to other groups. A complete list of household breakdowns at the local authority level, including information on the local authorities who reported 95% or more single adult households are provided in table A5P and A5R. For links see section 8: [Accompanying tables](#) section at the back of the release.

Of the 37,690 households owed a prevention duty, 18,750 or 49.7% were owed to single adult households. This compares to the relief duty where 32,740 households were owed a relief duty and 23,680, 72.3% were owed to single adult households. The creation of new duties assesses needs and helps to prevent and relieve homeless for all eligible households irrespective of priority need, meaning more single households will have applications taken and assistance provided than prior to commencement of the HRA.

During January to March, single males were the largest represented household group owed a relief duty and second highest owed a prevention duty. The largest group for the prevention duty was single female parents with dependent children with 10,340 or 27.4% of the total. Single female parents represented only 5,200 or 15.9%

of relief duties owed, the third largest group after single males and single females. Couples with children and extended family households with 2 or more adults and children represented 4,670 or 12.4% of the total owed a prevention duty and 1,520 or 4.5% owed a relief duty – see Figure 6.

Figure 6: Households composition for prevention and relief duty %, January to March 2019, England



Support needs

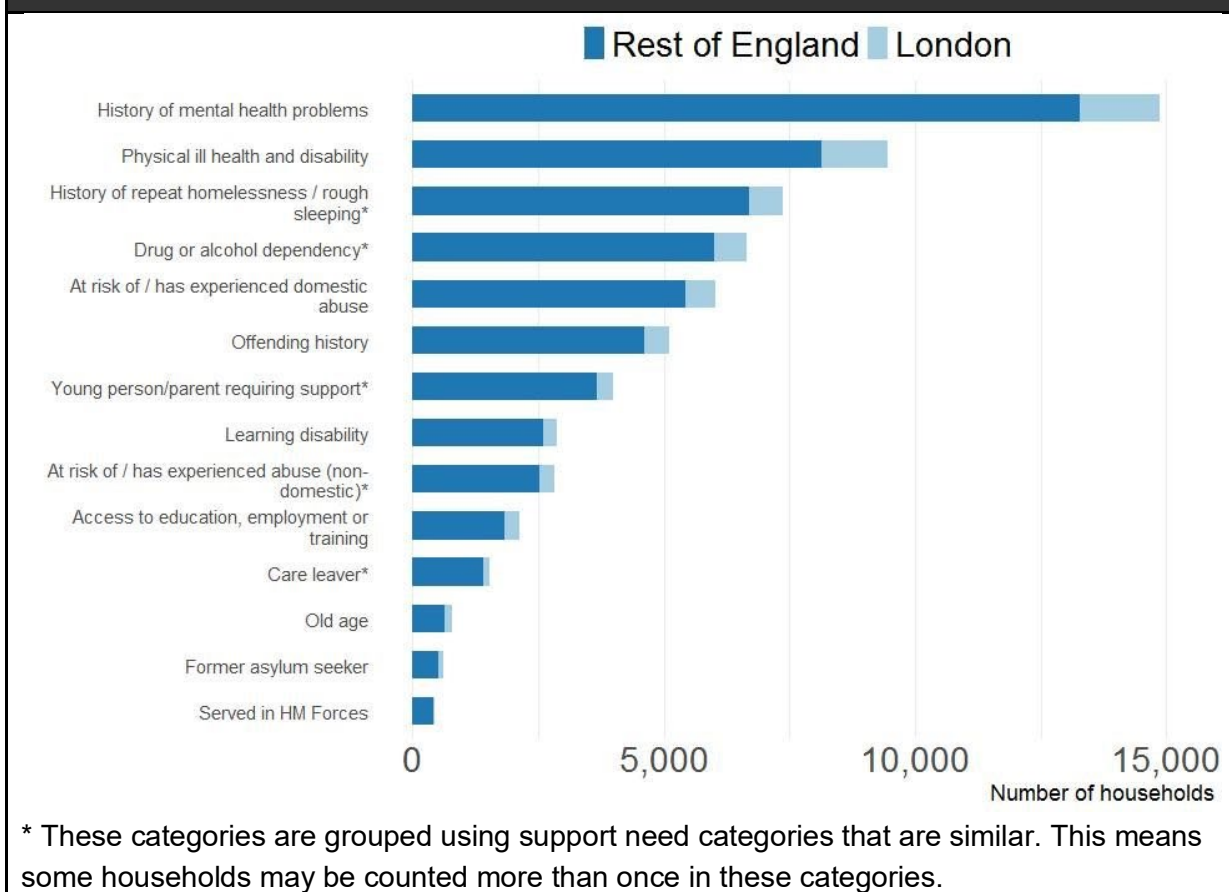
The amended legislation requires local authorities to assess the support needs of homeless households and consider how these needs might be met as part of their personalised housing plan. Support needs are not characteristics of the household, but instead are areas of additional needs that mean the household requires support to acquire and sustain accommodation. Where support needs are identified, the local authority should identify the steps to be taken to provide the necessary support as part of the personalised housing plan. This gives an indication of the additional services local authorities provide to prevent an individual becoming homeless or to stop the cycle of repeat homelessness.

Local authorities report as many support needs that apply to each household. This means that total support needs may exceed the number of households each quarter.

A complete list of support needs and breakdowns at the local authority level are provided in table A3 (for links see section 8: [Accompanying tables](#) section at the back of the release).

Of the 70,430 households who were owed a homelessness duty, 30,840 or 43.8% of households were identified as having support needs. There were 37,830 households, or 53.7% with no recorded support needs. Of the 30,840 households who had a support need, 15,590 households or 50.6% had 1 support need, 6,830 households or 22.1% had 2 support needs and 8,420 or 27.3% had 3 or more support needs. 1,770 households were missing any support needs information, and these are provided in [table A3](#).

Figure 7: Households owed a homelessness duty by support need, January to March 2019, England



The most common support need identified was a history of mental health problems which was reported by 14,880 of households or 48.2% with support needs. The second largest group was those with physical ill health or disability, identified by 9,460 households or 30.7% of households with support needs. Other notable groups included those with experience of domestic abuse, 6,020 households or 19.5%, those with drug dependency, 3,750 households or 12.2%, and alcohol dependency

needs, 2,890 households or 9.4%. Those with a history of repeat homelessness or rough sleeping were identified in 4,150 and 3,230 households respectively – see Figure 7.

6. Threatened with homelessness

Prevention duty ended

Data in this section concerns the number of prevention duties that ended between January to March 2019 and the reasons why these duties ended. It also includes information on the activities and accommodation outcomes of those whose homelessness was prevented.

The new prevention duty outcomes are reported when a homeless application has been taken and a statutory process followed. Data is not comparable to the previous prevention activity data up to the end of March 2018. This previous prevention activity data included interventions and activities that prevented a household from making a homeless application, sometimes referred to as ‘upstream’ prevention and are no longer reported.

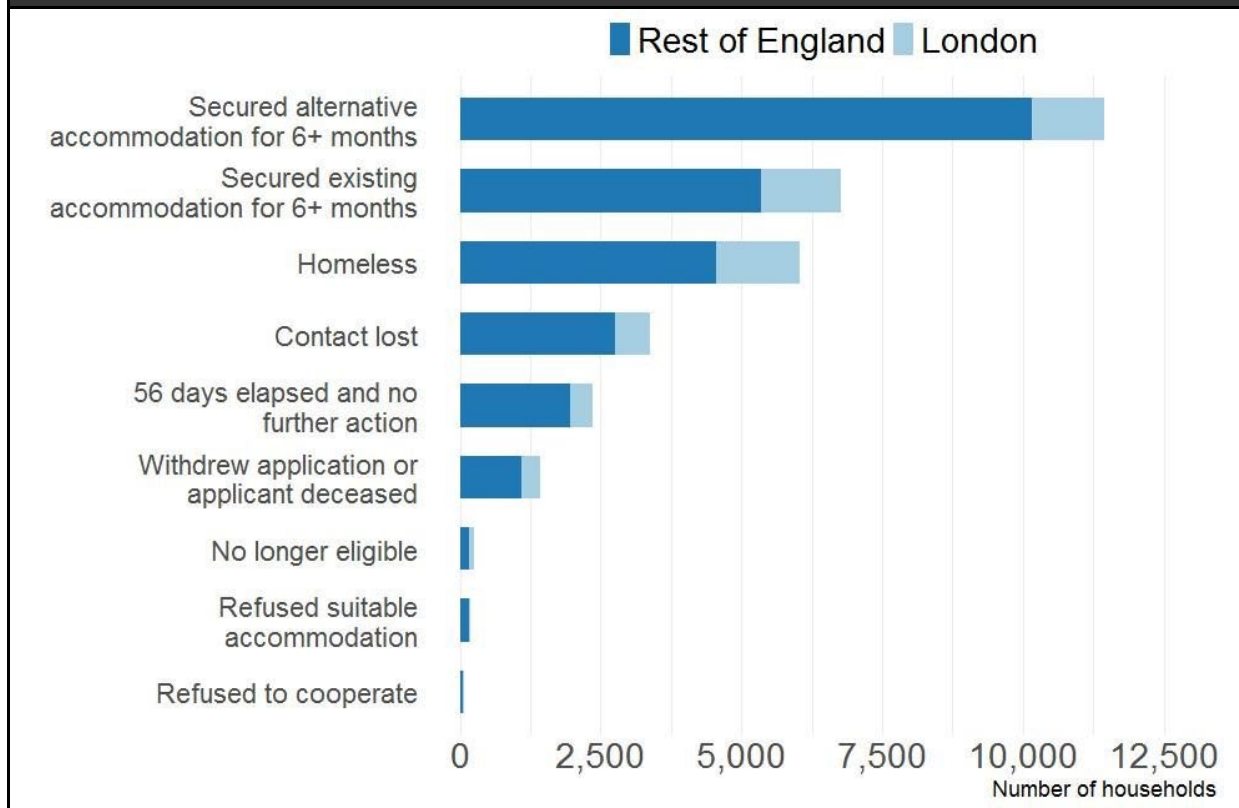
A number of local authorities have reported issues collecting or reporting accurately on prevention duties. 13 out of 326 local authorities did not provide this information, 5 were not imputed so the total is likely to be an underestimate. This means the overall England total and trends throughout the year should be used with caution. The data quality process is covered in more detail in the [technical note](#).

Figure 8 shows how the prevention duty ended for 31,930 households in January to March 2019. The number of prevention duties that ended has increased by 1.5% from the 31,470 households in the previous quarter. Of the households whose prevention duty ended 18,220 households, or 57.1%, secured accommodation for 6 months or more and were no longer threatened with homelessness. Of those with accommodation secured, 6,780 households or 37.2% secured their existing accommodation, whilst 11,440 households or 62.8% secured alternative accommodation.

For 6,030 or 18.9% of households, the prevention duty ended because the household became homeless, and were therefore owed a relief duty. The prevention duty ended for 180 households because the applicant refused an offer of accommodation. Local authorities ended the prevention duty for 80 households who deliberately and unreasonably refused to cooperate with the reasonable steps set out in their personalised housing plan.

There are a number of further reasons why a prevention duty may end that do not relate to securing accommodation for 6+ months or the household becoming homeless. The prevention duty ended for other reasons not related to failing or succeeding to secure accommodation for 6+ months for 7,410 households or 23.2% of prevention duties ended. These reasons include where the authority lost contact with the client, the 56 day period ended and no further action was required, the application was withdrawn or the household ceased to be eligible for assistance.

Figure 8: Outcome of prevention duty, January to March 2019



7. Homeless households

Relief duty ended

Data in this section concerns the number of relief duties that ended for households in January to March 2019. Under a relief duty a local authority is required to take reasonable steps to try and relieve a household's homelessness by helping them to secure available accommodation for at least 6 months. Duties that ended this quarter are included in this section. Breakdowns include reasons why duties ended, the activities undertaken and accommodation outcomes of those whose homelessness was relieved.

A number of local authorities have reported issues collecting or reporting accurately on relief duties. Users of one of the main software systems have previously informed us that this information is not always extracted for a case and has resulted in some underreporting, particularly in earlier quarters. 13 out of 326 local authorities did not provide this information, 5 were not imputed so the total is likely to be an underestimate. The data quality process is covered in more detail in the [technical note](#).

This data is not comparable to the data published on relief activities up until April 2018. Previously published relief data was based on activities offered to households at the discretion of local authorities where the main homelessness duty was not owed. Under the HRA all households assessed as already homeless are owed a duty to try and relieve their homelessness. As with the prevention duty, early reporting of the way the relief duty ended was limited by both the number of households assessed as owed a relief duty and the length of time taken to end the duty following commencement of the Act.

As relief is a new duty, local authorities have had to adapt to the new process and associated ways to collect and report this information and some have experienced technical difficulties affecting reporting. Local authorities have experienced some issues reporting this information. Where issues were identified these have been flagged in the associated tables. The England total includes underreported and omitted local authority level figures so should be used with caution.

Figure 8 shows how the relief duty ended for households during January to March 2019. The relief duty ended for 32,270 households during January to March 2019, this has increased by 7.5% from the 30,020 households reported in the previous quarter. Of the 32,270 households whose relief duty ended between January to March 2019, 12,960 or 40.2% of households had accommodation secured for at least 6 months. This has increased 3.6% from the 12,510 households whose homelessness was relieved in the previous quarter. For 11,530 households (35.7%) the relief duty ended because their homelessness had not been relieved within 56 days. For 380 households the homeless duty ended because of a refusal of a final accommodation offer and a further 90 households were served a notice for refusal to cooperate.

Figure 9: Reason relief duty ended, January to March 2019



Main duty decisions

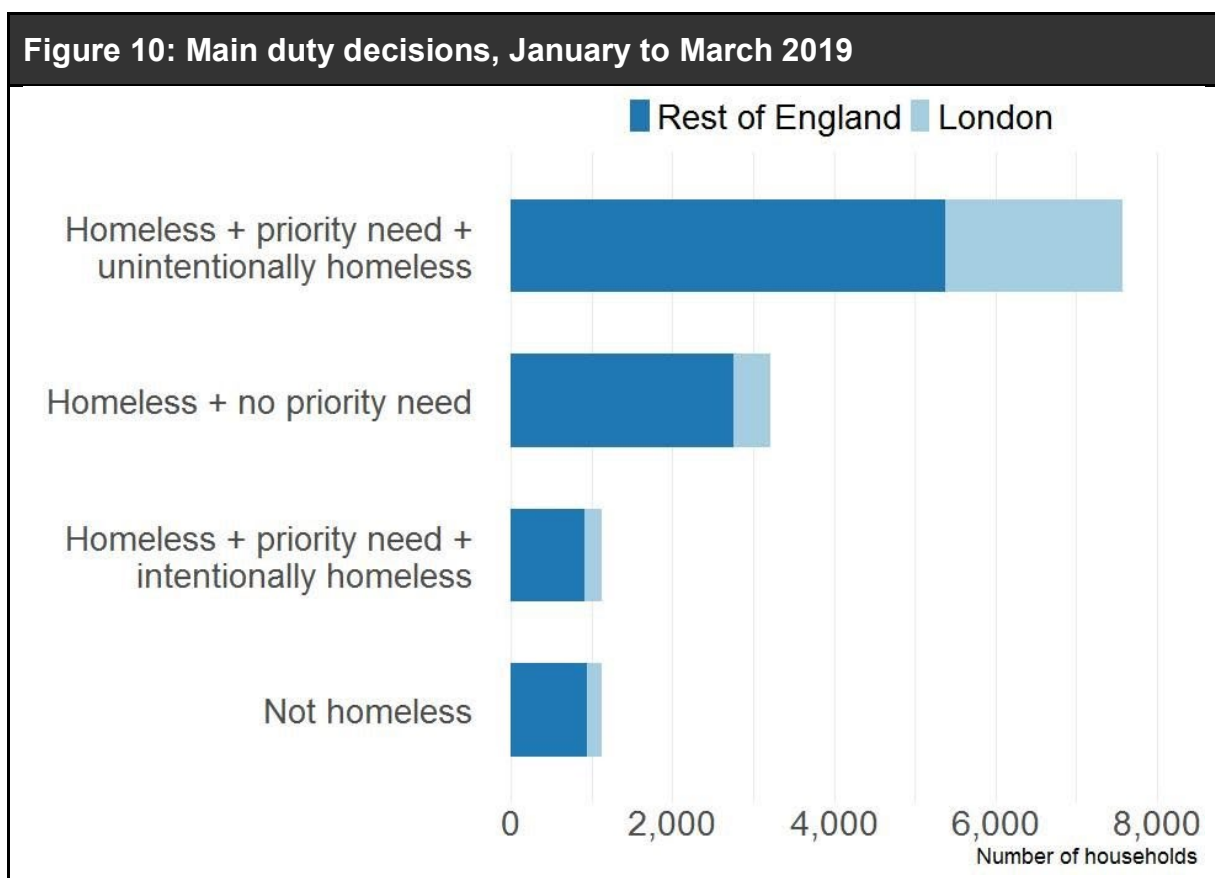
Data in this section concerns decisions on whether the main homelessness duty is owed to a homeless household and includes some decisions on applications made prior to the HRA commencement date as well as decisions made under the amended legislation.

From 3rd April 2018 homeless households were owed a 56 day relief duty before a main duty could commence, and in some cases would also have been owed a prevention duty before the household became homeless. For the purpose of this data this means there will be a delay in households reaching the main duty stage in the early part of 2018-19. Over this first year it will be difficult to determine the impact of the act on main duty decisions because of this change.

A number of local authorities have reported issues collecting or reporting accurately on main duty decisions. Users of one of the main software systems have previously informed us that this information is not always extracted for a case and has resulted in some underreporting or missing information. 21 out of 326 local authorities did not

provide this information, 4 were not imputed so the total may be an underestimate and a further 10 authorities were suspected to have under or over reported their main duty decisions data this quarter so their figures were imputed. As local authorities resolve these issues, main duty decision totals for this year are likely to be revised in future publications. The data quality process is covered in more detail in the [technical note](#).

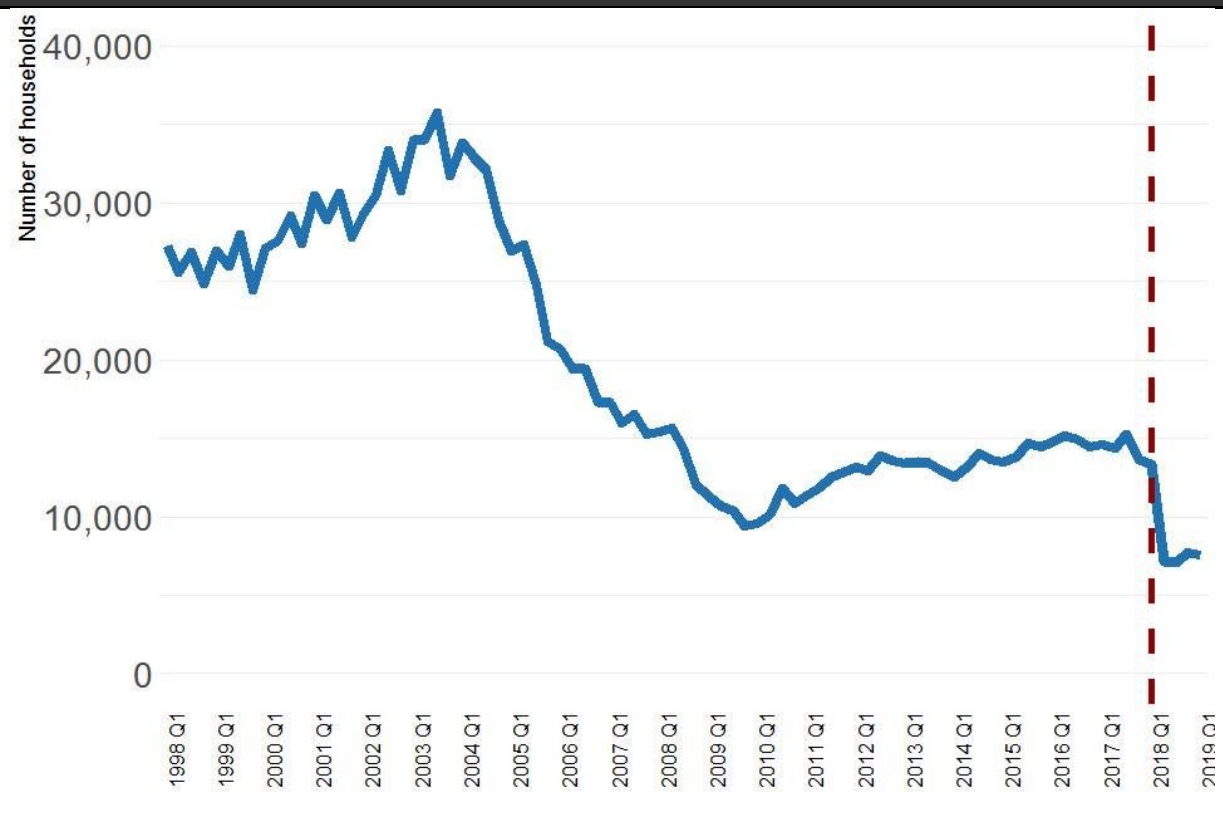
The main duty decision figures for London and Rest of England are shown in Figure 10.



Local authorities made 13,020 main homelessness duty decisions in January to March 2019. This is just under half, 49.4%, of the 25,750 households who were issued with a main homelessness duty decision in the same quarter of 2018 prior to commencement of the HRA. 1,120 households were found to be not homeless. 3,210 households were found to be homeless but did not have priority need, an increase of 12.6% from 2,850 the previous quarter.

Figure 11 shows how the total number of households owed a main homelessness duty has changed over time from Q1 1998 to Q1, January to March, 2019.

Figure 11: Main duty homelessness acceptances 1998 to Q1 2019, quarterly, England



The number of main homelessness duty acceptances peaked in Q3 2003 at 35,770 before falling to the previous low of 9,430 in Q4 2009. This quarter the number of main duty acceptances is 7,570, which has decreased 1.4% from 7,680 in October to December 2018. Of the 7,570 owed a main homelessness duty, 2,190 were in London, accounting for 28.9% of the England total. Caution should be taken before using this figure as this number may be revised in future quarters as the new legislation and reporting systems are more established.

Main duties ended

When a household is accepted as being owed a main duty by a local authority the authority has a duty to ensure that suitable accommodation is available until such time that the duty ends. The main duty can also be brought to an end for other reasons such as the applicant turning down a suitable offer of temporary or settled accommodation or the applicant no longer being eligible for assistance.

Some local authorities have struggled to provide accurate information on duties ended. As with temporary accommodation this information mostly relates to cases

assessed before the introduction of the 2017 HRA. To ease the transition in reporting MHCLG have collected this information through both P1E and H-CLIC returns. 15 local authorities failed to provide accurate information for January to March of which 11 have been imputed. However, other local authorities identified issues with underreporting. The England level figure is likely to be under reported so should be used with caution.

A main homelessness duty was ended for 6,870 households in January to March 2019. This includes those who had previously been in temporary accommodation or had remained, with consent, in their existing accommodation while awaiting alternative accommodation. This is a 13.9% increase from 6,030 in the previous quarter and a 31.8% decrease from 10,080 during January to March 2018.

Of the 6,870 households, 5,200 were provided settled accommodation (75.7%). Of these 4,440 accepted a tenancy offer in local authority or housing association accommodation and 760 accepted a private rented sector offer. There were 240 households who became intentionally homeless from temporary accommodation, while 630 households (9.2%) voluntarily ceased to occupy temporary accommodation.

8. Temporary accommodation

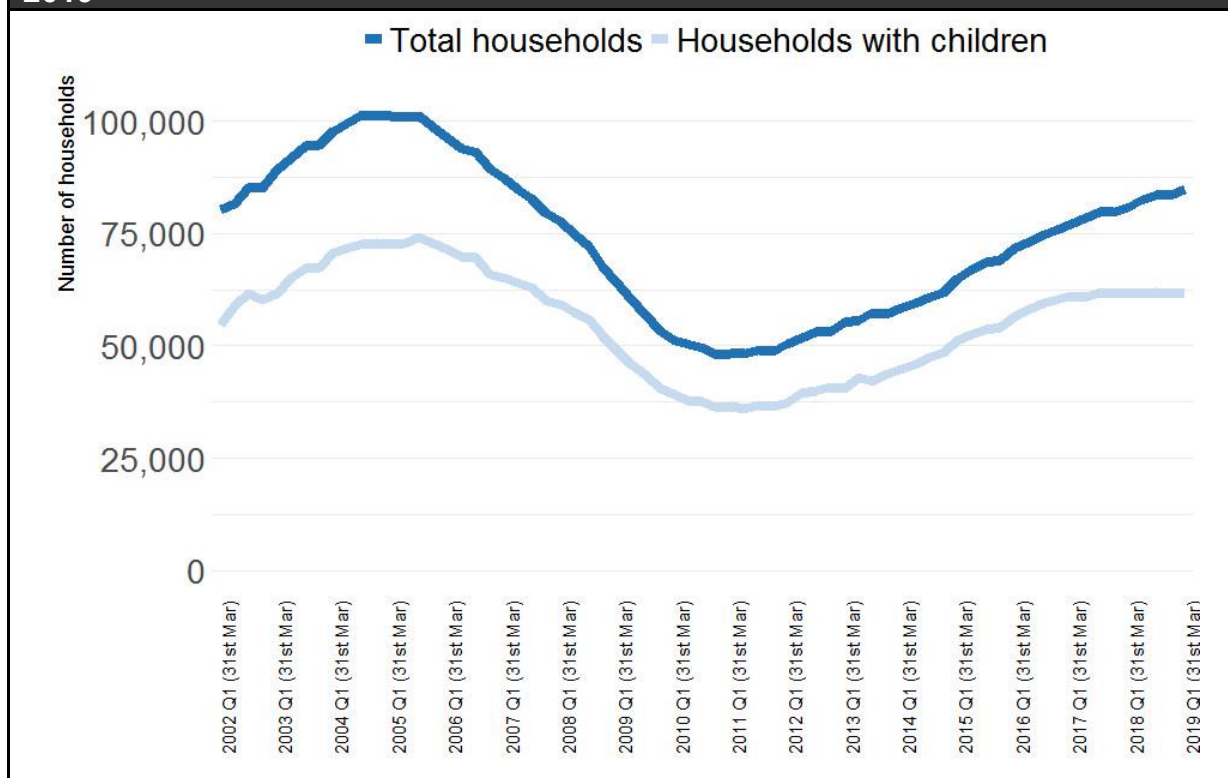
Temporary accommodation stock has been reported by local authorities through a combination of P1E summary and H-CLIC case level returns throughout the 2018/19 financial year. Local authorities had the choice of using either return or both to submit accurate temporary accommodation data. Despite offering this flexibility, many local authorities were still unable to provide accurate temporary accommodation data. This means more local authority level data has been imputed in this section than the rest of this release.

Complete temporary accommodation data was provided by 296 (91%) local authorities. 23 local authorities either provided no temporary accommodation figures or their figures were incomplete and could not be used. Figures for these households have been imputed. 7 local authorities provided temporary accommodation totals but no reliable breakdowns by type of temporary accommodation or no numbers of households in TA - these breakdowns were estimated. This is a higher number than expected and as a result, caution should be taken when using and interpreting the temporary accommodation data, especially when comparing data to previous quarters based on the P1E returns. Further details on these issues can be found in the [technical note](#).

Unlike other data in this release temporary accommodation is a snapshot at the end of the quarter. It is not a cumulative total of all placements across a quarter. The number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter includes households which are:

- awaiting a decision on whether a main duty is owed under a new application or reapplication
- awaiting a decision on whether a referral has been accepted under local connection arrangements
- undergoing a local authority review or county court appeal
- under a relief duty and have or may have priority need so eligible for temporary accommodation.
- homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need and owed the main homelessness duty
- intentionally homeless and have priority need and are being accommodated for a limited period.

Figure 12: Number of households in temporary accommodation, 2002 to Q1 2019



On 31 March 2019, the total number of households in temporary accommodation arranged by local authorities under homelessness legislation was 84,740. This was 5.0% higher than the 80,720 households reported a year earlier and up 76.5% on the low of 48,010 on 31 December 2010.–In London the number of households in

temporary accommodation at 31 March 2019 was 56,280, 66.4% of the total England figure.

The corresponding figures for London and Rest of England and the percentage changes are shown in Table 2.

Table 2⁷: Households accommodated in temporary accommodation at 30 March 2019 compared to previous quarter and year, England, London and Rest of England

	31 March 2019	Previous quarter: 31 December 2019		Same quarter last year: 31 March 2018	
	Households in TA	Households in TA	Percentage change	Households in TA	Percentage change
England	84,740	83,610	1.4%	80,720	5.0%
London	56,280	56,550	No change	55,440	1.5%
Rest of England	28,470	27,060	5.2%	25,280	12.6%

*No change refers to changes of less than +/-1%

Comparing the number of households in temporary accommodation to the population size in an area gives a measure of its use. In England there were approximately 3.65 households living in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households at the end of March 2019. There were approximately 16.02 cases per 1,000 households in London and 1.44 cases per 1,000 households in the Rest of England.

Types of temporary accommodation

Of the total 84,740 households living in temporary accommodation on 31 March 2019, 71,980 (or 84.9%) were in self-contained accommodation. The number of households in temporary accommodation with shared facilities (bed and breakfast and hostels including women's refuges) was 12,760, or 15.1% of all households. Of the households sharing facilities, there were 7,040 households living in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation (privately owned accommodation in which facilities are shared), which is an increase of 14.8% from 6,130 at the same time last year.

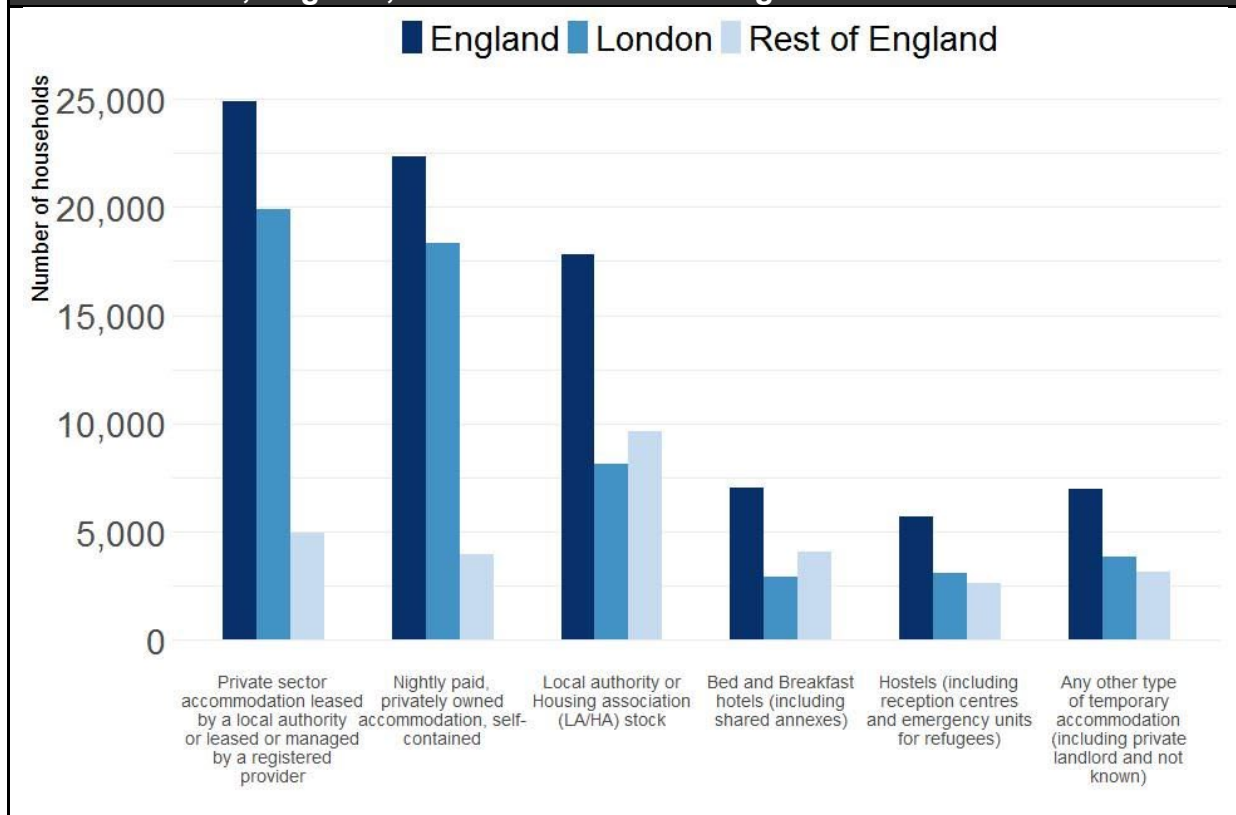
The rise in B&B placements has been driven by an increase in single households being accommodated. The number of households with children in B&Bs has remained unchanged compared to the same time last year. This corresponds with an increase in temporary accommodation figures since March 2018. The B&B increase

⁷See Live Table TA1: Number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter by temporary accommodation type <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

is due partly to the Homelessness Reduction Act and partly to local authorities' work improving the quality of the data they provide. Improvements concern the classification between nightly-paid self-contained accommodation and nightly paid shared facilities, which we report as B&B. These improvements account for 235 households out of the 910 household increase in B&B use. Further details on the data quality issues can be found in the [technical note](#).

Figure 13 shows a breakdown of households by temporary accommodation type.

Figure 13: Households in temporary accommodation by type of accommodation, 31 March 2019, England, London and Rest of England



Children in temporary accommodation

Of the 84,740 households in temporary accommodation on 31 March 2019, 62,010 households or 73.2% included 126,020 dependent children. The average number of children in households in temporary accommodation is 2.0 children. Of the 62,010 households with children, 56,530 (91.2%) were in self-contained accommodation.

There were 2,190 households in B&B with dependent children, 31.1% of the 7,040 households in B&B accommodation. The number of households with children in B&B

is the same as the same quarter last year. Of the 2,190 households with children in B&B, 810 had been resident for more than the statutory limit of 6 weeks. This is down 5.8% from 860 on the 30 December 2018 and up 2.5% from 790 on 31 March 2018.

The corresponding figures for the previous quarter and same quarter the previous year, and percentage changes, are shown in Table 3.

Table 3⁸: Households accommodated in Bed and Breakfast temporary accommodation at 31 March 2019 with comparisons to previous quarter and year, England

	31 March 2019	Previous quarter: 30 December 2018		Same quarter last year: 31 March 2018	
	Households in B&B	Households in B&B	Percentage change	Households in B&B	Percentage change
Total households in B&B	7,040	6,730	4.6%	6,130	14.8%
Households in B&B with dependent children	2,190	2,230	-1.8%	2,190	No change
<i>Of which: resident for more than 6 weeks</i>	810	860	-5.8%	790	2.5%

The number of households in temporary accommodation in another local authority district was 22,380. This is a decrease of 300 from the 22,080 households reported the same time the previous year, 31st March 2018. 20,020 households or 89.5% of out of borough placements were from London boroughs.

⁶ See Live Table TA1: Number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter by temporary accommodation type

9. Accompanying tables

Accompanying tables are available to download alongside this release. References to previously published tables are included where comparisons are possible.

Initial assessments tables

A1: Initial assessment of homelessness duty owed to households

A2: Reason for loss of last settled home for those owed a prevention or relief duty

A3: Support needs of main applicant and household members for those owed a prevention or relief duty

A4: Accommodation at time of application for those owed a prevention or relief duty

A5p: Household type at time of application for those owed a prevention duty

A5r: Household type at time of application for those owed a relief duty

A6: Age of main applicants owed prevention or relief duty

A7: Households referred to a local authority prior to initial assessment

A8: Ethnicity of main applicants owed a prevention or relief duty by local authority

A9: Nationality of main applicants owed a prevention or relief duty by local authority

A10: Employment status of main applicants owed a prevention or relief duty by local authority

A11: Reason for eligibility of main applicants owed a prevention or relief duty by local authority

Prevention duty outcomes tables

P1: Reason for households' prevention duty ending by local authority

P2: Type of accommodation secured for households at end of prevention duty by local authority

P3: Main prevention activity that resulted in accommodation secured for households at end of prevention duty

P4: Destination of households with alternative accommodation secured at end of prevention duty

P5: Household type of households with accommodation secured at end of prevention duty

Relief duty outcomes tables

R1: Reason for households' relief duty ending by local authority

R2: Type of accommodation secured for households at end of relief duty by local authority

R3: Main relief activity that resulted in accommodation secured for households at end of relief duty by local authority

R4: Destination of households with accommodation secured at end of relief duty by local authority

R5: Household type of households with accommodation secured at end of relief duty by local authority

[Main duty decisions & outcomes tables](#)

MD1: Main duty decisions for households by local authority

MD1 TS: Main duty decisions for households by quarter

MD2: Reason the main duty ended by local authority

MD3: Priority need category of households owed main duty by local authority

MD3 TS: Priority need category of households owed main duty by quarter

[Temporary accommodation tables](#)

TA1 TS: Households in temporary accommodation by quarter

TA1: Local authority breakdowns of households in temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter by type

TA2 TS: Household types in temporary accommodation by quarter

TA2: Household types in temporary accommodation by local authority

The above tables can be accessed at:

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

Related MHCLG statistical releases are available at:

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

9. Additional information

Definitions

Eligible households: are those that meet eligibility criteria, which broadly concern UK immigration status and whether the household is habitually resident in the UK. Eligibility is an extremely complex aspect of the legislation, and more information is available in Chapter 7 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-7-eligibility-for-assistance>

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017: This act commenced on 3rd April 2018, and amended Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 ("the 1996 Act"), and the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012. It placed duties on local housing authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness and to take reasonable steps to help those who become homeless to secure accommodation. The HRA provisions require local housing authorities to provide homelessness advice services to all residents in their area and expands the

categories of people who they have to help to find accommodation. A Code of Guidance on the homelessness legislation, updated to incorporate the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities>.

Intentionally homeless: Households who have lost accommodation as a result of actions that they took or failed to take. This may include households who have given up suitable accommodation without good reason or have been evicted due to rent arrears or other breach of tenancy conditions.

Threatened with homelessness: Following the introduction of the HRA, an applicant is threatened with homelessness if it is likely they will become homeless within 56 days, or if they have been served with a valid Section 21 notice to end an Assured Shorthold Tenancy which expires within 56 days. Prior to the introduction of the HRA an applicant was accepted as owed duties if they were threatened with homelessness within 28 days.

H-CLIC: A case level data return used by local authorities to report information to MHCLG from April 2018. It collects information on the homelessness legislation as amended by the 2017 HRA. Information from these returns has been published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on Statutory homelessness in England, a statistical release which is currently experimental.

Households for whom a duty is owed, but no accommodation has been secured: these are households who have been accepted as being owed a homelessness accommodation duty and for whom arrangements have been made for them, with consent, to remain in their existing accommodation (or to make their own arrangements) for the immediate future. This was previously referred to as “Homeless at Home”. Before the second quarter of 2005, figures were also collected on those potentially in this category but whose application was still under consideration pending a decision.

Main homelessness duty acceptance: A household who is accepted by the LA as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falling within a priority need group (as defined by homelessness legislation - see below) during the quarter are referred to as “main duty acceptances”. The main homelessness duty is to secure accommodation until such time as the duty ends, usually through an offer of settled accommodation.

P1E: Was a quarterly local authority return, used by MHCLG to report on statutory homelessness in England until March 2018. The purpose of the quarterly P1E forms was to collect summary data from English local housing authorities on their responsibilities under homelessness legislation. It also included a section on homelessness prevention and relief. Information from these returns has been published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in Statutory homelessness in England, a quarterly statistical release.

Part 6 offer: An offer of social housing made to a homeless household through the local authority's housing allocation scheme

Prevention Duty: The new prevention duty is owed to eligible households threatened with becoming homeless within 56 days. The duty is owed irrespective of local connection, priority need or intentional homelessness, and lasts for up to 56 days. The local authority may choose to extend the prevention duty beyond 56 days if the applicant has not yet become homeless, in order to continue activities to prevent their homelessness. The duty is to take reasonable steps to prevent the applicant from becoming homeless. These steps are set out in a personalised housing plan which is, wherever possible, agreed with the applicant.

Priority need: The legislation provides that some categories of applicants have a priority need for accommodation if homeless, whereas others do not. Applicants who have priority need include households with dependent children or a pregnant woman, people homeless due to fire, flood or other emergency, and people who are particularly vulnerable due to ill health, disability, old age, having been in custody or care, or having become homeless due to violence or the threat of violence. A full explanation of priority need groups and assessments is contained in Chapter 8 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance.

Refusal to cooperate: As part of the prevention and relief duties introduced by the HRA, local authorities are able to issue a notice bringing a household's prevention or relief duties to an end if the applicant deliberately and unreasonably refuses to cooperate with the required steps. Before ending duties in this way the local authority must issue a warning to the applicant, and must have in place a procedure to ensure such decisions are taken fairly.

Relief Duty: The new relief duty is owed to eligible households who are actually homeless, irrespective of priority need or intentional homelessness, and lasts for up to 56 days. The local authority may only extend the relief duty beyond 56 days if the applicant is not owed the main homelessness duty. The duty is to relieve the applicant's homelessness by taking reasonable steps to help secure suitable accommodation that will be available for at least 6 months. These steps are set out in a personalised housing plan which is, wherever possible, agreed with the applicant.

Self-contained accommodation: this includes all temporary accommodation where the household has sole use of kitchen and bathroom facilities, including property held by local housing authorities, registered social landlords and private sector landlords. A distinction is made between this type of accommodation and accommodation where such facilities are shared with other households (i.e. bed and breakfast, hostels and women's refuges).

Statutory homelessness: covers all eligible households who are owed a homelessness duty by a local authority. A household is considered statutorily

homeless if a local authority decides that they do not have a legal right to occupy accommodation that is accessible, physically available and which would be reasonable for the household to continue to live in. The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, Localism Act 2011 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) determines the legal duties on local authorities towards homeless households and households threatened with homelessness.

Temporary accommodation: households in temporary accommodation (secured by a local housing authority under their statutory homelessness functions. The majority of households in temporary accommodation have been placed under the main homelessness duty to secure suitable accommodation until the duty ends, usually through an offer of a settled home. However, the numbers also include households owed a relief duty and provided with interim accommodation, households provided with accommodation pending a decision on their homelessness application, households pending a review or appeal to the county court of the decision on their case, or possible referral to another local authority, and households found to be intentionally homeless and in priority need who were being accommodated for such period as would give them a reasonable opportunity to find accommodation for themselves.

Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Statistics and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government **Revisions Policy** (found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-MHCLG-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.

Scheduled Revisions

Local authorities can update their HCLIC returns following publication of the data. At the end of each financial year, the figures for the eight quarters of the previous two years are routinely reviewed for revision. Q1-3 releases revise figures for the previous two quarters. Provisional figures are labelled in the tables with a "P".

Revised figures are labelled in the tables with "R". These revisions are kept to a minimum wherever possible by encouraging local authorities to submit their data early. This allows MHCLG to run validation checks on data and check any unusual movements in data with affected local authorities. Where larger revisions are made more information will be provided in the footnotes of the statistical tables and the updated release, where changes impact on the headline numbers.

Revisions to historic data (all data older than that currently due for scheduled revision) will be made only where there is a substantial revision, such as a change in methodology or definition.

Coverage

The latest quarter's figures are based on full or partial returns for 319 out of 326 local authorities (97.9% response rate).

Initial assessment: 9 local authorities were unable to provide initial assessment information. For 5 of the authorities that failed to provide this information their data was imputed from previous returns in 2018/19.

Prevention and relief: 13 out of 326 local authorities did not provide prevention and relief information, 5 were not imputed.

Main duty: 21 out of 326 local authorities did not provide this main duty information, 4 were not imputed and a further 10 authorities were suspected to have under or over reported their main duty decisions data this quarter so their figures were imputed.

Main duty end: 15 local authorities failed to provide accurate information on end of main duty for January to March of which 11 have been imputed.

Temporary accommodation: 23 local authorities either provided no temporary accommodation figures or their figures were incomplete and could not be used. Figures for these households have been imputed. 7 local authorities provided temporary accommodation totals but no reliable breakdowns by type of temporary accommodation or no numbers of households in TA - these breakdowns were estimated.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's statistical quality guidelines are published here:

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

Uses of the data

These data form the basis of evidence on homelessness duties. Ministers and officials in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government use this information to understand the scale and causes of homelessness and to consider possible policy responses. 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. They are used by MHCLG Ministers to help determine local authority performance for the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act. This includes assessing the performance of OGDs under the duty to refer. They are also used to allocate resources, monitor performance and to support bids for funding from the Treasury. For example the data was used in December 2015 to allocate £5m of funding towards areas with the highest use of temporary accommodation.

Other government departments also use the statistics, including DWP (monitoring those in temporary accommodation in receipt of housing benefit), DH (Public Health Outcomes Framework), DfE (Child poverty needs assessment toolkit for local authorities) and Defra (sustainable development indicators). Local housing authorities are both providers and users of the statistics and use the data extensively 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. These statistics along with our annual rough sleeping count regularly feature in reports from Homelesslink, Crisis, Shelter and other homeless organisations.

User engagement

Following this publication of the January-March 2019 statistical release, MHCLG is seeking views on the Statutory Homelessness statistical release and live tables to help ensure that it delivers usable, informative data to those interested in statutory homelessness. Users of the statistics are encouraged to provide feedback on their use of the release, tables and other supporting information in an online consultation survey which is available here:

https://www.research.net/r/MHCLG_Homelessness_Statistics_Consultation_Survey

In the survey users are also asked to provide suggestions for content to be discussed at homelessness statistics user events, which are planned for Spring 2020. The online survey closes midnight on 31st October 2019.

Comments on any issues relating to this statistical release can also be addressed to

the "Public enquiries" contact given in the "Enquiries" section below or suggestions for future releases to homelessnessstats@communities.gov.uk.

The Government wants to ensure that this new ambitious legislation is working for all, and local government and its partners have the tools and support to effectively implement and operate the Act. This is why the Government committed to reviewing the implementation of the Act and how it is working in practice, including a review of new burdens funding provided to ensure that the Act could be implemented successfully. The review will provide important insight and will shape the Government's future plans.

The review will be run by MHCLG has two complimentary components running in parallel:

- External evaluation commissioned by MHCLG
- Intensive engagement by MHCLG with a wide range of stakeholders from local government and other sectors.

A website has been created to keep users up to date with all the latest developments in MHCLG's homelessness statistics. It contains details of user events and information about planned developments. Further information on the timescales for the consultation of user feedback will also be published on this forum:

<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/user-facing-pages/mhclg-homelessness-statistics-user-forum/>

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>

The UK Statistics Authority has published an assessment of the Department's homelessness and rough sleeping statistics in 2015 these are available at:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publications-list/?keyword=homelessness+assesment&type=assessment-report&theme=&producer=&date=&number.>

Improvements were made to the statutory homelessness statistics in response to this report. One of these changes was the move to Experimental Statistics. Correspondence about this change in designation can be found here:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Ed-Humpherson-to-Sandra-Tudor-regarding-changes-to-statutory-homelessness-statistics-0.2-1.pdf>

The H-CLIC data specification was produced after consultation with charities, local authorities, local authority homelessness case management system software suppliers, other government departments and the Scottish Government, who moved to a case level reporting system in 2001. The final draft H-CLIC data requirement was shared with local authorities in August 2018. Feedback received on the data requirement meant the draft was revised until January 2018. Minor amendments to the H-CLIC data requirement have been published as revisions on the homelessness statistics user forum website from January 2018. During the development and QA process MHCLG have been in continued contact with software suppliers and local authorities via phone, email and face to face meetings. Software suppliers have been invited into the Department to discuss the data specification and reporting set up. Local authorities have consulted on the collection and burdens of the process via the Central and Local Government Information Partnership Housing group.

Notes

Pre release access

Details of officials who receive pre-release access to the Department's quarterly Statutory Homelessness Statistical Release up to 24 hours before release can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics>

Related links and statistics

Rough sleeping

MHCLG conduct an annual single night snapshot of rough sleeping each autumn and publish this separately. This count/estimate is used to track annual changes in the population. The latest 2018 statistics published on 31st January 2019 reported 4,677 individuals rough sleeping in England. Further breakdowns can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2018>.

The number of people owed a homelessness duty will include some but not all people rough sleeping in this count.

A further source of data on rough sleeping is from the Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN). CHAIN is a multi-agency database recording information about people seen rough sleeping by outreach teams in London. CHAIN is managed by St Mungo's, a London-based homeless charity, and is used by

organisations working with people sleeping rough in London. Information is recorded onto the CHAIN database by people who work directly with people sleeping rough in London (e.g. workers in outreach teams, day centres, hostels and resettlement teams). CHAIN does not cover 'hidden homeless' groups, such as those who are squatting or staying in inaccessible locations to outreach workers.

There will be some overlap between rough sleeping households in this release and the rough sleepers in the annual autumn count and estimates and in the CHAIN dataset, the extent of this overlap is unknown and is likely to differ at local authority level.

Hidden Homelessness

This group includes people who live in overcrowded, insecure or uninhabitable conditions. Many people in this group do not present to the local authority for help and are sometimes unaware they would be considered statutory homeless. For this reason, the group are called hidden homeless with only a small proportion appearing in Official Statistics. This makes quantifying the number of hidden homelessness difficult.

MHCLG produce other statistics releases that can help build up the wider homelessness picture. The English Housing Survey (EHS) is a national survey of people's housing circumstances. This includes breakdowns on the additional adults in a household who wanted to rent or buy but could not afford to do so. As part of the EHS interview, households are asked some questions about all members of the household, including the circumstances of additional adults in the household such as grown-up children, nieces and nephews, adult siblings, or parents or grandparents who might otherwise be living elsewhere. There are many possible reasons that additional adults might be living as part of a household, including caring responsibilities, being cared for by another household member, waiting to move into their own property, and simply preferring to live as part of the household. Data on concealed households, a subset of hidden homeless can be found in MHCLG's English Housing Survey Statistics here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2017-to-2018-headline-report>

Information on lettings of local authority and private registered provider properties in England are collected on the CORE (COntinuous REcording of Lettings and Sales in Social Housing) system. This includes information on whether lettings have been

made to statutorily homeless households and homeless households not covered by a local authority's statutory duty. The CORE social lettings includes lettings for Local Authority/ Private Registered Providers. The CORE social lettings Official Statistics can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rents-lettings-and-tenancies>

An on-line analysis tool is available at:

<https://core.communities.gov.uk/public/AnalyseCOREData.html>

Statistics on local authority revenue expenditure and financing in England can be found at the following link. The RO4 return within the Revenue Outturn suite relates to housing services and includes information on local authorities' expenditure on homelessness activities:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing>

Devolved administration statistics

In **Scotland**, local authorities' homelessness duties under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 have been substantially amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003. The 2001 Act extended the duties towards non-priority homeless households, ensuring they are provided with a minimum of temporary accommodation, advice and assistance. The 2003 Act introduced many changes, of which the target to abolish the priority need test by 2012 was the most significant. The target states that, by 31 March 2012, everyone assessed as being unintentionally homeless would be entitled to settled accommodation.

Local authorities currently make enquiries as to whether the person is homeless, whether they have a priority need, whether they made themselves homeless intentionally, and whether they have a local connection with the local authority. However, the 2003 Act has removed or substantially amended the priority need, intentionality and local connection stages.

The most recent statutory homelessness statistics for Scotland are available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/?term=homelessness&topics=Statistics&page=1>

Welsh homelessness legislation was governed by the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) until superseded by part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 which obtained Royal Assent in September 2014. The homelessness provisions came into force on 27 April 2015 (with the exception of provisions on intentionality, which came into force on 1 July 2015).

Changes to the legislation are explained here:

<https://gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/services-and-support/homelessness/new-homelessness-legislation/?lang=en>

The most recent homelessness statistics for Wales are available at:

https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research?keywords=homelessness&%20All%20=All&field_stats_research_type%5B1%5D=1&%20All%20=All&published_after=&published_before=

The governing legislation for homelessness in Northern Ireland is the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 (as amended). Unlike the other three UK nations, housing is allocated by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), which covers the whole of Northern Ireland, rather than by local authorities.

In **Northern Ireland** statistics on homelessness are obtained from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). Under the Housing (NI) Order 1988, NIHE has a similar statutory responsibility to secure permanent accommodation for households who are unintentionally homeless and in priority need; to secure temporary accommodation in a variety of circumstances and to provide advice and assistance to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. However, Northern Ireland have slight differences in the definition of priority need. They also have an additional requirement to decide who is eligible. Someone can be deemed ineligible as a result of 'unacceptable behaviour' in previously held Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) tenancy. The most recent statutory homelessness statistics for Northern Ireland are available at:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/housing-statistics>

Comparing between countries

The devolved administrations are working with the ONS to produce guidance on the comparability of datasets across the UK. The house of commons library have produced a guide to comparing the legislation that can be found here: <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7201>.

ONS have also produced a document about how this affects the comparability of statistics that can be found here:

<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/GSS-homelessness-report-1.pdf>

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 on the 3rd April 2018 England statistics are no longer closely comparable to Northern Ireland data. However, the removal of priority need and introduction of new duties means that the

data is more closely comparable to Scottish and Welsh data than previously. These differences in legislation can be quite complex and the GSS harmonisation team are working on a conceptual framework to help users of UK homelessness statistics understand the similarities and differences of these datasets. Updates about this work can be found here: <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/homelessness/>.

Enquiries

Media enquiries:

0303 444 1209

Email: newsdesk@communities.gov.uk

Public enquiries:

Email: homelessnessstats@communities.gov.uk

Information on Official Statistics is available via the UK Statistics Authority website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements>

Information about statistics at MHCLG is available via the Department's website:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics

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If you have any enquiries regarding this document/publication, email contactus@communities.gov.uk or write to us at:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF
Telephone: 030 3444 0000

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