



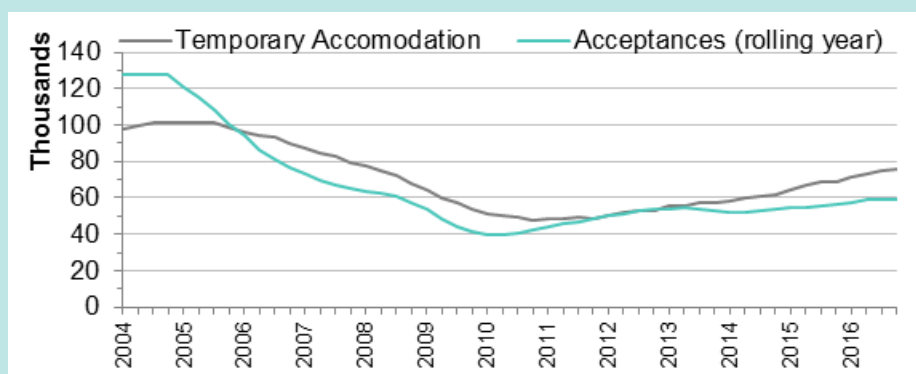
Statutory homelessness and prevention and relief, October to December 2016: England

This publication provides information on the number of households that reported being homeless (or threatened with homelessness) to their local authority and were offered housing assistance.

- Local authorities accepted 14,420 households as being **statutorily homeless** between 1 October and 31 December 2016, down 3% on the previous quarter and down 0.4% on the same quarter of last year.

These are households that are owed a main homelessness duty to secure accommodation as a result of being unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

- The total number of households in **temporary accommodation** on 31 December 2016 was 75,740, up 10% on a year earlier, and up 58% on the low of 48,010 on 31 December 2010.



- Local authorities took action to **prevent and relieve** homelessness for 50,970 households between 1 October and 31 December 2016, down 3% on 52,520 in the same quarter of 2015.



Housing

Statistical Release

23 March 2017

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Responsible Statistician:

Mike Young

Statistical enquiries:

office hours:

0303 444 4387

homelessnessstats@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Media Enquiries:

0303 444 1201

newsdesk@communities.gsi.gov.uk

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Introduction

The term “homelessness” is a broad one and has a number of interpretations. For the purposes of this release, a household is homeless if they do not have accommodation which they have a legal right to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to their household and which it would be reasonable for them to continue to live in. Households which are homeless or threatened with homelessness may approach their local authority for assistance, and the figures in this release detail the response of authorities.

The actions of local authorities are guided by their legal duties, in particular the Housing Act 1996, the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011 (see notes on page 26). For some households – those which are unintentionally homeless and in a **priority need** category (such as having dependent children) – the local authority will have a main duty to secure settled accommodation, and to ensure suitable accommodation is provided until settled accommodation become available. Such households are referred to as **statutory homeless acceptances**. Pages 4 – 13 of this release provide statistics on accepted households and the types of **temporary accommodation** provided to them since 1998.

As well as the statutory duties to priority need households, local authorities also have a duty to provide free advice and assistance to all households threatened with homelessness, although in practice they will often go beyond this to proactively attempt to **prevent** or **relieve** homelessness. These actions are discretionary and thus approaches may vary considerably between authorities. Variations in levels of prevention activity may reflect differences in demand, in local authority policy, availability of resources, or a combination of these. The activity may also have an effect on the numbers of acceptances.

In this release, **prevention** refers to positive actions taken by local authorities (or partner organisations funded by them) to provide assistance to households who consider themselves to be at risk of homeless, which enable them to remain in their existing accommodation or obtain an alternative for at least the next 6 months. A small number of households may appear in both the prevention and acceptances figures – see page 24. **Relief** refers to positive actions to secure accommodation for households that have already become homeless. Pages 13 – 17 of this release provide statistics on prevention and relief since 2009.

Another common interpretation of homelessness is **rough sleeping** – an annual single night snapshot of rough sleeping is conducted each autumn and is published separately. The latest statistics can be found at;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2016>

The statistics in this release present information to understand the long and short term trends within the definition of statutory homelessness, and the broad characteristics and circumstances of those households affected. However, they are limited in that they only capture the sub-set of homeless households who are granted assistance or assessed by their local authority. They do not directly provide a national number of the total number of people or households affected by homelessness in England. For example they do not cover the population living in hostels or those sometimes described as “hidden homeless” who may meet the definition above, but either have

not approached or not received assistance from their local authority.

The [Homelessness Reduction Bill](#), due to have its third reading in the House of Lords on the day of this release, will make significant changes to the legal duties which local authorities carry out in relation to homelessness. This will have a large knock-on impact on the statistical categories in this release. Further information is given on page 28.

DCLG are currently consulting with users and suppliers about designing a new homelessness statistics system to be introduced in early 2018 – to contribute to the discussion visit our [user page](#). The new system will be designed to monitor the impact of the Bill. It is intended that it will collect household level data and will provide detailed information on a much wider section of the homeless population than those currently considered to be statutorily homeless.

Decisions taken by local authorities on homelessness applications

Local housing authorities received 27,960 applications for housing assistance in October to December (Q4) 2016 (excluding those who were ineligible, such as recent arrivals to the UK). This is 5% lower than in the same quarter of 2015.

Of these:

- 14,420 (52%) were accepted (referred to as 'owed a main homelessness duty').

Of the remainder:

- 6,550 (23%) were found not to be homeless;
- 4,560 (16%) were found to be homeless but not in priority need; and
- 2,430 (9%) were found to be intentionally homeless and in priority need.

Since 1998, decisions finding households 'accepted' or 'intentionally homeless' have increased proportionally compared to all other decisions. 'Not in priority need' and 'not homeless' decisions have fallen slightly proportionally during the same period.

Chart 1: Decisions made by local authorities, Q4 2016, England

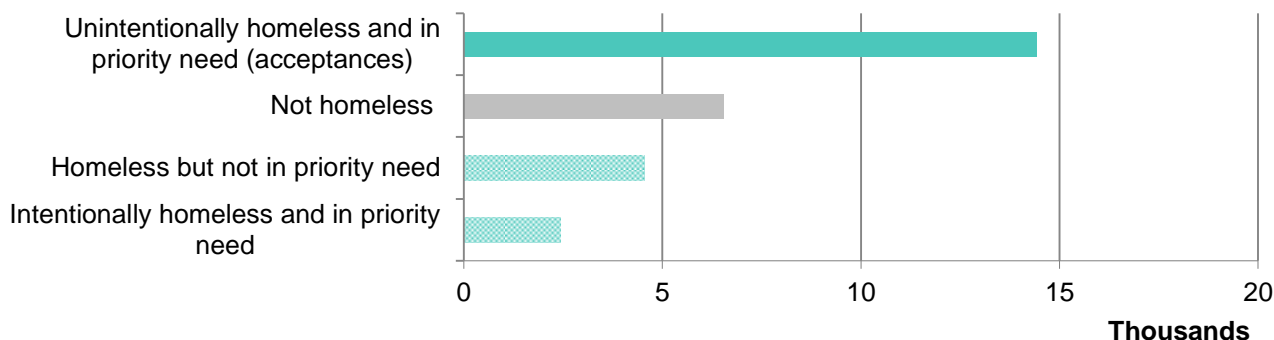
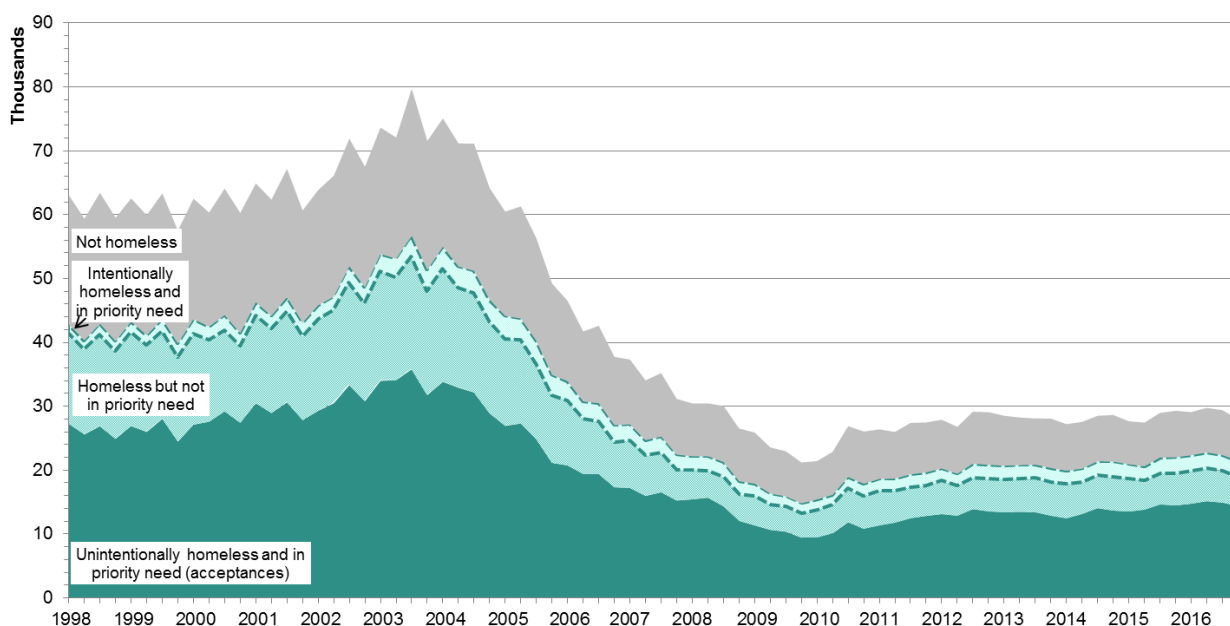


Chart 2: Decisions made by local authorities each quarter, Q1 1998 to Q4 2016, England



See Live Table 770: Decisions taken by local authorities under the 1996 Housing Act on applications from eligible households.

Households accepted as owed a main homelessness duty

Local authorities in England accepted 14,420 households as statutorily homeless in Q4 2016, down 3% from the figure of 14,930 in the previous quarter and down 0.4% compared to the same quarter last year.

Of these, 4,540 were in London, accounting for 31% of the England total.

The corresponding figures for London and Rest of England and the percentage changes are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Households accepted as owed a main homelessness duty during Q4 2016 with comparisons to previous quarter and year, England, London and Rest of England

	Q4 2016	Previous quarter: Q3 2016		Same quarter last year: Q4 2015	
	Households Accepted	Households Accepted	Percentage change	Households Accepted	Percentage change
England	14,420	14,930	-3%	14,480	-0.4%
London	4,540	4,580	-1%	5,160	-12%
Rest of England	9,880	10,360	-5%	9,310	6%

Chart 3 shows the number of acceptances in England since 1998.

Chart 3: Households accepted by local authorities as owed a main duty each quarter, Q1 1998 to Q4 2016, England



The quarterly number of acceptances peaked in Q3 2003 at 35,770 before falling to a low of 9,430 in Q4 2009. In the latest quarter the number of acceptances at 14,420 is 60% below the peak (a difference of 21,350), and 53% higher than the low (a difference of 4,990).

The steep fall in acceptances seen in Chart 3 is likely to have been significantly influenced by the encouragement from central government to local authorities to strengthen their prevention activities and to provide comprehensive housing options services to local residents. This shift in

policy also led to the collection of prevention and relief statistics from local authorities from 2008 onwards. The rise in acceptances from 2010 is largely comprised of households who have lost their home as a result of the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy – see next section.

See Live Table 770: Decisions taken by local authorities under the 1996 Housing Act on applications from eligible households, Live Table 774 London and Live Table 774 Rest of England.

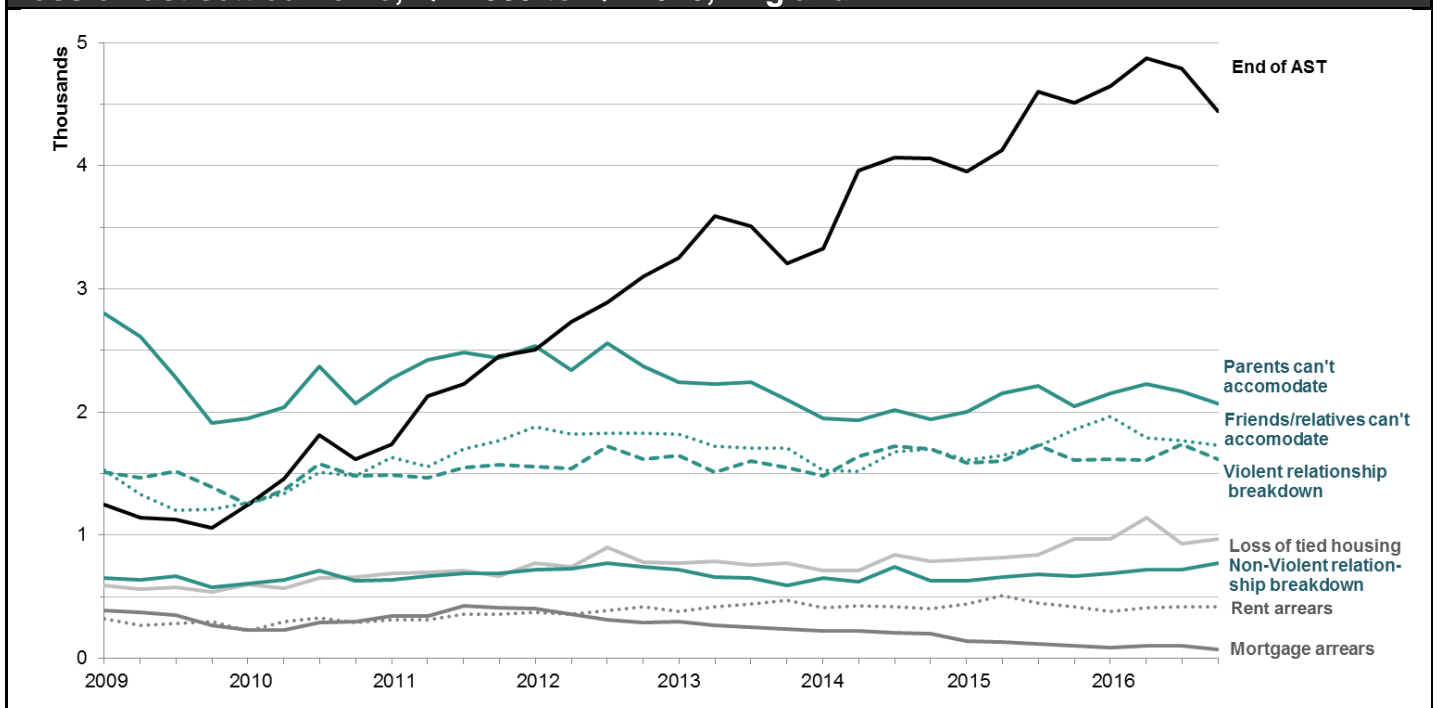
Acceptances by reason for loss of last settled home

The ending of an assured shorthold tenancy with a private landlord was the most common reason for the loss of the last settled home in Q4 2016. This represents 31% (4,440 households) of all acceptances in England and 39% of acceptances (1,760 households) in London.

The end of an assured shorthold tenancy (AST) has been an increasingly common cause of loss of last home over the last six years, rising from a low of 1,060 households in Q4 2009 (11% of all cases) to 4,440 in Q4 2016 (31% of cases) – a rise of 3,380. By comparison, the rise in acceptances for all other reasons between Q4 2009 and Q4 2016 was 1,610. This indicates that affordability is an increasingly significant issue, as more households facing the end of a private tenancy are unable to find an alternative without assistance. The increase in the end of tenancies is also related to the expansion of the private rented sector, which has doubled in size (since 2002) and now houses 4.5 million households (2015/16). ⁽¹⁾

Chart 4 shows a breakdown of acceptances by reason for loss of settled home.

Chart 4: Households accepted by local authorities as owed a main duty by reason for loss of last settled home, Q1 2009 to Q4 2016, England



See Live Table 774: Homeless households accepted by local authorities, by reason for loss of last settled home.

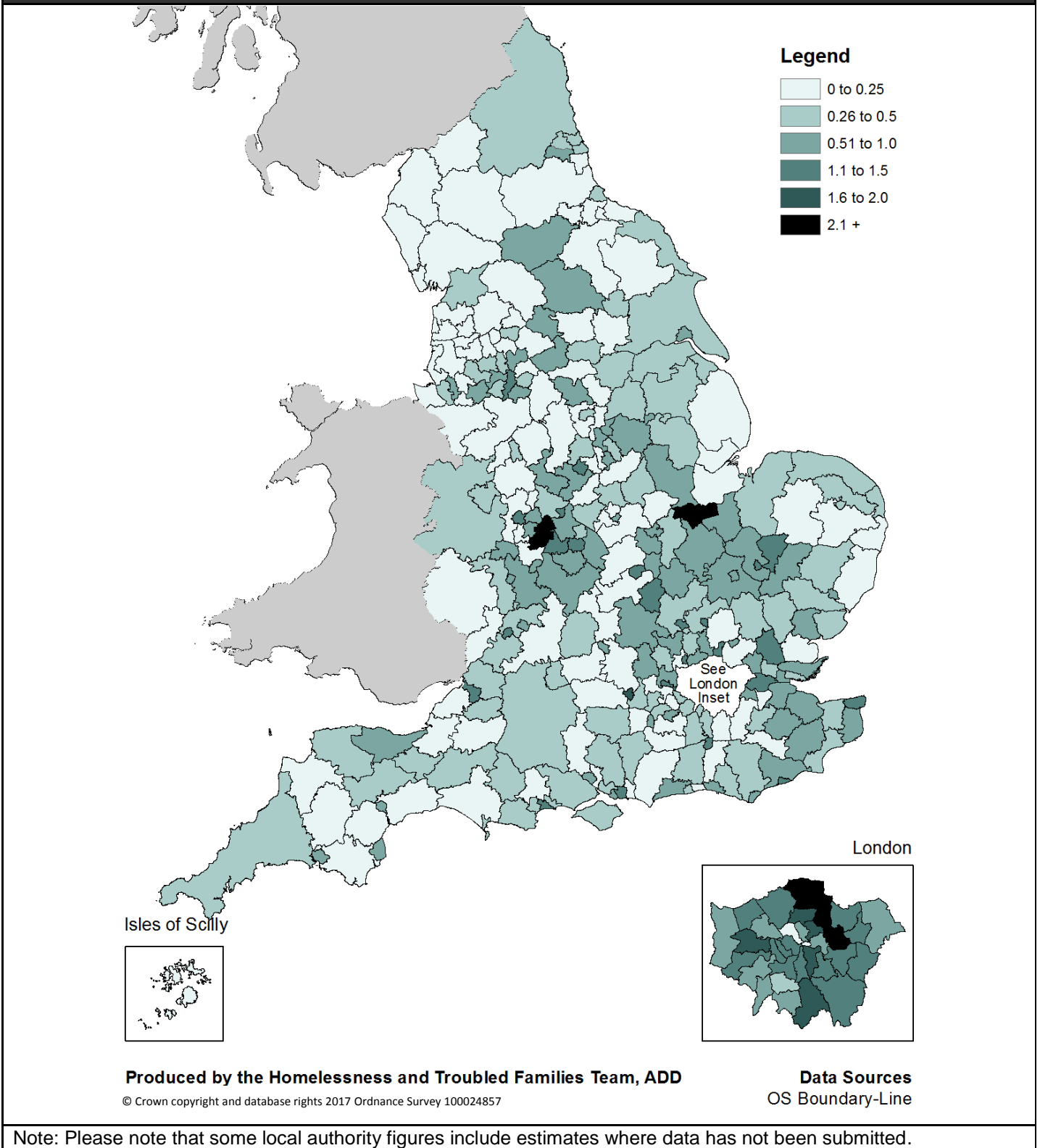
(1) Source: English Housing Survey 2015-16

Relative levels of homelessness

Comparing the number of acceptances to the population size in an area gives a measure of the level of homelessness.

The number of homeless acceptances was 0.62 per 1,000 households in England in Q4 2016. In London, the rate was 1.26 and in the rest of England (excluding London) it was 0.50 per 1,000 households. Map 1 illustrates the rates at local authority level.

Map 1: Statutory Homelessness: Acceptances Rates per 1,000 households Q4 2016, England

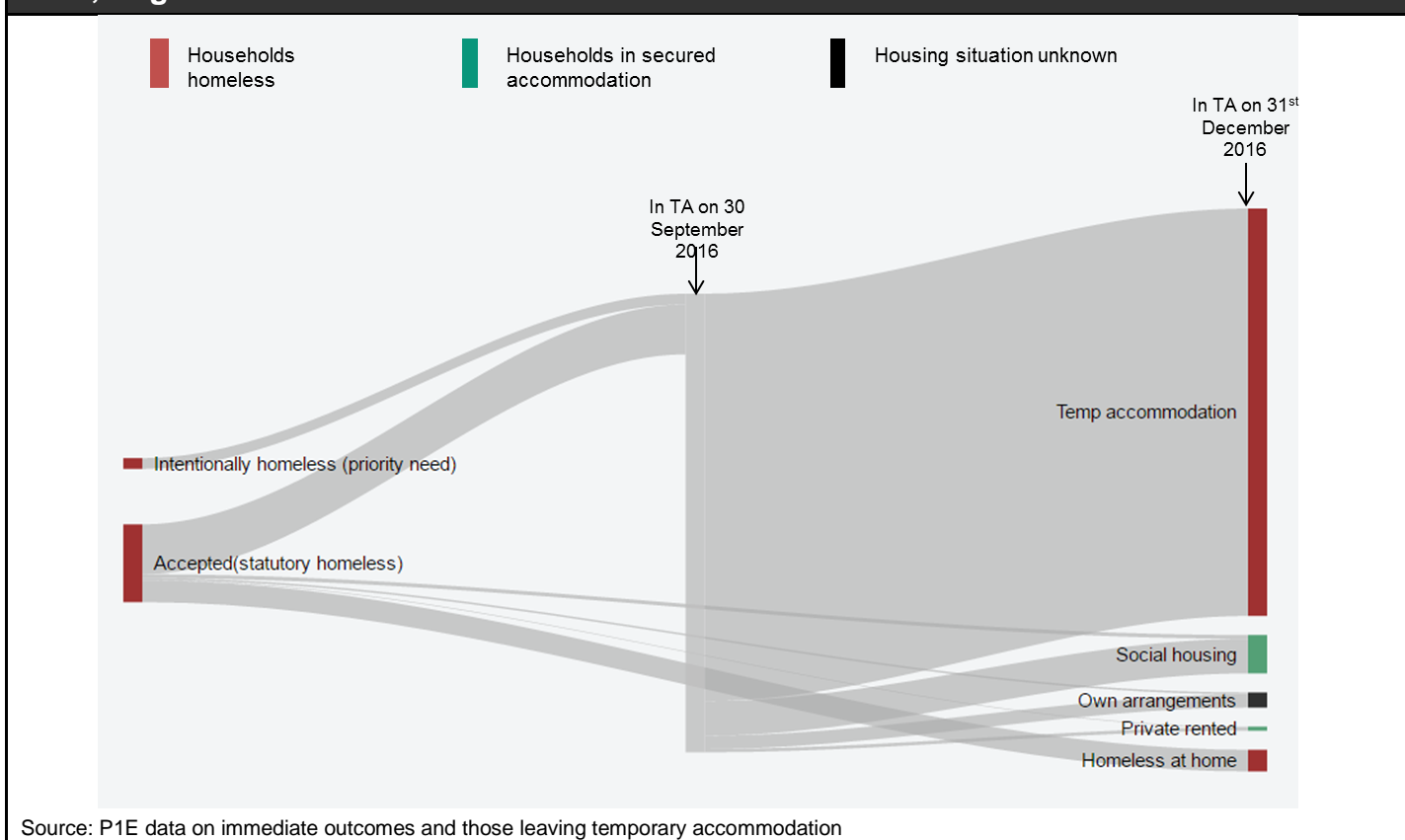


Note: Please note that some local authority figures include estimates where data has not been submitted.

Accommodation outcomes

When a household is accepted by a local authority, or is found to be intentionally homeless and in priority need, the authority has a duty to ensure that suitable accommodation is available. Chart 5 shows the various paths that may be followed by households when entering and leaving homelessness. The widths of the lines are proportionate to the numbers of households in each category based on the data in this release. The upper lines show households newly entering temporary accommodation, while the other lines show destinations of households, whether directly from being accepted, or leaving temporary accommodation. The chart shows that most households in temporary accommodation at 30 September 2016 remain there three months later.

Chart 5: Flows in and out of temporary accommodation and statutory homelessness, Q4 2016, England



Source: P1E data on immediate outcomes and those leaving temporary accommodation

The most common immediate outcome for new acceptances is to be placed in temporary accommodation. This was the outcome for 64% (9,270) of the acceptances during the quarter. In 28% of cases (4,020) the household was provisionally able to remain in their existing accommodation to await an offer of alternative accommodation (referred to as 'duty owed, no accommodation secured' or 'homeless at home').

Some households accepted during Q4 2016 moved into settled accommodation by the end of the quarter. 5% of all acceptances (700) were given a secure tenancy by a local authority or private registered social landlord. In addition to such tenancies, under the Localism Act 2011 local authorities were given the power to discharge their homeless duty by making an offer in the private rented sector; 80 households (1%) accepted such an offer and 20 (less than 1%) rejected one. For

households accepted prior to changes made in the Localism Act, local authorities can make a qualifying offer of an assured shorthold tenancy which the applicant can refuse – 50 households (less than 1%) accepted such an offer.

See Live Table 777: Immediate outcome of decision by local authority to accept household as unintentionally homeless, eligible and in priority need.

Households in temporary accommodation

The number of households in temporary accommodation arranged by local authorities under homelessness legislation on 31 December 2016 was 75,740. This was 10% higher than a year earlier and up 58% on the low of 48,010 on 31 December 2010. In London, the number of households in temporary accommodation at 31 December 2016 was 54,170, 72% of the total England figure.

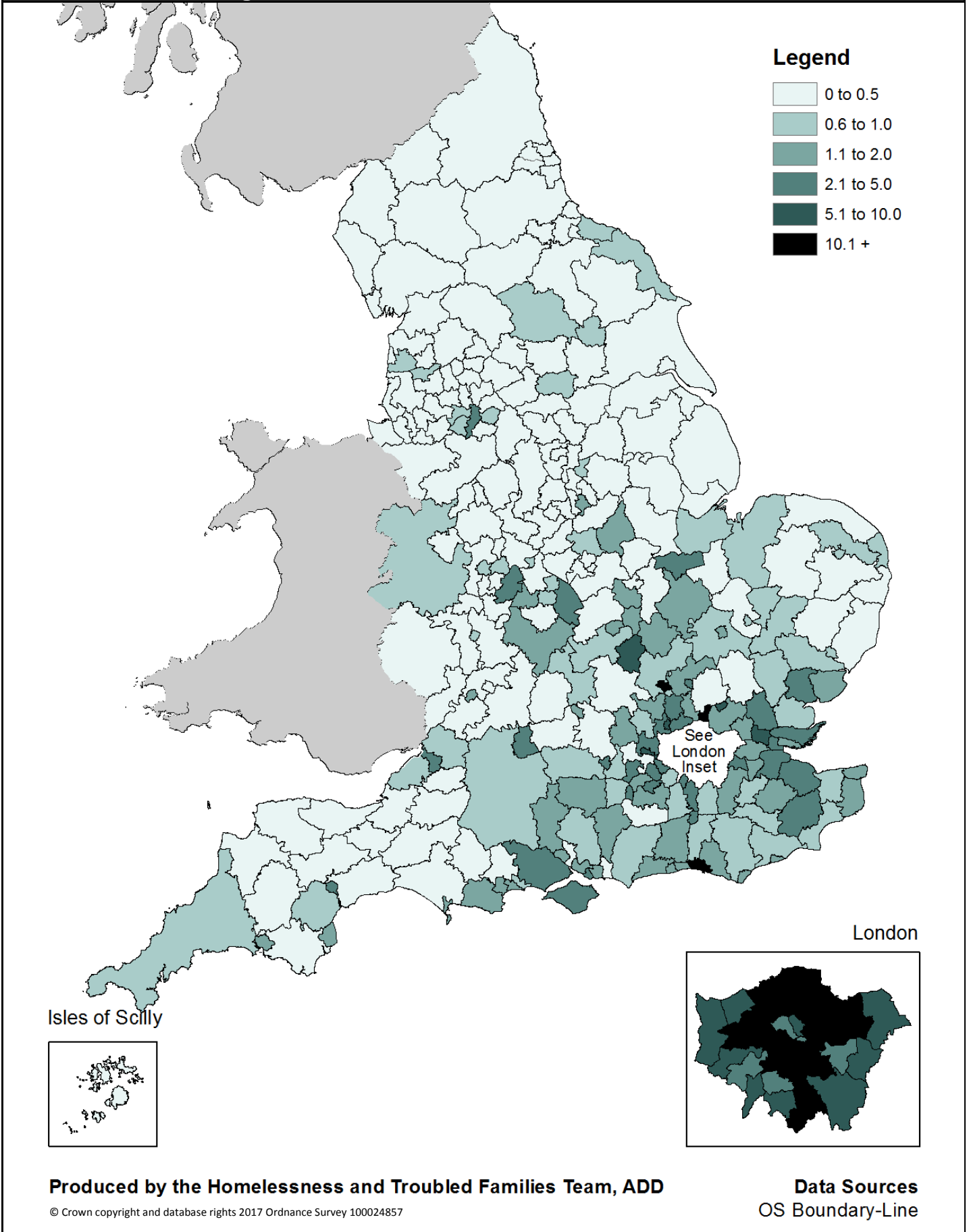
Table 2: Households accommodated in temporary accommodation at 31 December 2016 compared to previous quarter and year, England, London and Rest of England

	31 December 2016	Previous quarter: 30 September 2016		Same quarter last year: 31 December 2015	
	Households in TA	Households in TA	Percentage change	Households in TA	Percentage change
England	75,740	74,630	1%	69,140	10%
London	54,170	53,370	1%	50,970	6%
Rest of England	21,570	21,270	1%	18,180	19%

Comparing the number of households in temporary accommodation to the population size in an area gives a measure of its use across England.

In England there were 3.26 households living in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households at the end of December 2016. There were 15.09 cases per thousand households in London and 1.10 cases per thousand households in the rest of England. The patterns at local authority level can be seen in Map 2 below.

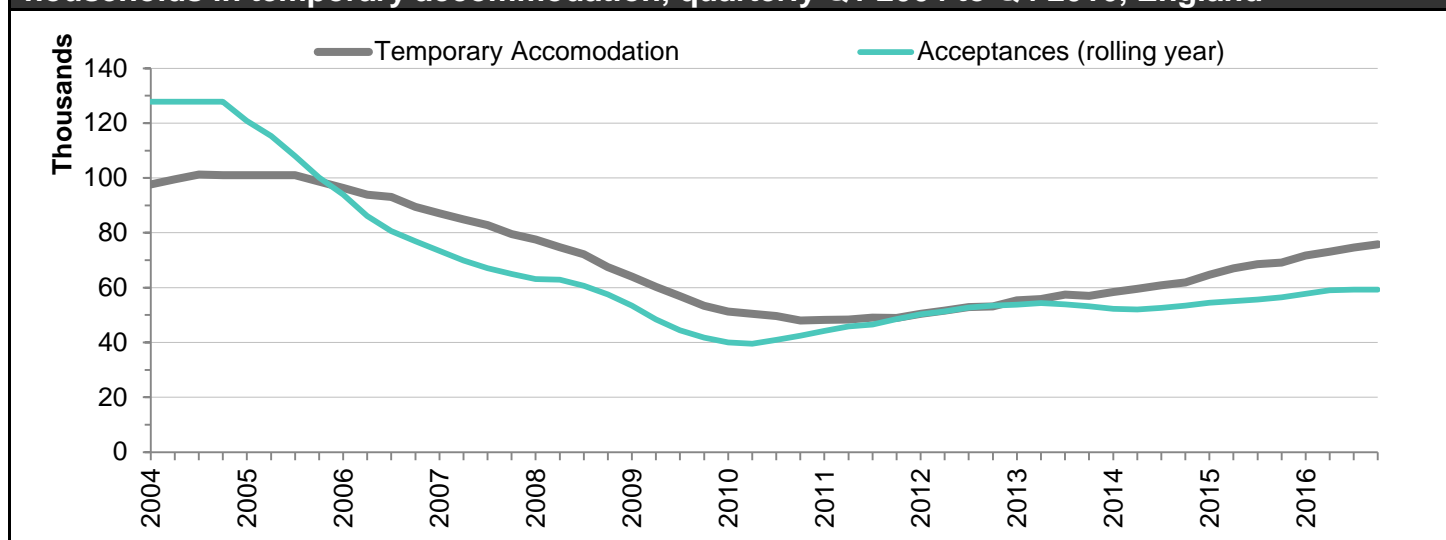
**Map 2: Temporary Accommodation Rates per 1,000 households
31 December 2016, England**



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

Historically, there tends to be a lag between changes in the number of acceptances and changes to the number of households in temporary accommodation. Chart 4 (on page 4) shows the number of acceptances each quarter, which peaked in 2003 before falling off until 2009 and then rising again. Chart 6 shows the stock of households in temporary accommodation and the rolling 12 month total number of acceptances. The number of households in temporary accommodation follows a similar trajectory to the number of acceptances, although with a delay. The number of households in temporary accommodation peaked at 101,300 at the end of September 2004 before declining by half to 48,010 at the end of 2010.

Chart 6: Households accepted by local authorities as owed a main duty, and households in temporary accommodation, quarterly Q1 2004 to Q4 2016, England



See Live Table 775: Type of temporary accommodation: Households in temporary accommodation by type of accommodation, and cases where duty owed but no accommodation has been secured at the end of each quarter, England, London and Rest of England.

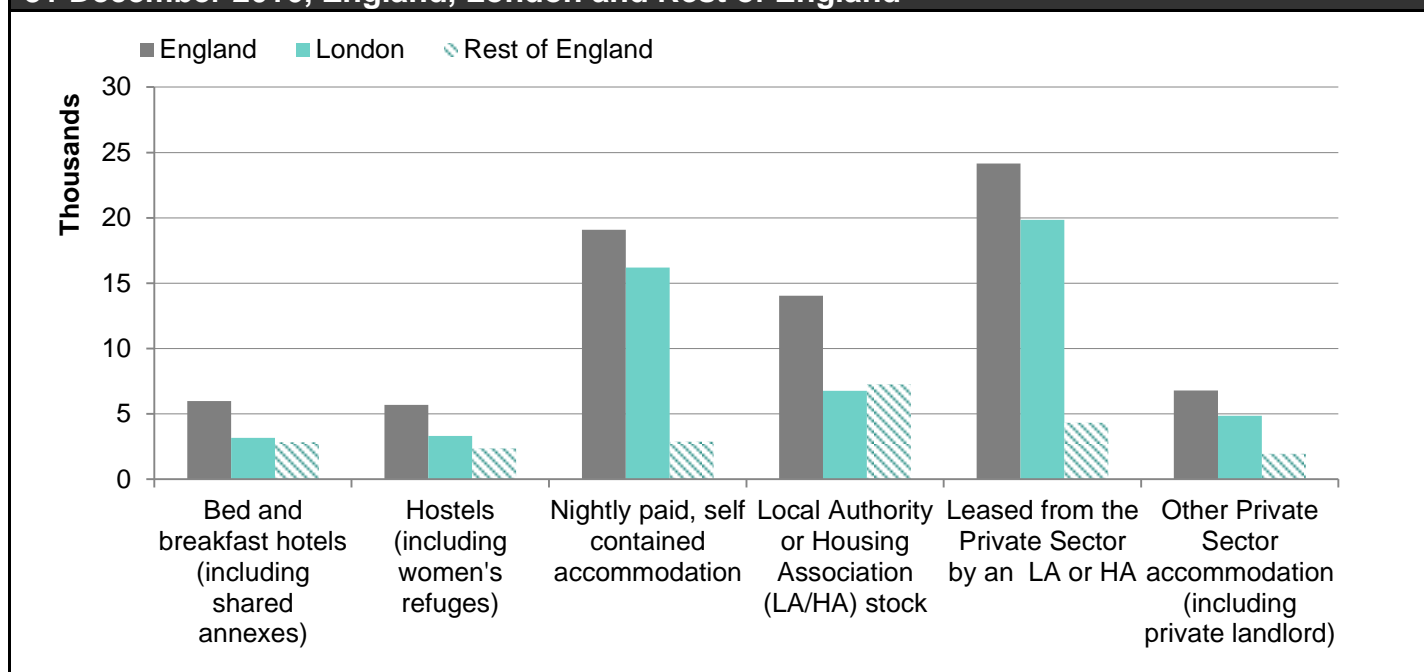
Types of temporary accommodation

The number of households in temporary accommodation with shared facilities (bed and breakfast accommodation, hostels or women's refuges) was 11,680, or 15% of all households in temporary accommodation. Of the number in shared facilities, there were 5,990 households living in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation (including those in shared 'annex' facilities), an increase of 17% from 5,120 as at 31 December 2015. There were 64,060 households in self-contained temporary accommodation in England at the end of December 2016, representing 85% of all households in temporary accommodation.

The number of households in nightly paid self-contained annexes was 19,080. This represents 25% of all households in temporary accommodation, up from 23% a year previously and 9% five years ago.

Chart 7 shows a breakdown of the type of temporary accommodation households are in.

Chart 7: Households in temporary accommodation by type of accommodation, 31 December 2016, England, London and Rest of England



Households in temporary accommodation by household type

Of the 75,740 households in temporary accommodation on 31 December 2016, 60,240 included dependent children and/or a pregnant woman (within which there were 118,960 children or expected children). The average number of children in those households in temporary accommodation with children is 2.0.

Of the 60,240 households with children, 53,380 (89%) were in self-contained accommodation.

There were 5,990 households in bed and breakfast style accommodation as at 31 December 2016. Of these 2,780 (46%) had dependent children or expected children of which 1,260 had been resident for more than 6 weeks. The corresponding figures for the previous quarter and same quarter the previous year, and percentage changes, are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Households accommodated in Bed and Breakfast temporary accommodation at 31 December 2016 with comparisons to previous quarter and year, England

	31 December 2016	Previous quarter: 30 September 2016		Same quarter last year: 31 December 2015	
	Households in B&B	Households in B&B	Percentage change	Households in B&B	Percentage change
Total households	5,990	6,680	-10%	5,120	17%
Households with dependent children or expected children	2,780	3,390	-18%	2,270	23%
<i>Of which: resident for more than 6 weeks</i>	1,260	1,300	-3%	910	38%

See Live Table 793: Families with children in Bed and Breakfast accommodation for more than 6 weeks excluding those pending review, by local authority

Households in temporary accommodation in another local authority district

Of the 75,740 households in temporary accommodation on 31 December 2016, 21,910 (29%) were in accommodation in another local authority district. This is an increase of 17%, from 18,670 at the same date last year (27% of the total).

Of the 21,910 accommodated in another local authority district, 19,860 were from London authorities (91% of the England total). This is an increase of 16% from the same date last year when 17,150 such households were placed by London authorities.

Further breakdowns of households in temporary accommodation can be found in several of the Live Tables at the link provided in the Accompanying Live Tables section of this release.

Households leaving temporary accommodation and other temporary arrangements

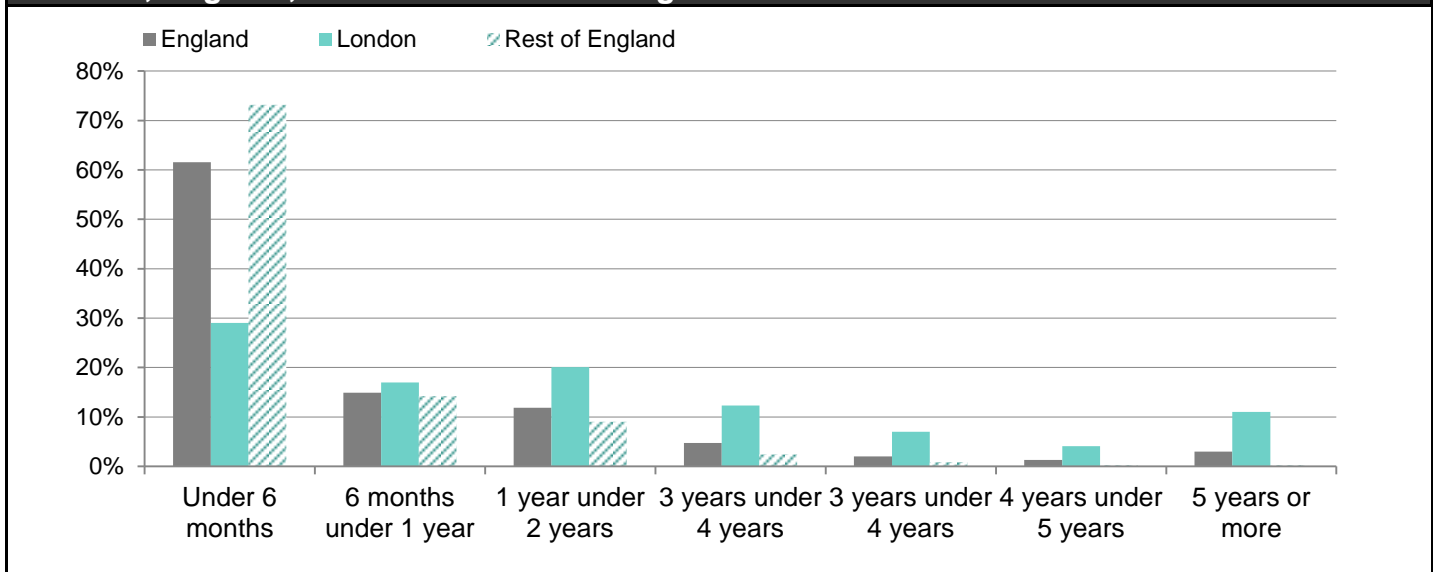
In Q4 2016 a main homelessness duty was ended for 9,520 households who had previously been in temporary accommodation or had remained, with consent, in their existing accommodation while awaiting the provision of alternative accommodation. This is a 0.3% fall from the previous quarter and an 8% fall from the same quarter in 2015.

Of these households, 6,270 (66%) were provided with settled accommodation by accepting a "Part 6" offer of a tenancy in local authority or housing authority accommodation, a fall of 2% on the figure of 6,380 in the previous quarter. A further 370 refused such an offer.

360 households (4%) accepted an offer of settled rented accommodation in the private sector, made under the Localism Act power, down from 370 in the previous quarter, and 40 households rejected such an offer. There were 280 households (3%) which became intentionally homeless from temporary accommodation while 1,290 households (14%) voluntarily ceased to occupy temporary accommodation.

In England, 62% of those leaving temporary accommodation between 1 October and 31 December 2016 did so less than 6 months after acceptance, and 77% less than a year after acceptance. The corresponding percentages for London were 29% and 46%.

Chart 8: Households leaving temporary accommodation by length of stay, Q4 2016, England, London and Rest of England



See Table 778: Households leaving temporary accommodation (or no longer recorded "Duty owed, no accommodation secured"), by outcome and Table 779: households leaving temporary accommodation (or no longer recorded as "duty owed, no accommodation secured") during each quarter, by length of stay for England and London.

Foreign national households

2,750 [foreign national applicants](#) were accepted as homeless in Q4 2016, down 5% from 2,890 in the same quarter the previous year. Of these, 560 were European Economic Area (EEA) accession State nationals, 720 were from other EEA countries and 1,470 were from outside the EEA. During this period, foreign nationals accounted for 19% of all acceptances.

See Live Table 785 Foreign Nationals decisions: Local authority assistance to foreign nationals under homelessness provisions of the 1996 Housing Act: decisions on applications for assistance, England; and Live Table 786 Foreign Nationals reason for eligibility: Local authority assistance to foreign nationals under homelessness provisions of the 1996 Housing Act: reason for eligibility of accepted households, England

Prevention and relief activity

This section presents statistics on homelessness prevention and relief in England that took place outside the statutory homelessness framework in October to December 2016. These statistics are not designated as National Statistics.

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, local housing authorities must have a strategy for preventing homelessness in their district. The strategy must apply to everyone at risk of homelessness, including cases where someone is found to be homeless but not in priority need and cases where someone is found to be intentionally homeless. Homelessness prevention refers to positive action taken by the local authority which provides someone who considers themselves at risk of homelessness with a solution for at least the next six months. This is done by either assisting them to obtain alternative accommodation or enabling them to remain in their existing home. Homelessness relief occurs when an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness but helps someone to secure accommodation, even though the authority is under no statutory obligation to do so.

There were 50,970 successful cases of homelessness prevention or relief outside the statutory homelessness framework in England during Q4 2016, down 3% on 52,520 in the same quarter of 2015.

Of the total cases, 47,420 (93%) were preventions and 3,540 (7%) were cases of relief. Of the prevention outcomes, 24,570 (52%) were able to remain in their existing home, whilst 22,860 households (48%) were assisted to obtain alternative accommodation.

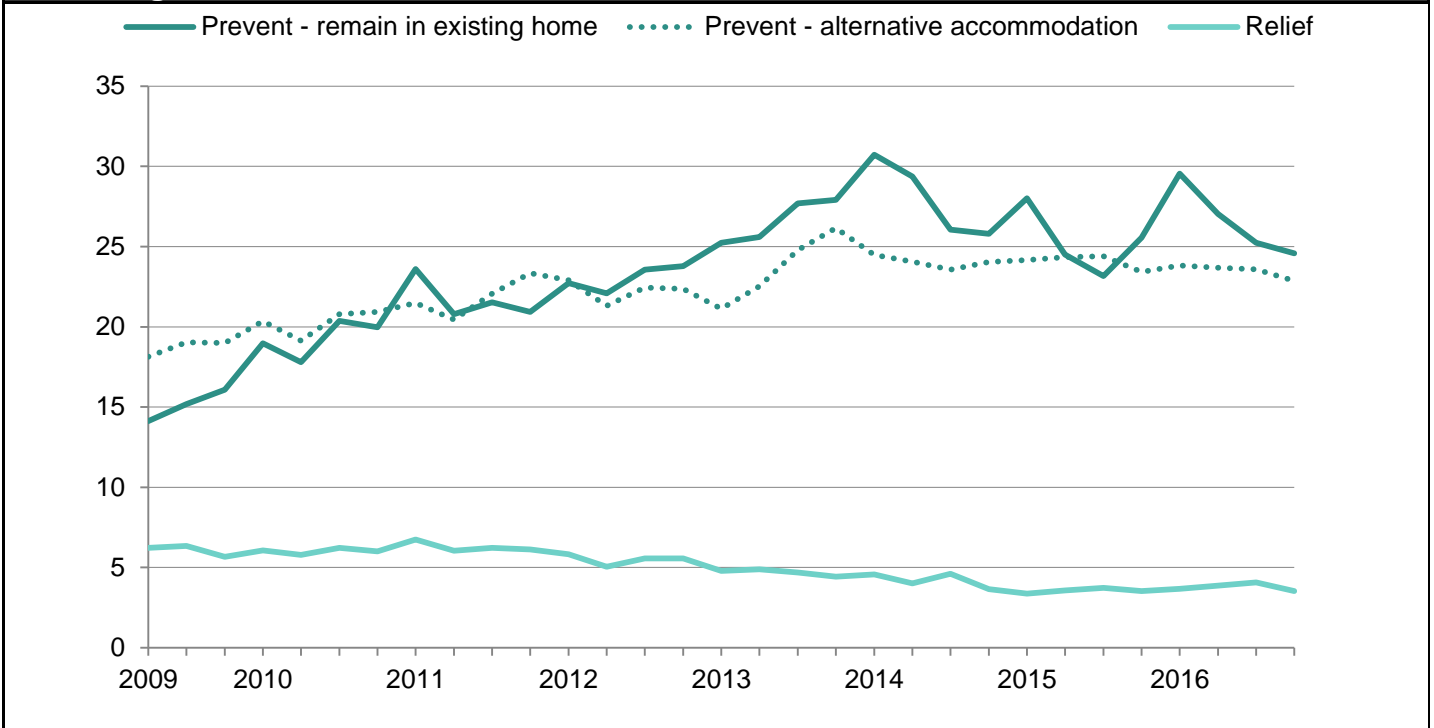
Table 4 summarises comparisons of the data to the previous quarter and year. There is some volatility in the data, which means the changes shown should be treated with an element of caution.

Table 4: Prevention and relief during Q4 2016 with comparisons to previous quarter and year, England

	Q4 2016	Previous quarter: Q3 2016		Same quarter last year: Q4 2015	
	Actions	Actions	Percentage change	Actions	Percentage change
Prevention – remain in existing home	24,570	25,240	-3%	25,560	-4%
Prevention – alternative accommodation	22,860	23,580	-3%	23,430	-2%
Relief	3,540	4,070	-13%	3,540	0%

Longer term, chart 9 shows that the total number of cases of homelessness prevention and relief increased by 38% between 2009/10 and 2013/14 from 165,180 to 228,410 before falling back to 213,260 in 2015/16.

Chart 9: Prevention and relief activity by final accommodation outcome, Q1 2009 to Q4 2016, England



See Live Table 787: Outcome of homelessness prevention and relief

Type of homelessness prevention and relief activity

Chart 10 shows the actions taken to assist the 26,400 households who obtained alternative accommodation (of which 3,540 were cases of relief). The most common type of alternative accommodation obtained was social housing in the form of a Part 6 offer of the local authorities' own accommodation or nomination to a Private Registered Provider. There were 7,330 such cases in Q4 2016 (28% of the total).

Chart 10: Cases assisted to obtain alternative accommodation (prevention and relief), Q4 2016, England

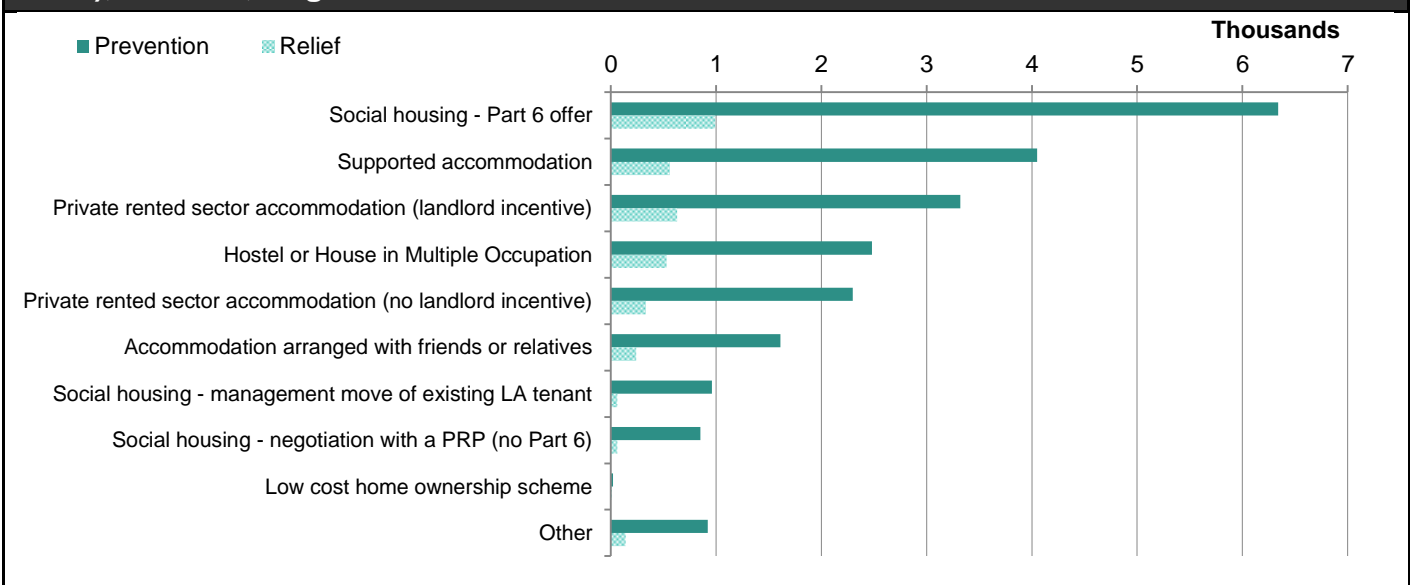
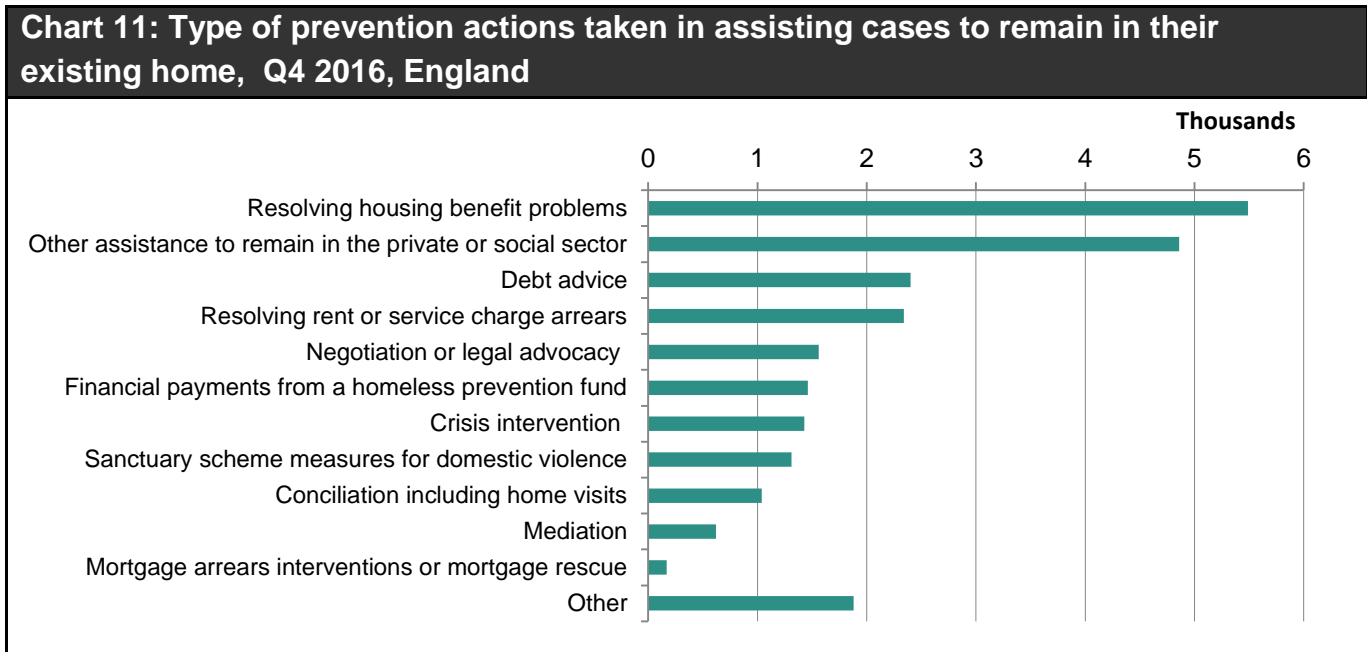


Chart 11 shows the different types of prevention activities which assisted 24,570 households to remain in their existing home. The first category “Other assistance to remain in the private or social sector” covers a range of actions such as resolving anti-social behaviour, tackling disrepair and adaptations to property. The most common action which assisted cases to remain in their existing home was resolving housing benefit problems (5,490 cases, 22% of the total).



See Live Tables 788 and 789: types of homelessness prevention actions taken and types of alternative accommodation secured.

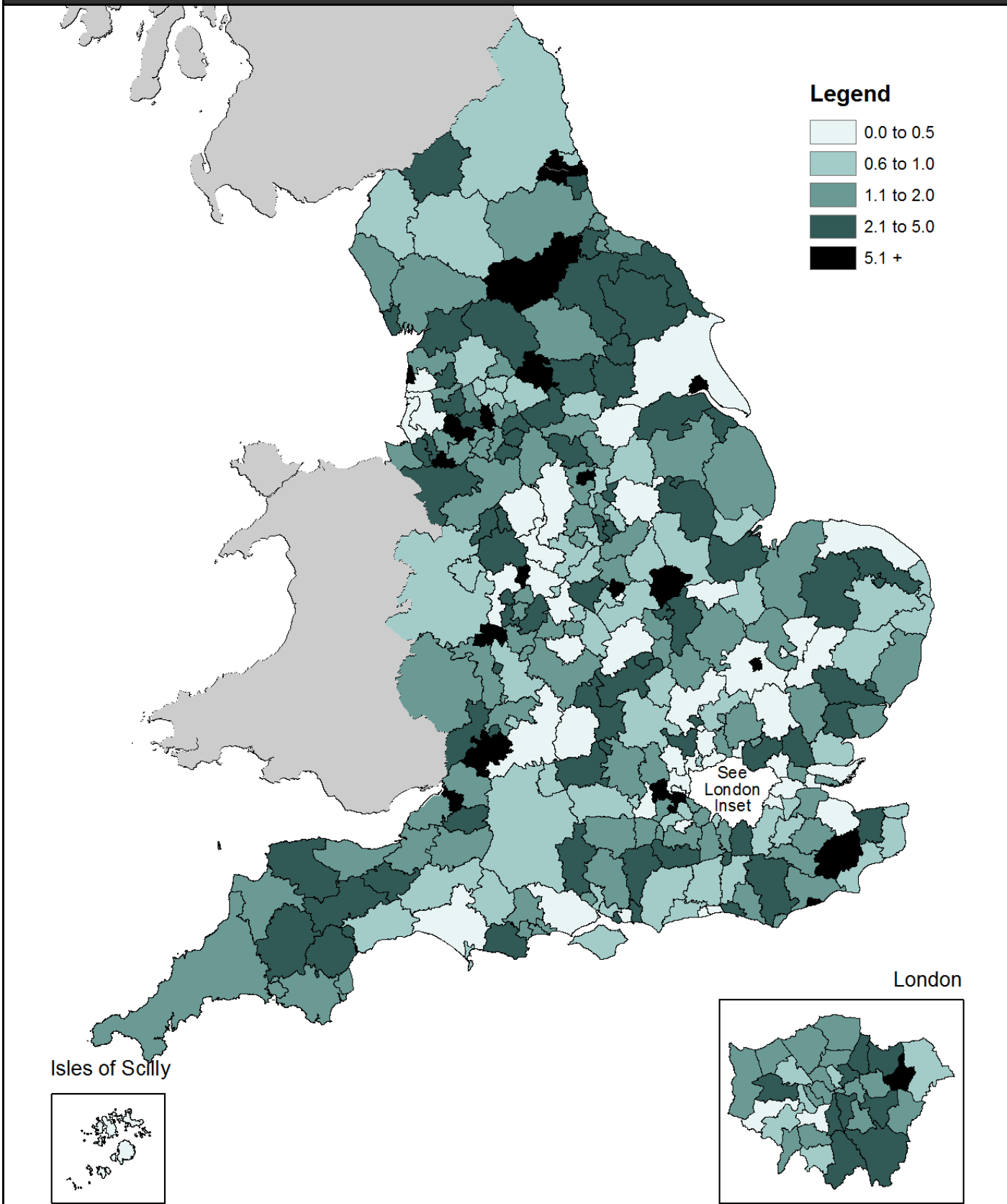
Detailed descriptions of the different categories of prevention and relief can be found in section 10 of the P1E guidance document:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions>

Map 3 maps the rates of prevention and relief activity in each local authority, expressed as a number of cases per 1,000 households.

Rates of prevention activity average 2.19 cases per 1000 households in England, with a wide degree of variation between different authorities. Local authority data are given in Live Table 792.

Map 3: Total cases of prevention and relief per 1,000 households by local authority, Q4 2016



Produced by the Homelessness and Troubled Families Team, ADD

Data Sources
OS Boundary-Line

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

Accompanying tables

Accompanying tables are available to download alongside this release.

- Table 770** Decisions taken by local authorities under the 1996 Housing Act on applications from eligible households, England, 1998 to Q4 2016
- Table 770a** Re-application Duty: Decisions taken by local authorities on eligible households owed the reapplication duty under Section 195a of the Localism Act 2011, England, Q4 2013 to Q4 2016
- Table 771** Ethnicity: Households accepted by local authorities as owed a main homelessness duty by ethnicity, England, 1998 to Q4 2016
- Table 773** Reason for acceptance: Households accepted by local authorities as owed a main homelessness duty by priority need category, England 1998 to Q4 2016
- Table 774** Reason for loss of last settled home: Households accepted by local authorities as owed a main homelessness duty by reason for loss of last settled home, England, London and rest of England, 1998 to Q4 2016
- Table 775** Type of temporary accommodation: Households in temporary accommodation by type of accommodation, and cases where duty owed but no accommodation has been secured at the end of each quarter, England, London and Rest of England 1998 to Q4 2016
- Table 777** Immediate outcome of decision by local authority to accept household as unintentionally homeless, eligible and in priority need, England, 2003 to Q4 2016
- Table 778** Households leaving temporary accommodation (or no longer recorded "Duty owed, no accommodation secured"), by outcome, England 1998 to Q4 2016
- Table 779** Length of time in temporary accommodation: Households leaving temporary accommodation or no longer recorded as "Duty owed, no accommodation secured" during each quarter, by length of time since acceptance, England and London, 1998 to Q4 2016
- Table 780** Household type: Households accepted by local authorities as owed a main homelessness duty by household type, England Q2 2006 to Q4 2016
- Table 781** Age of applicants: Households accepted by local authorities as owed a main homelessness duty by age of applicant, England Q2 2005 to Q4 2016
- Table 782** Household types in temporary accommodation, England Q2 2006 to Q4 2016
- Table 784** Local authorities' action under [the homelessness provisions of the Housing Acts:](#)

financial years 2004/05 to 2015/16

Table 784a Local authorities' action under the homelessness provisions of the Housing Acts: quarterly data for Q2 2014 to Q4 2016

Table 785 Foreign Nationals decisions: Local authority assistance to foreign nationals under homelessness provisions of the 1996 Housing Act: decisions on applications for assistance, England, Q2 2004 to Q4 2016

Table 786 Foreign Nationals reason for eligibility: Local authority assistance to foreign nationals under homelessness provisions of the 1996 Housing Act: reason for eligibility of accepted households, England, Q2 2004 to Q4 2016

Table 787 Outcome of homelessness prevention and relief, England, Q2 2009 to Q4 2016

Table 788 Type of homelessness prevention and relief - relief, England, Q2 2009 to Q4 2016

Table 789 Type of homelessness prevention and relief - prevention, England, Q2 2009 to Q4 2016

Table 792 Outcome of homelessness prevention and relief by local authority, England, 2009/10 to 2015/16

Table 792a Outcome of homelessness prevention and relief by local authority, England, Q4 2016

Table 793 Families with children in Bed and Breakfast accommodation for more than 6 weeks excluding those pending review, by local authority, Q4 2012 to Q4 2016

Detailed local authority level homelessness figures - Spreadsheets containing detailed figures at local authority level from sections E1 to E7 and E10 of the P1E return for each quarter from Q2 2009 to Q4 2016.

Figures for individual local authorities are included in Tables 784, 784a, 792 and 793.

* Tables giving regional totals have been frozen so as not to include figures for any periods after Q2 2012.

Table 772 * Homeless households accepted by local authorities, by region

Table 776 * Homeless households in temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter, by region

Table 783 * Homeless households in temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter, by type of accommodation and region

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

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

The above tables can be accessed at:

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

Related DCLG statistical releases are available at:

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

Open Data

These statistics are available in fully open and linkable data formats at Open Data

Communities: <http://opendatacommunities.org/>

The Open Data mobile app provides a range of statistics published by DCLG for the locality and is available for download free of charge from the [Windows App Store](#) and [Google Playstore](#). Any enquiries about the app should be sent to ODC@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

Definitions

Acceptances: households found to be 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 “acceptances”. These households are consequently owed a main homelessness duty by a local housing authority. The main duty is to secure settled accommodation.

Decisions: refers to decisions taken during the quarter in respect of all eligible households that apply for assistance under the Housing and Homelessness Acts. These do not therefore include households found to be ineligible for assistance (some persons from abroad are ineligible for assistance).

Foreign nationals: The accession States are countries whose nationals may be subject to the Home Office Worker Authorisation schemes for a transitional period: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Separate figures for decisions made on Croatian applicants were collected on the P1E form, following Croatia becoming an accession country on 1 July 2013. The ‘other EEA’ countries are Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

Households for whom a duty is owed, but no accommodation has been secured: these are households who have been accepted as being owed a main homelessness 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.

Priority need groups: includes households with dependent children or a pregnant woman and people who are vulnerable in some way, e.g. because of mental illness or physical disability. The priority need categories were extended by Order in January 2002 to include, additionally: applicants aged 16 or 17; applicants aged 18 to 20 who were previously in care; applicants vulnerable as a result of time spent in care, in custody, or in HM Forces, and applicants vulnerable as a result of having to flee their home because of violence or the threat of violence (in addition to domestic violence, which is one of the original priority need groups). It is not possible to establish precisely how much of the changed profile of acceptances is attributable to the Order. Previously, some local authorities would have accepted households that fell within the new categories as having a priority need because of “another special reason”. This applies in particular to applicants such as vulnerable young people, and people fleeing domestic violence. Where applicants are accepted as homeless because of an emergency, for example fire or flood, this will always be recorded as the main priority need category.

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).

Temporary accommodation: households in temporary accommodation (excluding those for whom a duty is owed, but no accommodation has been secured) on the last day of the quarter, as arranged by a local housing authority as a discharge of their statutory homelessness functions. In most cases, the authority is discharging a main homelessness duty to secure suitable accommodation until a settled home becomes available for the applicant and his/her household. However, the numbers also include 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.

Technical notes

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated the statutory homelessness statistics in this release as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

This statistical release does not include any totals for former government regions except London following the consultation on the publication of regional statistics in 2012. Further details are given in the Written Ministerial Statement of 18 December 2012, which is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/statistics-for-local-enterprise-partnerships-and-upper-tier-local-authorities>. Figures are given for London because they relate to the area covered by the Greater London Authority.

Data collection

Local housing authorities report their activities under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011) to the Department for Communities and Local Government by completing the quarterly P1E statistical return. The P1E is a form designed by the Department to ask local authorities questions about statutory homelessness and the authority's activities both within and outside the legislative framework.

The form contains questions about decisions made about homelessness applications, immediate outcomes, households in temporary accommodation, and prevention and relief activity, amongst other things. A recent form and guidance notes can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions>.

Homelessness statistics are published around 50 working days after the end of each quarter, on a pre-announced date in accordance with the Official Statistics Code of Practice.

Rough sleeping figures are collected and published separately - see link on page 27. The devolved administrations publish their own statistics on statutory homelessness – see pages 28 and 29.

Data quality

All P1E returns submitted by local housing authorities undergo thorough validation and cross-checking, and late returns are pursued to ensure overall response is as complete and accurate as possible. Anomalous data are highlighted and verified by contacting the local authority. Local authorities also provide details of any data checks they undertake. These can take the form of audits (by either internal or external auditors), periodic quality checks on data extracts, or random quality checks. For the period 1 October to 31 December 2016, 97% of responding authorities reported some form of checking on the return. For sections 1 to 10 of the return, 46% of sections had periodic checks performed, 47% had random checks performed and 1% had undergone an LA audit. All sections were reported as receiving the same level of checking by local authorities.

The validation process typically takes around six weeks, after which estimates for missing data are calculated. Local authorities are split into groups based on the former government region they are in and by type of authority. For example, the West Midlands area is split into two groups, one group of district and unitary authorities, the other of metropolitan districts. London is split into inner- and outer-London. Estimates are then calculated by an automated grossing procedure which either (i) updates previously reported data based on the changes observed in other authorities in the same group or (ii) apportion totals based on ratios reported by these similar authorities.

The latest quarter's figures are based on full or partial returns for 325 out of 326 local authorities (99.6% response). Overall (for sections 1 to 7 and sections 9 and 10 of the form), 99.4% of cells were filled in by local authorities.

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

There may be a small number of households recorded in both the prevention and acceptance statistics within the same quarter – for example where an authority reasonably expected that successful prevention action had been taken but this subsequently fell through leading to acceptance. However it is broadly correct to add together the acceptance, prevention and relief figures to assess the number of households assisted within a quarter.

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

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

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

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publications-list/?keyword=&type=assessment-report>

The report gathered detailed feedback from a wide range of users. The Department is using the findings of the report to plan future developments.

Revisions policy

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

There are two types of revisions that the policy covers:

Non-Scheduled Revisions

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

Scheduled Revisions

Local authorities can update their P1E returns following publication of the data. At the end of each financial year, the figures for the eight quarters of the previous two years are routinely reviewed for revision. This release revises 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".

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

Uses of the data

The data in this statistical release form the basis of evidence on statutory homelessness and prevention and relief. The data are used for a variety of purposes. Ministers and officials in the Department for Communities and Local Government use this information to understand the scale and causes of homelessness and to consider possible policy responses. They also use it to inform the allocation of resources, performance monitoring 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. 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, and are also used for international comparisons.

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.

User engagement

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

A website has been created to keep users up to date with all the latest developments in DCLG's homelessness statistics. It contains details of user events and information about planned developments such as the redesign of the P1E form. Users can also feedback their comments through this forum:

<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/statistics/working-with-users/dclg-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 Department's *Statistics Plan for 2011/12* (available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/dclg-draft-statistics-plan-for-2011-to-2012>) sets out the Department's intention to reduce the detail of the statutory homelessness quarterly releases to include only the most high profile and volatile data, with a more detailed publication at year end. This approach is now being followed. The Statistics Plan was available for user consultation from

13 July to 3 December 2011 and the final version of the plan was published on 7 March 2012.

Notes

Legislation

Each local housing authority is required to consider housing needs within its area, including the needs of homeless households. Legislation places a statutory duty on local housing authorities to ensure that advice and assistance to all households is available free of charge.

Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/52/contents>), as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/7/contents>) and the Localism Act 2011 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>), places statutory duties on local housing authorities to provide assistance to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Authorities must consider all applications from people seeking accommodation or assistance in obtaining accommodation. A main homelessness duty (see below) is owed where the authority is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a priority need group. The priority need groups are specified in the legislation, although the definitions section above provides a summary.

In 2002 an [Order](#) made under the 1996 Act extended the priority need categories to include applicants who: are aged 16 or 17; are aged 18 to 20 and previously in care; were previously in custody; were previously in HM Forces; or were forced to flee their home because of violence or the threat of violence.

Where a main duty is owed, the authority must ensure that suitable accommodation is available for the applicant and his or her household until a settled home becomes available for them. Where households are found to be intentionally homeless or not in priority need, the authority must make an assessment of their housing needs and provide advice and assistance to help them find accommodation for themselves. Where the applicant is found to be intentionally homeless but falls in a priority need category the authority must also ensure that accommodation is available for long enough to give the applicant a reasonable opportunity to find a home.

Local authorities are encouraged to offer prevention assistance to everyone who seeks housing assistance and considers they are at risk of homelessness in the near future, including single person households and others who may not appear to the authority to fall within a priority need category (however local authorities cannot use such prevention assistance to avoid their obligations under the homelessness legislation). Prevention assistance involves providing people with the means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness. It includes activities which enable a household to remain in their current home, where appropriate, or which enable a planned and timely move and help sustain independent living.

Additionally, local authorities are encouraged to take steps to relieve homelessness and to record these cases where someone has been accepted as homeless but is not owed a duty to secure accommodation under the homelessness legislation (Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996). These are

cases where the authorities have been unable to prevent homelessness, but nevertheless decide to ensure the applicant secures accommodation (although under no statutory obligation to do more than ensure the provision of advice and assistance) – for example, cases where someone is found to be homeless but not in priority need and/or intentionally homeless.

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

The Homelessness Reduction Bill is due to have its Third Reading in the House of Lords on the day of the publication of this release. The Bill makes changes to the current homelessness legislation contained in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 ("the 1996 Act"), and to the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012. It places 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. It requires local housing authorities to provide some new homelessness services to all people in their area and expands the categories of people who they have to help to find accommodation. Details can be found here:

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/homelessnessreduction/documents.html>

Once enacted the duties in the Bill will have a significant effect on the homelessness activities performed by local authorities and in consequence on the statistical categories presented in this release. DCLG is currently working with local authorities and other stakeholders to redesign the data collection requirements to best report on homelessness following the implementation of the Bill.

Methodology

1. Rates per 1,000 households have been calculated using the 2014-based household projections for 2016 produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government. These were published on 12 July 2016 and are available at Table 406 at the following link:

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

2. National 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.

Related links

The Department previously released statistics Homelessness Prevention and Relief activity separately. The publication, relating to local authority actions prior to the 2015-16 financial year, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics#homelessness-prevention-and-relief>.

Rough sleeping statistics can be found at:

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

Figures for Autumn 2016 were published on 25 January 2017. Figures for Autumn 2017 will be

published in early 2018.

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/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing>

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. Official Statistics are published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/rents-lettings-and-tenancies>

An on-line analysis tool is available at: <https://core.communities.gov.uk/>

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/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics#pre-release-access-to-official-statistics>.

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 December 2012, everyone assessed as being unintentionally homeless would be entitled to settled accommodation.

The framework of the assessment process is similar to that in England. 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.

Data on applications are collected on the HL1 return, a continuous case level electronic data capture system. This case level data allows analysis of applications and breakdowns by combinations of characteristics which are not possible from the English local authority level P1E return. Cases can also be grouped to household level to identify instances of repeat homelessness.

Data on households in temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter are collected on the HL2 form which is completed by local authorities and records summary snapshot details in a similar way to the P1E. The HL2 return also contains information on households at risk of homelessness as defined under Section 11 of the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003.

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

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables>

In **Wales**, local authorities were until recently bound by the same statutory duties as those in England. The Housing Act (Wales) 2014 contained a number of changes to statutory homelessness legislation which were introduced on 27 April 2015. One of these was a new duty to help anyone threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days. The Welsh Government advises that data before and after the legislative changes are not comparable, as explained here:

<http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2015/150923-statutory-homelessness-legislative-changes-27-april-2015-en.pdf>

The most recent homelessness statistics for Wales are available at:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/homelessness/?lang=en>

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. The most recent statutory homelessness statistics for Northern Ireland are available at:

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

Comparing between countries

Statutory homelessness statistics for Northern Ireland are comparable with the English figures. However, actions taken by Scottish authorities since the 2003 Act to meet the target to abolish priority need by the end of 2012, and changes to the legislation in Wales from 2015, mean that caution should be exercised when comparing these figures to England or deriving a UK figure over that time period.

Enquiries

Media enquiries:

office hours: 0303 444 1157

0303 444 1159

out of hours: 0303 444 1201

Email: newsdesk@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Public enquiries and Responsible Statistician:

Mike Young

Email: homelessnessstats@communities.gsi.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 DCLG is available via the Department's website:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics

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Department for Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF
Telephone: 030 3444 0000

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