



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Statutory Homelessness April to June (Q2) 2020: England

Technical Note

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Experimental statistics status

From 1st April 2018 the **Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC)** data system replaced the aggregated data return (collected using the **P1E form**) for all new homeless applications. The replacement of the aggregated return coincided with the introduction of new legislation, the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA). This new system collects more detailed data than previously on households, the activities offered to assist them, and their outcomes. The H-CLIC data specification, with detailed guidance for each field and guidance on how to enter the data through MHCLG's DELTA system, are all available on a dedicated Homelessness Statistics User Forum webpage <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/user-facing-pages/mhclg-homelessness-statistics-user-forum/>. MHCLG have also published a series of newsletters about progress on the H-CLIC project which are also available on the user forum.

This release is categorised as experimental statistics to reflect the new methods of collection and aggregation of case level data via H-CLIC. The quality of data in this publication is being continually improved, and the data presented will be revised in future quarters. The purpose of publishing this data as experimental statistics is to allow users to use these statistics with an understanding of the quality and limitations.

Missing values are imputed to ensure national headline figures are representative. Since July to September 2019, all local authorities with missing data have provided data for at least one previous quarter, and missing values can therefore be imputed. Prior to July to September 2019, where authorities had failed to submit any H-CLIC data for the new Act since April 2018, imputation was not possible and these authorities were excluded from previous totals. This means the national totals published for the first year were an underestimate, yet to be adjusted. Details of excluded authorities can be found in the detailed local authority (LA) tables.

From the January to March 2020 release we have applied reverse imputation, using the same method as outlined in the Data collection section but in reverse, for those local authorities that failed to submit H-CLIC data prior to July to September 2019. This means that national headline figures have been updated and are now more representative. Figures for July to September 2019 and October to December 2019 have also been re-imputed to correct for any trends caused by those local authorities that previously could not be imputed. These new figures are available in the time series tables within the Statutory Homelessness [Live tables](#). Figures previously published in the Detailed Local Authority tables remain unchanged.

For households in temporary accommodation, missing values have been reduced by allowing local authorities to complete a P1E as well as the H-CLIC return. We have also

allowed main duty data to be submitted via P1E or H-CLIC in all quarters except the April to June 2019 data collection. From April 2020, all local authorities were expected to provide data via H-CLIC rather than P1E, however due to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, this has been delayed. This is explained in more detail in the Data quality section.

The format and content of the release will change as the quality of data in the new fields improves. In order to cut down time needed to produce and quality assure tables for the release some tables will only be published once a year as annual tables by financial year. The annual publication will include all quarterly tables with the addition of the annual tables to provide a more detailed look at the homelessness system. Quality checks between MHCLG and LAs may mean published values and trends may change during the financial year.

Data collection

Local housing authorities report their homelessness activities under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 to MHCLG by completing the quarterly H-CLIC statistical return. H-CLIC is an upload of all cases about statutory homelessness and the authority's activities within the legislative framework. Data in the temporary accommodation and main duty sections is also supplemented by additional data provided through P1E in most quarters, where accurate data through H-CLIC was not available.

1. Rates per 1,000 households have been calculated using the 2018-based household projections for 2020 produced by the Office for National Statistics. These were published on 29th June 2020 and are available at Table 406 at the following link: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/householdprojectionsforengland>
2. National and regional figures in the text and accompanying tables are presented rounded to the nearest 10 households or applicants. Local authority figures provided in the accompanying [Live tables](#) are unrounded. Local authority to regional and regional to national sum totals may not match due to rounding.
3. In tables containing information that is considered sensitive, breakdowns have been suppressed at local authority, regional or national level to protect the identity of individuals. Suppressed data is clearly marked in the live tables and may mean the sum of local authority data provides a lower figure than the regional or national rounded totals.
4. Missing or incomplete local authority data has been imputed and included in national

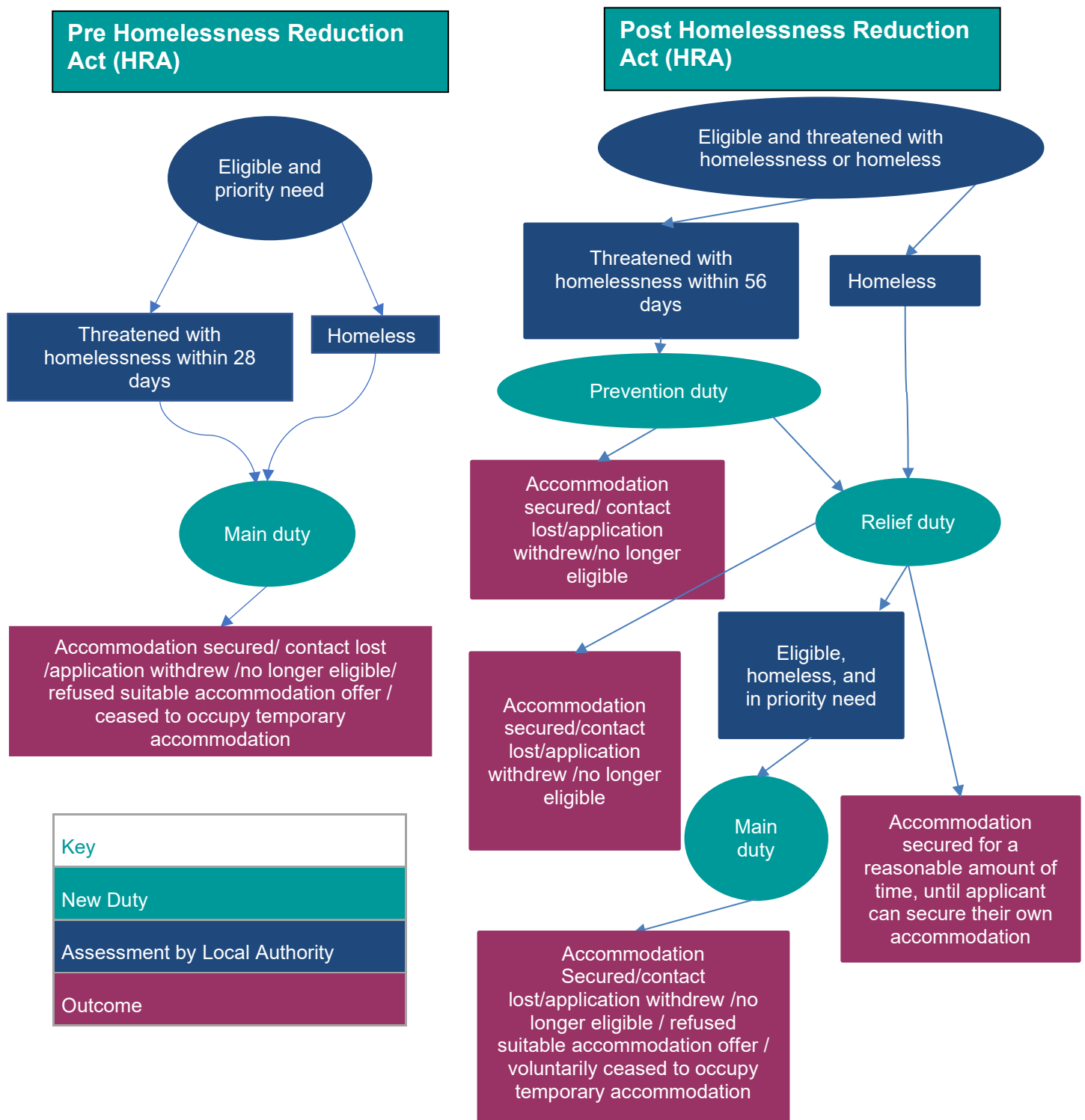
and regional totals. Imputation replaces missing data with an estimated value based on additional information; where local authorities have failed to provide an accurate total, imputation is based on the quarter-on-quarter change observed in groups of local authorities. The groups aim to provide the best estimate for trends by comparing local authorities with similar characteristics, whilst keeping the groups large enough to not be influenced by large unusual changes reported by one authority within a group. From July to September 2019, all LAs with missing data have now provided data for at least one previous quarter, and so all missing values can be imputed.

The three groups we use to impute are: London Boroughs; Unitaries combined with Metropolitan Districts; and Shire Districts. Where local authorities have provided a missing or incomplete breakdown, local authorities' previously submitted data is used to estimate the values using a multiplier based on previous proportional representation within a group.

Comparability between the new H-CLIC case level collection and the old P1E summary return

Some data collected via P1E is **broadly comparable** to data collected via H-CLIC. The new method of reporting means initially any suggestion of recent trends about households in temporary accommodation should be made with caution.

Prevention and relief information collected by H-CLIC cover new legal duties introduced from 3 April 2018, so these are **not comparable** to the activity information collected in P1E.



Prevention and relief data in this release cannot be compared with the prevention and relief activity based on the P1E returns. Through the P1E local authorities were able to report all cases where homelessness was prevented, whether or not a homelessness application had been taken. Data submissions included, for example, households who had been provided with assistance through a third-party organisation funded by the local authority to provide services that helped to prevent homelessness, such as money advice services. Prevention data reported in this release are based on case level information on homelessness applications and should only include data on prevention activity when a homelessness application has been made. Relief was previously discretionary to those not owed a main duty.

The definition of main duty acceptances remains the same, but the introduction of the new prevention and relief duties mean there are now steps local authorities take with households before they reach a main duty. This means it no longer includes households threatened with homelessness within 28 days. Any inferences about trends in main duty acceptances pre-HRA compared to post-HRA should be made with caution.

Temporary accommodation (TA) figures remain the most consistent with historical data; the criteria for temporary accommodation have not changed. An increase in households without children has been observed. We are working with LAs to understand this increase but it may be due to the number of households being offered TA whilst their circumstances and needs are assessed rather than those who are priority need and owed a s193(2) TA duty.

H-CLIC is a household case level data collection and contains **new information not collected in the P1E return**. H-CLIC includes some information on all individuals within the household and not just the main applicant. This release includes numbers of initial assessments, prevention and relief activities, main duty homelessness acceptances, and the number of households in temporary accommodation.

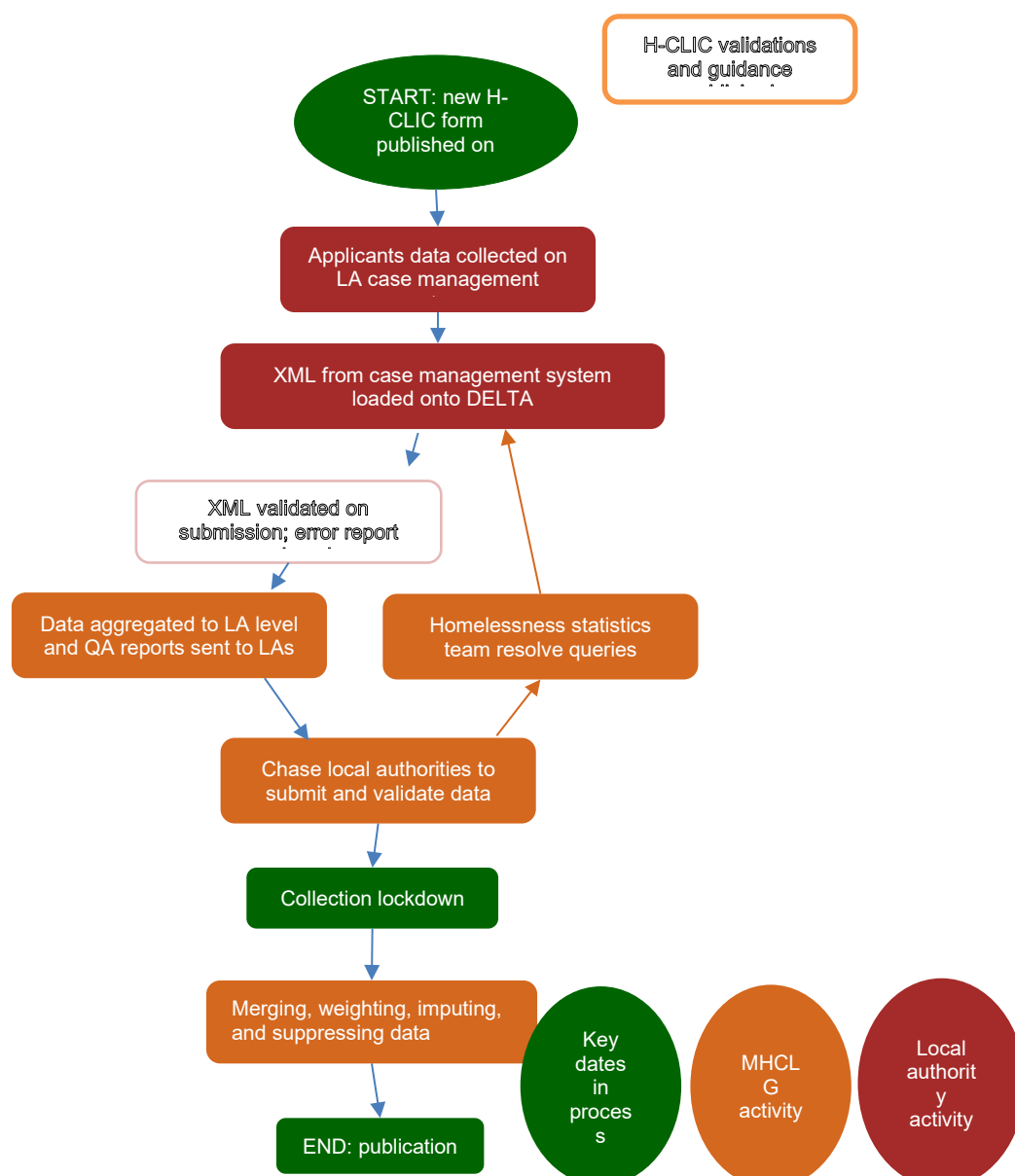
More information and guidance about the H-CLIC data collection can be found:
<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/guidances/mhclg-homelessness-statistics-user-forum/>

Data quality

All H-CLIC returns submitted by local housing authorities undergo thorough validation and cross-checking and late returns are chased to ensure overall response is as complete and accurate as possible. Local authorities are given a minimum of six weeks to submit accurate data and reminded when they fail to submit. Any missing returns after this period are omitted or imputed in the release. These are referenced in the main release and associated live tables. Details of coverage, including imputations, by section of the release are in the Coverage section in the main statistical release.

The diagram below shows the data collection and submission process, QA checks and feedback between local authorities and MHCLG during the process.

For initial assessments, prevention and relief outcomes and wider information related to these cases.

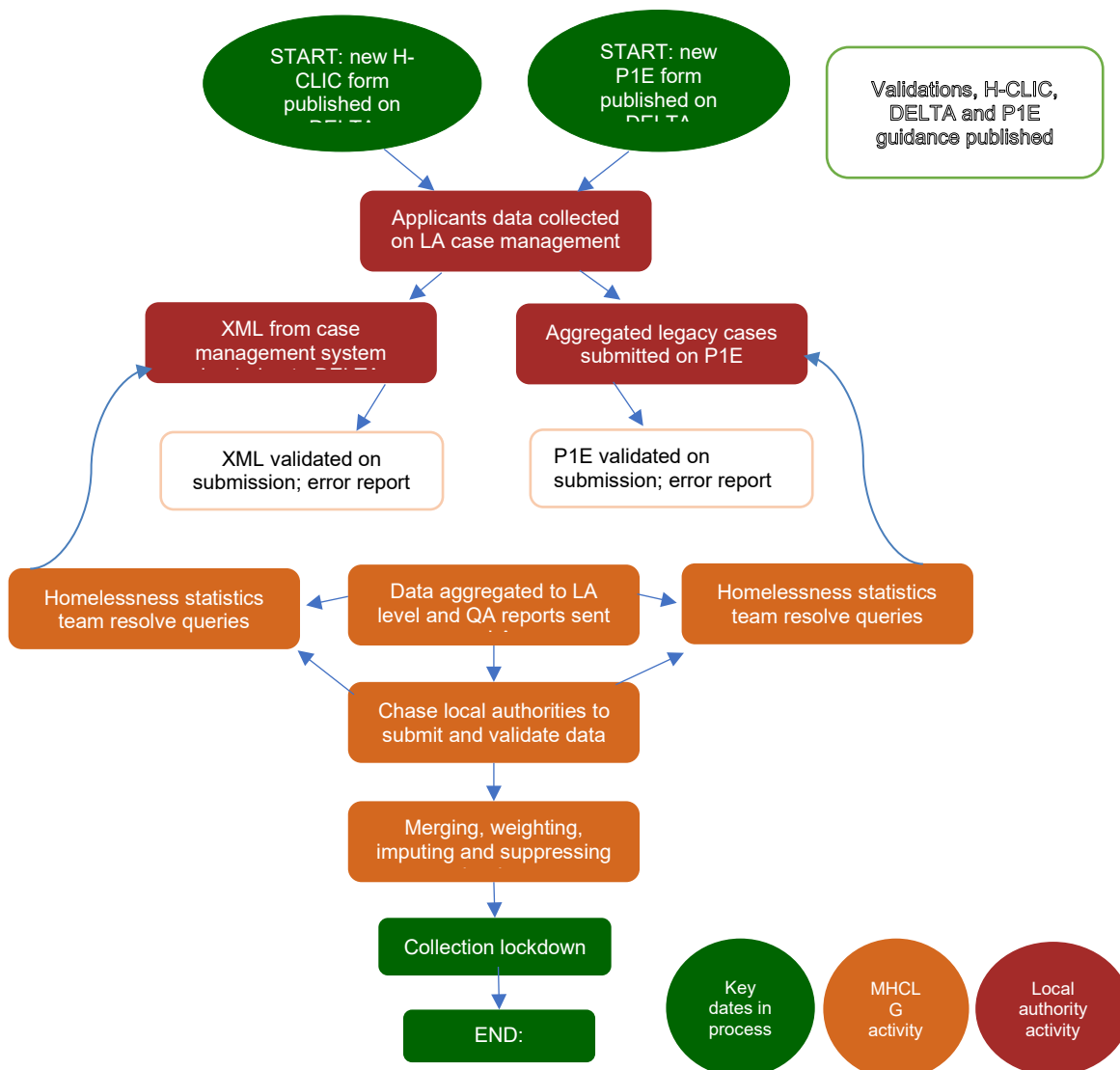


Case data is reported by local authorities onto the DELTA data collection platform. On upload a case level error report is instantly available to authorities by case ID. This allows local authorities to fix any case issues in their own systems. During the collection period and following the deadline, a summary level data QA report is made available on DELTA to the local authorities. This report contains some of the metrics we plan to publish in the release. Any inconsistencies with the previous quarter or anomalous use of certain fields are flagged in these reports and local authorities can mark metrics as approved or not approved for publication. Local authorities fix their data and / or report any system issues to their software suppliers. A new updated summary return is available each week, if authorities update their submission.

After the local authority returns phase is complete MHCLG collate the information and perform final QA, where any unexplained unusual local authority level changes are further chased with the authority. Moving quality assurance reports onto DELTA has created some improvements. LAs can now approve or not approve summary totals individually, and provide comment on each large change, to give more granular detail and context to figures. Response rate for QA reports has also increased substantially, with over 80% of Local Authorities using the QA report for their April to June 2020 submission.

Any issues raised by local authorities are logged throughout the process. Where system based issues are identified these are then raised with the software supplier. Conversations with suppliers then lead to improvements in guidance, a correction to MHCLG collection or the software supplier reporting systems or a combination of all of these to resolve the issue.

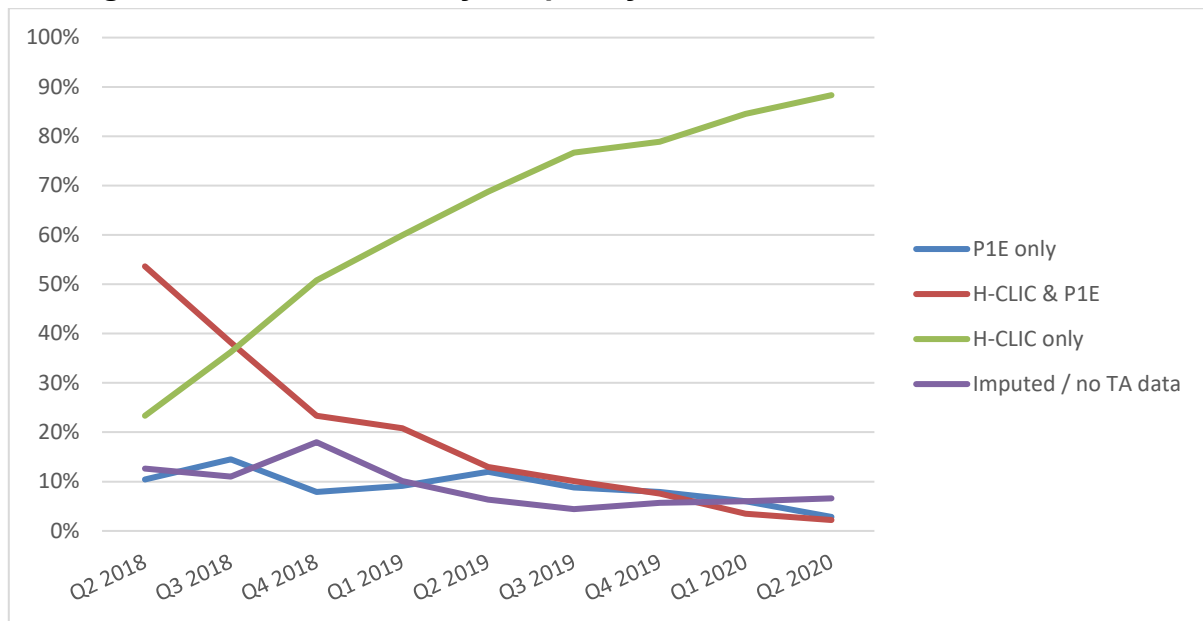
For temporary accommodation data



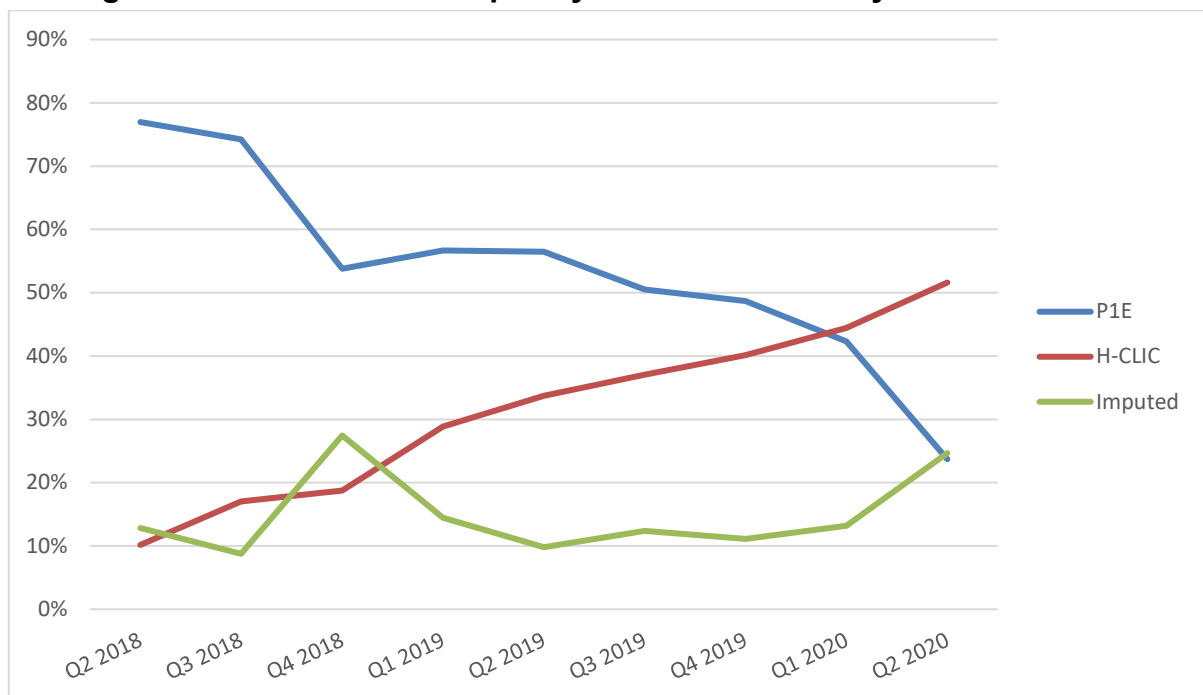
Before April 2020, local authorities were able to opt to provide temporary accommodation (TA) through P1E as well as H-CLIC. Main duty data could also be provided via P1E or H-CLIC in all quarters except the April to June 2019 release. Local authorities provided this information using P1E, H-CLIC or both. This flexibility was provided to ensure the best data quality was achieved during the transition. Additional steps were taken for these authorities to ensure no duplication or omission of data occurred.

From April 2020, all local authorities were expected to provide data via H-CLIC rather than P1E, however due to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, this has been delayed. Where local authorities have been unable to provide data via H-CLIC for the April to June 2020 release, they have been able to provide data via P1E. We are continuing to work with local authorities to phase out use of the P1E system and move to a H-CLIC only system.

Percentage of local authorities by temporary accommodation submission method



Percentage of national total in temporary accommodation by submission method

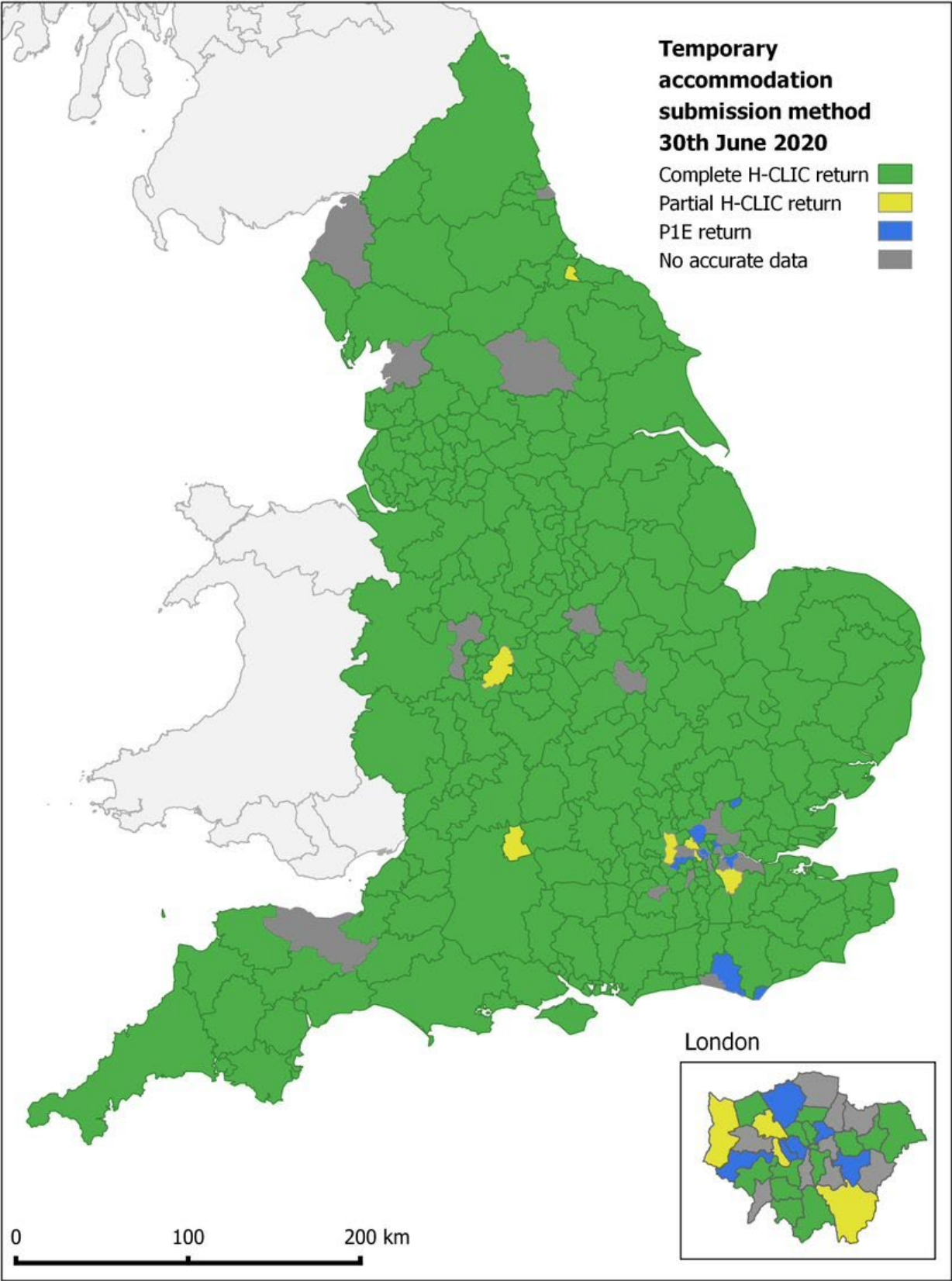


The proportion of local authorities providing case-level temporary accommodation data through H-CLIC has risen from 23% in the first quarter to 88% in the latest collection. This is largely due to fewer local authorities requiring P1E to report legacy (pre-HRA) cases in temporary accommodation. Pre HRA cases are typically stored on a separate software system that cannot export data in H-CLIC format.

Around 10% of local authorities have consistently submitted aggregated temporary accommodation data through P1E only. Authorities with the largest temporary

accommodation usage are significantly represented among those reliant on P1E, which is why 24% of the national total in temporary accommodation continues to be provided on the pre HRA collection system. We are working with these authorities to overcome the technical difficulties in moving temporary accommodation reporting to an accurate, case-level data return on H-CLIC. This is being achieved through the central and local government information partnership group for housing, where local authorities have the opportunity to feedback on any issues and developments.

A map showing temporary accommodation submission methods in England.¹



Produced by Homelessness Statistics Team, MHCLG
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Data sources: OS boundary line,
Local authority HCLIC returns

QA principles, standards and checks applied by data suppliers

Most software suppliers have incorporated the H-CLIC reporting requirement into their case management systems. Software suppliers and local authorities were invited to test their XML extracts during May to June 2018. H-CLIC is an XML data submission, uploaded to MHCLG's DELTA² data collection system. The DELTA system checks the format of H-CLIC files, and the fields in each case are checked using schema validation tool. The schema checks are XPath coded scripts that test the validity of the data structure. Once the data has been uploaded onto DELTA the values submitted in each case are checked for consistency. Any omitted fields or inconsistent reporting variables are validated using a validation report that is shared immediately with the authority on the DELTA website. Local authorities reporting this data are required to check and correct the inconsistencies. MHCLG welcome feedback on any issues resulting from these and work with authorities to continually improve the process.

Additionally, there are number of local authorities who have not adopted a H-CLIC compatible reporting requirement. These include Kingston upon Thames, Oxford, Melton, and Swindon, among others, who manually fill out case level form and their data is less reliable. We are working with those affected to adopt systems in the future. Data for these LAs is more likely to be omitted from the published data.

Producer's QA investigations and documentation

Case level validations in DELTA are explained with information flags marked against the reportable fields and text validation messages that help local authorities identify the cause of their mistake. Where a combination of errors are flagged MHCLG have produced a validations glossary that helps local authorities understand and correct these errors.

Many software suppliers have incorporated MHCLG's schematron, a validation script run against the xml file, into local authority systems to enable local authorities to identify and fix errors at the point of collection. This allows the administrative officers who collect the information to resolve any issues at the source.

After local authorities complete their H-CLIC submission on DELTA, MHCLG make quality assurance reports available on DELTA. The reports show summary headline figures for the current quarter's data, along with the previous quarter and the same quarter the previous year. They check for any significant changes against similar fields collected in the previous quarter and highlight any possible issues. These quality assurance reports aggregate

¹ This refers to submissions deemed accurate by MHCLG.

² <https://delta.communities.gov.uk/login>

activity totals for the homelessness duties owed, outcomes, temporary accommodation and several other breakdowns. Local authorities are asked to check these quality reports against their internal reports to confirm if the data is correct. Any large absolute or proportional changes or data artefacts are flagged to authorities with an expectation that these issues would be explained or case data revised to correct for known mistakes.

During the quality assurance process a number of authorities raise concerns with their submission. MHCLG's homelessness statistics team work with these authorities and their software suppliers to resolve any incorrectly formatted data, data omissions or misunderstanding of the data requirement. Lessons have been learned throughout the process and guidance documentation, new documentation and test sites are all made available to continually improve the quality of all local authority submissions. This quality assurance process has significantly improved the data in this release.

Moving quality assurance reports onto DELTA has created some improvements. LAs can now approve or not approve summary totals individually, and provide comment on each large change, to give more granular detail and context to figures. Response rate for QA reports has also increased substantially, with over 80% of Local Authorities using the QA report for their April to June 2020 submission.

Data limitations

Detailed information on the data coverage and limitation per H-CLIC section can be found on the front page of each of the [Live tables](#).

Time series

As discussed in the comparability section of the release, time series may show trends in the data which are either not directly comparable, or due to data quality improvements.

Main duty comparisons before and after the HRA 2017

Although the definition of main duty is similar both pre- and post-HRA, any inferences about trends in main duty acceptances should be made with caution. This is due to changes under the HRA in April 2018 that introduced a minimum 56 day relief duty period for all households irrespective of priority need. In addition households only threatened with homelessness are no longer owed a main duty. This meant that from April 2018, no new case main duty assessments could take place for at least 56 days. It is advised that no strong conclusions are drawn from 2018/19 data due to the minimum 56 day lag in main duty assessments following the introduction of the HRA.

We recommend using 2019-20 main duty acceptance data to compare to 2017-18 or earlier.

The fall in main duty acceptances following the introduction of the HRA was expected as priority need households could be helped out of homelessness under a prevention or relief duty. Main duty comparisons will reflect whether the prevention and relief duties are working to effectively prevent and relieve homelessness for households with priority need.

Initial assessments

Initial assessments include information on the new prevention and relief duties as assessed at the point of application. Applicants who were assessed as being owed a prevention duty at their initial assessment and were subsequently owed a relief duty are only reported as owed a prevention duty in the initial assessment section.

As local authorities adjust to the new system of collecting data, figures may have misreported. For example, some local authorities have previously reported a large proportion of the 'not threatened with homelessness' cases, incorrectly logging 'advice only' cases that were never formally issued a homeless decision under this category. These authorities have worked to correct these mistakes, and data in recent and future quarters may show a decrease in these categories due to improvements in data quality.

Some local authorities may be reporting upstream preventions as prevention duties lasting only one day, which may represent some over-reporting of prevention duties.

One local authority, Kingston upon Thames, appears to be reporting only on the main applicant of each household, resulting in all households being reported as single adult households. However, this effect is thought to be 0.1% on the total. This authority does not have an H-CLIC compliant reporting system.

Prevention and relief

Feedback from local authorities who provided data suggest that prevention and relief activities may have been underreported in April to June 2018, caused by issues with their new software extracting and uploading such data. Many local authorities and software suppliers have since corrected these issues. Therefore, some of the trends from 2018/19 may be an effect of data improvement.

As local authorities get to grips with the new Act, MHCLG's HAST team have been using the H-CLIC data to identify how local authorities are adopting the new legislation, checking fields are being applied correctly where certain categories are higher than expected – refusal to cooperate and prevention duty ends after 56 days and no further action. Further improvements to figures are expected in future quarters.

Main duty

Both H-CLIC and P1E forms were used to collect data in the April to June 2020 data collection. Some users of particular software systems have suggested that their main duty

data is not being exported correctly. We are continually working with local authorities and data suppliers to assist with these issues so quality can be improved.

Main duty figures are the most volatile duty figures reported, and are revised in subsequent quarters. For example, January to March 2020 main duty acceptance figures in this revised release are 2% higher than in the original release, and main duties ended are 5% lower.

It should be noted that many main duty outcomes and a small number of main duty decisions refer to legacy cases – households whose duty began prior to the introduction of the HRA, and therefore did not receive prevention or relief duties. Reviews, reapplication duties, and reassessments, as well as the end of duties, are still occurring for these households.

Temporary accommodation

As part of the initial consultation to move from a P1E summary return to H-CLIC case level submissions local authorities identified a potential issue linking their homeless cases to the associated temporary accommodation placements. To assist local authorities, a transition period was offered where local authorities could separately report temporary accommodation data through the old P1E return as an alternative or addition to H-CLIC. It was up to local authorities to choose the most suitable option. Those local authorities who procured a new software system typically reported via both returns. Whilst those who updated existing software tended to return P1E or H-CLIC. The transition period was intended to end in April 2020, however, due to the impact of COVID-19 this has been delayed. Local authorities who were unable to provide data via H-CLIC for the April to June 2020 release were able to provide data via P1E and we are working with these authorities to support their transition to a H-CLIC only system. Due to the continued use of P1E, breakdowns of temporary accommodation and main duty data are more limited than the H-CLIC data specification suggests.

Double counting of temporary accommodation placements was a risk when collecting information via both P1E and H-CLIC. Where double reporting was suspected local authorities were approached to explain their mechanism for reporting these cases so that the duplicates could be omitted from either the P1E or H-CLIC return. However, the likelihood of this occurring was low because temporary accommodation placement data is usually linked to a payments database and records are kept up to date by the local authority to ensure any payments to accommodation providers are stopped when placements end. Any local authority that submitted data across two systems were checked for the placement dates in H-CLIC and overall totals versus the previous quarter, when only P1E was reported.

All submissions are reviewed, and where large changes have occurred between quarters local authorities were approached for an explanation. If no explanation of the change could be provided this data was rejected and imputed figures were used instead for the England total. These local authorities can be identified in the live tables because they are highlighted

yellow and their imputed figures are not published – to ensure these are not misused.

As part of the QA process local authorities were asked to verify their households in temporary accommodation. There were a number of inconsistencies identified in the way local authorities reported these. Some local authorities omitted anyone in temporary accommodation whose main duty had been discharged and other local authorities did not, and the method varies by local authority.

Imputation

The response rate for the latest quarter was 308 out of 314 local authorities (98.1% response rate).

Initial assessment:

15 local authorities were unable to provide initial assessment information. For the authorities that failed to provide this information their data was imputed from previous returns. The authorities whose figures were estimated were: Allerdale, Charnwood, Dartford, East Cambridgeshire, Harrogate, Hounslow, Lancaster, Newark and Sherwood, North Lincolnshire, Preston, Redbridge, Somerset West and Taunton, South Tyneside, Wandsworth, and Woking, who did not provide accurate data this quarter but have provided figures in previous quarters. They are highlighted and referenced in the live tables. Comparisons with previous numbers of initial duties accepted indicate that the impact of this is small. There may be seasonal trends in this data, which is not currently adjusted.

Data for most authorities is included, however, it should be noted that a small number of authorities only provided information on one member of the household. A complete list of household breakdowns at the local authority level are provided in table A5P and A5R.

Prevention and relief:

Several local authorities have reported issues collecting or reporting accurately on prevention and relief duties. 14 out of 314 local authorities did not provide this information, and this data was therefore imputed. The authorities whose figures were estimated were: Allerdale, Bromley, Charnwood, Dartford, East Cambridgeshire, Harrogate, Hounslow, Lancaster, Newark and Sherwood, Newham, North Lincolnshire, Redbridge, Somerset West and Taunton, and South Tyneside, who did not provide duty end data this quarter but have provided figures in previous quarters. This means the overall England total and trends throughout the year should be used with caution.

Main duty:

Several 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. 14 out of 314 local authorities either provided inaccurate data or did not provide this information. The authorities whose figures were estimated were: Allerdale, Charnwood, Dartford, East Cambridgeshire, Harrogate, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Lancaster, Lewisham, Newark and Sherwood, North Lincolnshire, Redbridge,

Somerset West and Taunton, and South Tyneside. As local authorities resolve these issues, main duty decision totals for this year are likely to be revised in future publications.

Some local authorities have also struggled to provide accurate information on main duties ended. As with temporary accommodation this information mostly relates to cases assessed before the introduction of the 2017 HRA. 17 out of 314 local authorities did not provide this information. The local authorities whose figures were estimated were: Allerdale, Charnwood, Dartford, East Cambridgeshire, Harrogate, Hounslow, Lancaster, Lewisham, Newark and Sherwood, North Lincolnshire, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Somerset West and Taunton, South Tyneside, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth, and Westminster, who did not provide accurate data this quarter but have provided figures in previous quarters. However, other local authorities identified issues with underreporting. The England level figure is likely to be under reported so should be used with caution.

Temporary accommodation:

Complete temporary accommodation (TA) data was provided by 293 (93.3%) local authorities. 21 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. The authorities who did not provide this information were Allerdale, Bexley, Brighton and Hove, Broxbourne, Charnwood, Dartford, Ealing, Enfield, Harrogate, Kettering, Kingston upon Thames, Lambeth, Lancaster, Lewisham, Redbridge, Somerset West and Taunton, South Staffordshire, South Tyneside, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, and Woking. 6 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 for: Breckland, Chichester, Coventry, Harlow, South Northamptonshire, and Westminster.

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>.

Ongoing quality improvements

The quality of data in this publication are continually being improved. This 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.

Completed actions to improve the publication and processes of this collection include:

- Reduced publication timescales

Current plans to further improve the publication and future processes of this collection include:

- Working to agree standard rules/principles around quarter on quarter revisions and imputations.
- Continue standardising imputation processes for missing/invalid data.
- Continue automating processes to reduce human error and speed up processes.
- Monitoring and evaluation of key indicators which can be used to assess when a 'steady state' has been reached. This can be done by monitoring fluctuations in the dataset.
- Working with users and data suppliers to better understand issues and improve data submission processes, and quality issues for data providers.
- Hold user workshops in 2021 to provide updates on progress, discuss the presentation and publication of the statistics and better understand user requirements.
- Expand content based on user feedback.
- Seasonal adjustments and adjustments for provisional data underreporting.
- Continue to reduce publication timescales
- Working with software providers and local authorities to improve the data submissions process.

MHCLG anticipate that these changes to quality will take some time to complete and updates will be provided with each quarter.

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

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

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://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/response-on-changes-to-statutory-homelessness-statistics/>

Definitions

This publication covers statutory homelessness, which is those people who are assessed by local authorities according to their legal duties. 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.

The data in this release regards the Housing Act 1996 statutory homelessness duties, and therefore excludes anyone who has not approached their local authority for assistance who would otherwise be considered homeless. It will include some, but not all, households with a broad range of living circumstances including rough sleeping and staying temporarily with friends or family. 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.

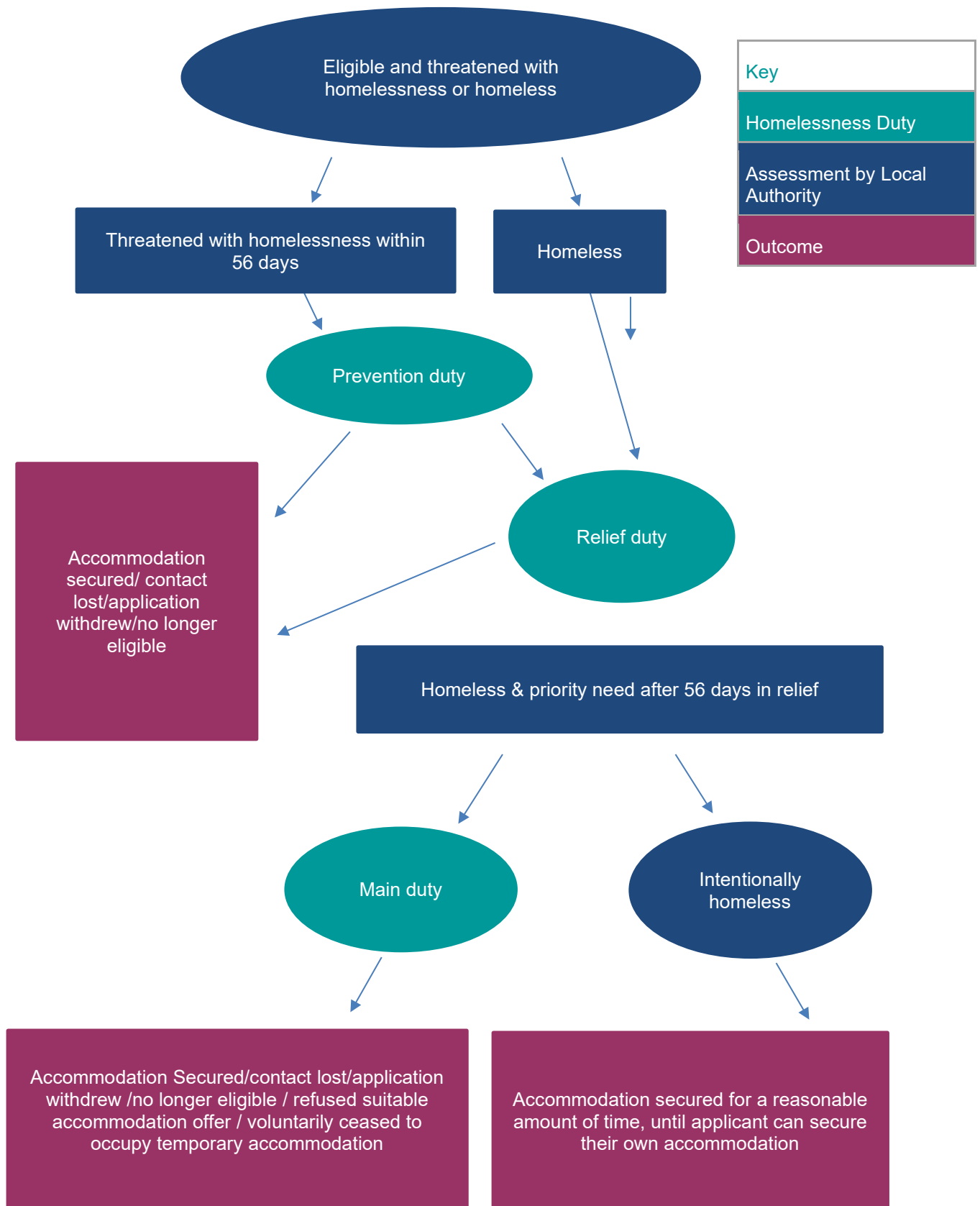
Prevention duty: Local authorities may deliver their prevention duty through any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness within 56 days from becoming homeless. This would involve activities to enable an applicant to remain in their current home or find alternative accommodation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

Relief duty: The relief duty is owed to households that are already homeless on approaching a local authority, and so require help to secure settled accommodation. The duty lasts 56 days and can only be extended by a local authority if the household is not owed the main homelessness duty.

Main Duty: The 'main' homelessness duty describes the duty a local authority has towards an applicant who is unintentionally homeless, eligible for assistance and has priority need. This definition is largely unchanged 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, and so is not owed to those 'threatened with homelessness'. In addition a minimum of 56 days of assistance must have elapsed from a household approaching the local authority to being owed a main duty, and households who may previously have been accepted as owed a main duty may now have secured accommodation through prevention or relief duties.

Prevention and relief information collected by H-CLIC cover new legal duties introduced from the 3 April 2018, so these are **not comparable** to the activity information collected previously. The definition of main duty acceptances and temporary accommodation remain the same, however due to the new steps local authorities must take with households prior to a main duty, any inferences about trends in main duty acceptances before and after the HRA 2017 should be made with caution.

Flow through the homelessness duties and outcomes



Assured Shorthold Tenancy: An Assured Shorthold Tenancy is a fixed term letting from a private rented landlord. Typical tenancies last 1 or 2 years.

Eligible Households: 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.

Hidden Homelessness: Hidden homelessness 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 an unknown proportion appearing in Official Statistics. This makes quantifying the number of hidden homelessness difficult.

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: 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.

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; homeless due to fire, flood or other emergency; 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.

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).

Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Revisions Policy and can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-mhclg-revisions-policy>.

There are two types of revisions that the policy covers:

Scheduled revisions

There are no scheduled revisions to the statutory homelessness release. However, it should be noted that data in each new release and latest quarter is provisional and subject to revision in future quarters. Local authorities may add new homelessness duty cases late or revise previous data submissions where mistakes have been spotted. These changes will not be marked with an R in the local authority dataset because these are likely to be extensive across all local authorities. However, the time series dataset will be marked with a P for the latest quarter and an R, where applicable, for previous quarters where changes have been made.

Revisions to the previous quarter will be made routinely with each new quarterly release. Where revisions to earlier quarters for the current financial year are made, these will be incorporated into the dataset at the end of the financial year.

Non-Scheduled Revisions

Where local authorities spot a mistake in their own data that change affects the national story, such as changing a national trend or total by 3% or more or reversing it, these changes will be incorporated into the live tables and published statistics release as soon as possible. These changes will not be preannounced on the release calendar. Users will be informed of the change by a change to the title of the document, adding a '(revised)' suffix both on the webpage and in the document itself. An explanation of the changes will be included in the updated publication and local authority level changes will be marked with an 'R'. Smaller changes at the local authority level are routinely expected as part of the previous quarter revisions in future publications. Where a local authority notes a minor correction to their data, these will be updated in the next release along with the other routine amendments.

If MHCLG spot a mistake in the numbers or trends referred to in this release or live tables, these will be updated as soon as possible. Users will be informed of the change by a change to the title of the document, adding a '(revised)' suffix both on the webpage and in the document itself. An explanation of the changes will be included in the updated publication and local authority level changes will be marked with an 'R'.

Other information

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.

Other government departments also use the statistics, including DWP (monitoring those in temporary accommodation in receipt of housing benefit), DHSC (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.

Related Statistics

Related MHCLG statistical releases are available at:

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

Coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency accommodation survey data

MHCLG have published new management information about the support for people sleeping rough and those at risk of sleeping rough, as part of the 'Everyone in' campaign during the COVID-19 pandemic. The published data shows that 14,610 people had been provided emergency accommodation as at May 2020. The data, including a breakdown by London and Rest of England, is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-rough-sleeper-accommodation-survey-data-may-2020>

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 2019 statistics published on 27 February 2020 reported 4,266 individuals rough sleeping in England. Further breakdowns can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019>. 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 homelessness 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.

The ONS have also published plans to improve homelessness and rough sleeping statistics in future available here: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/improvinghomelessnessandroughsleepingstatisticsacrosstheuk/2019-09-17>

Hidden Homelessness

MHCLG produce other statistics releases that can help build up the wider homelessness picture including hidden homeless. 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-2018-to-2019-headline-report>

Social Housing

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>

Local Authority expenditure on housing and homelessness

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

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>. The GSS have published an interactive tool which provides

details on the similarities and differences in the legislation which has an impact on the official statistics on statutory homelessness across the 4 countries. This is available here: <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/dashboard/tools/homelessness-statistics/landing.html>

The most recent statutory homelessness statistics for the other U.K. Countries are available as below:

Scotland: <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables>

Wales: <https://gov.wales/homelessness-statistics>

Northern Ireland: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/housing-statistics#toc-2>

User engagement

Users are encouraged to provide feedback on how these statistics are used and how well they meet user needs. Comments on any issues relating to this statistical release are welcomed and encouraged. Responses should be addressed to homelessnessstats@communities.gov.uk.

The Department's engagement strategy to meet the needs of statistics users is published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/engagement-strategy-to-meet-the-needs-of-statistics-users>

MHCLG is looking to hold user events in 2021 to understand more about how these statistics are used and how they can be improved. If you would like to be involved in these events, please contact homelessnessstats@communities.gov.uk.

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.

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 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.

The H-CLIC newsletters for data providers, and other guidance documents, are published at the above GSS link.

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>



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If you have any enquiries regarding this document/publication, complete the form at <http://forms.communities.gov.uk/> or write to us at:

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For all our latest news and updates follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mhclg>

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