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Homelessness

Causes of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Rapid Evidence Assessment

alma economics

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1.Non-technical summary

This review aims to summarise the existing evidence on the causes of homelessness in the UK and assess the strength of the evidence. It also seeks to identify any weaknesses and gaps in the current evidence base.

Alma Economics was commissioned to carry out a one-off study consisting of three elements – to summarise knowledge on the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping and provide advice on possible next steps towards developing a suite of quantitative, predictive models of homelessness and rough sleeping in England.

Accompanying this report is a second report "A review of homelessness models", which categorises and describes a range of models used to inform policy decisions on homelessness. The report also assesses the relative strengths and weaknesses of different models.

The third and final report is a feasibility study that considers existing evidence about

- the causes of homelessness,
- models applied to measure and predict homelessness and
- data availability to identify a range of options for the development of a suite of models that will inform homelessness policies.

To build models which are useful and robust, it is important to have a grasp of the theory underlying homelessness, which is where this review fits in.

We conducted a search of papers, reports and books relevant to answering the review's research questions (i.e. main causes of homelessness, how causes vary for different subgroups, how causes vary among different types of homelessness or rough sleeping, how do causes vary geographically and over time) using a set of search terms and inclusion criteria.

In total we screened the titles and abstracts of 144 studies. From this total number of studies, information from 58 was included in the review. While the focus was on studies concerning the UK, studies that examined other countries – such as US, Australia, Germany – were also included in the review.

When considering the quality of evidence reviewed there are two key dimensions of interest – firstly about the standard of each research paper (i.e. its integrity and what it adds to knowledge generally). Secondly, there is the question of relevance to the review questions. We used the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre's (EPPI-Centre) Weight of Evidence framework to assess the quality of evidence available. Broadly the evidence reviewed was of

medium-high quality in terms of research and relevance to answering the review questions. However, in terms of using the evidence to inform model development, there were a number of gaps that are highlighted in the report.

Most research divided the causes of homelessness into structural and individual factors, though the report discusses the criticism of this established categorisation. Recent literature uses a hybrid approach which acknowledges that structural factors create the conditions within which homelessness occurs and people with personal problems are more vulnerable to these adverse social and economic trends than others. In terms of important causes of overall homelessness, papers often cited affordability of housing, relationship breakdown and poverty. While there was recognition that some causes of homelessness do interact, there was limited detail on how a set of causes interact or any dynamic effects of different causes on homelessness.

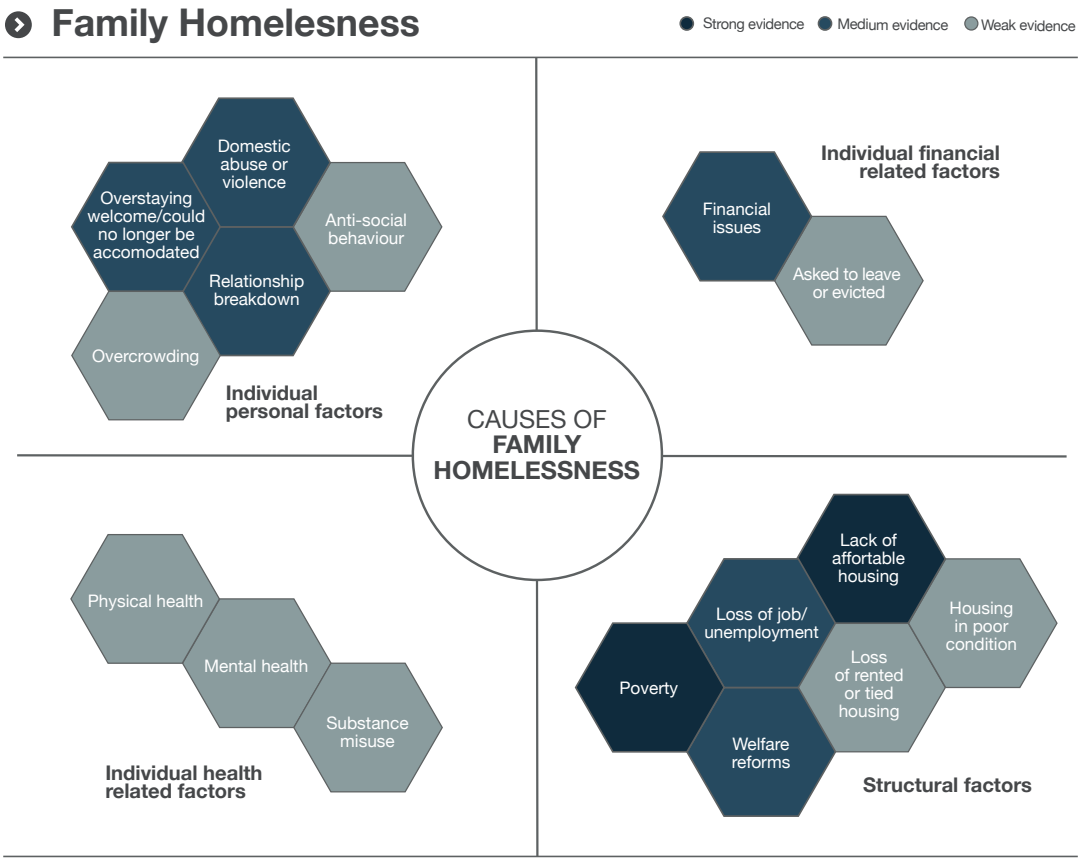
We saw relatively little quantitative work attempting to measure the relative strength of different causes of homelessness, with Bramley and Fitzpatrick (2017) being the exception. Consequently, often analysis of the reasons people became homeless was limited in its usefulness to inform prevention policies. For example, eviction is present in most lists of reasons and rank highly across all types of homelessness and various subgroups. However, there is less information available on factors that lead to eviction (e.g. employment issues, rent increases, inability to pay a deposit on another rental property) and how policy could effectively target these issues.

The limited evidence we read on the causes of homelessness over time showed the end of an assured shorthold tenancy has become an increasingly common reason for homelessness in the past ten years. Again, from a policy perspective, more detailed information would be helpful to understand the reasons behind this change.

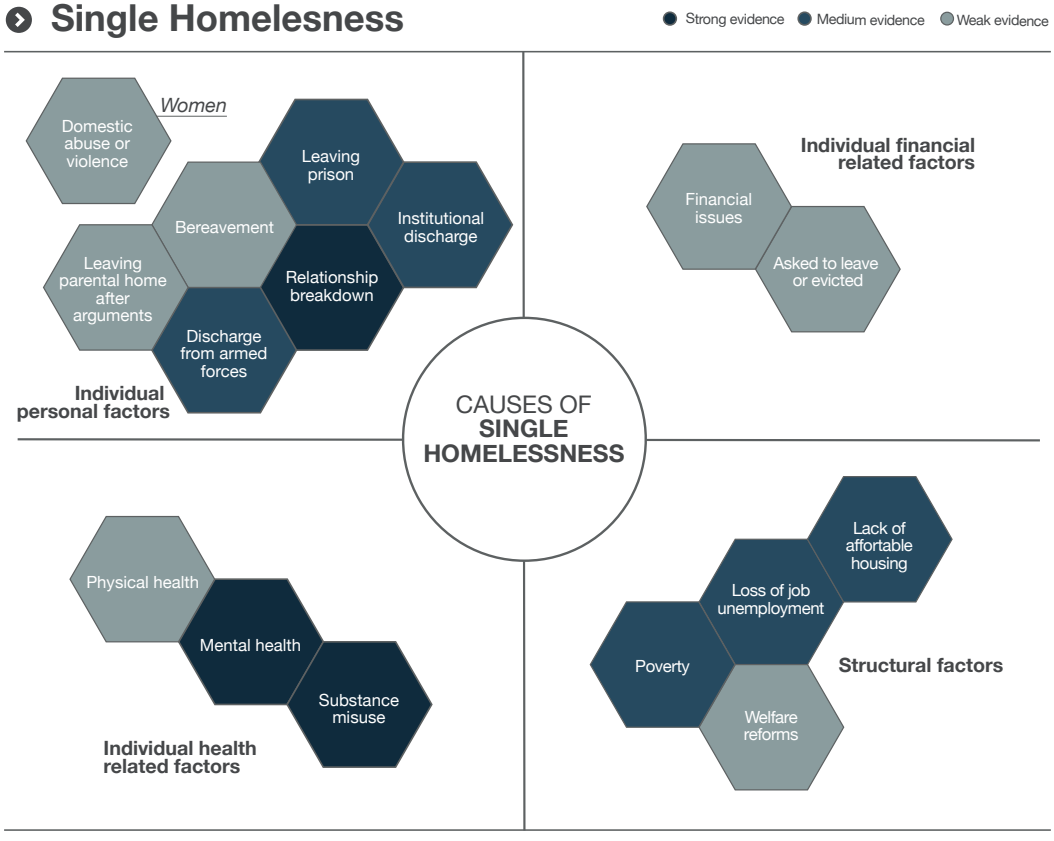
In terms of the causes of homelessness across the three different types of homelessness considered in the report – statutory homelessness,[1] single homelessness and rough sleeping – the research indicated that structural factors were more important in explaining family homelessness. People sleeping rough were more likely to have individual factors contributing to their reasons for being homeless (e.g. mental health and relationship breakdown).

[1] Under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the definition of statutory homelessness has been recently extended to include all homeless people (including single homeless and those in hidden homelessness) who turn to Local Authorities for homelessness and rough sleeping services. For ease of reference and to avoid any confusion when putting this report into context, we use the term 'statutory homelessness' to refer to the former official definition (i.e. homeless households in priority needs that apply to LAs for temporary accommodation), which is still universally used in the literature on homelessness and rough sleeping in England.

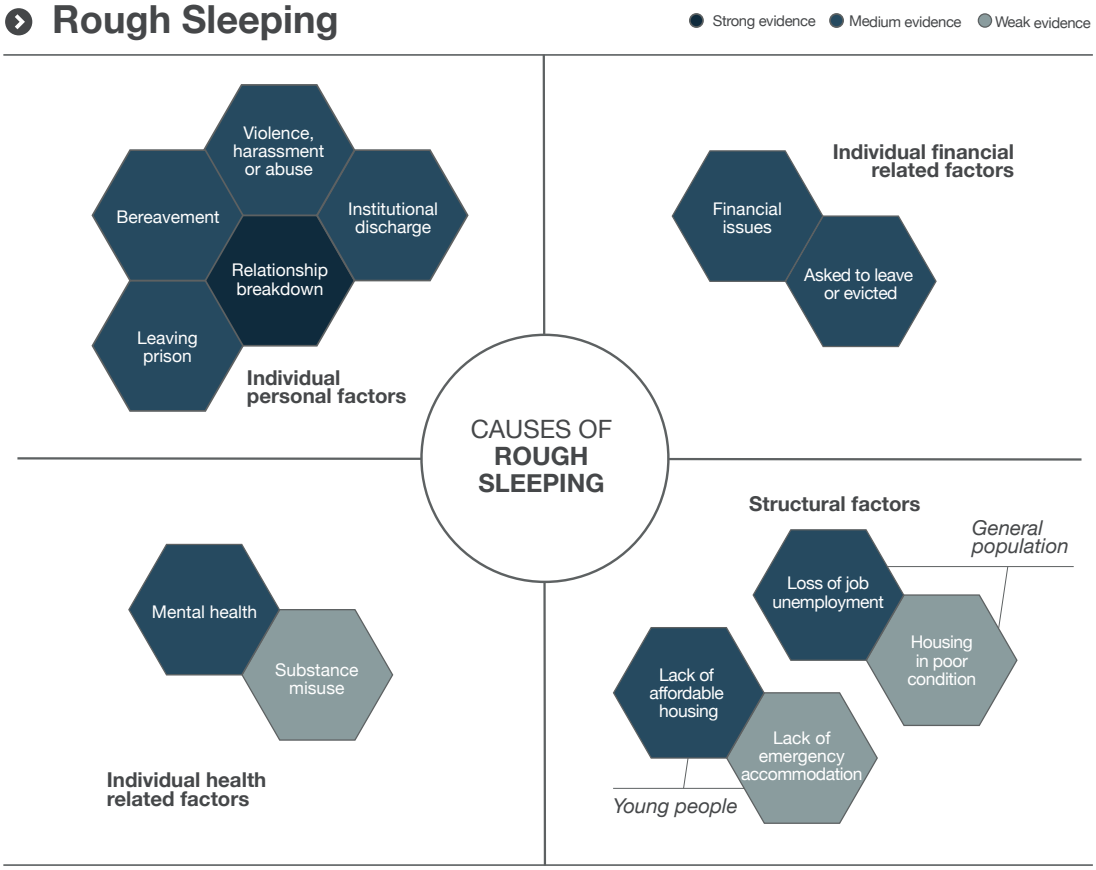
Family Homelessness



Single Homelessness



Rough Sleeping



2. Review aims and objectives

The review aims to summarise the existing evidence on the causes of homelessness in the UK and assess the strength of the evidence. It also seeks to identify any weaknesses and gaps in the current evidence base.

The specific research questions the review answers are:

- What are the key factors, drivers and causes of homelessness and rough sleeping in the UK?
- What are the strongest drivers, structural and individual, of homelessness and rough sleeping?
- What is the strength of evidence underpinning this assessment? Is evidence stronger for certain drivers than others?
- Can the strength of each driver be quantified, for the purposes of model development?
- How do these drivers vary over time and geography (i.e. national contexts and regional within the UK)?
- How do these drivers vary across types of homelessness and rough sleeping?
- What are the pathways in and out of homelessness in the UK?

The structure of the report is as follows:

- Section 3 outlines the review methods
- Section 4 answers "what are the key factors, drivers and causes of homelessness and rough sleeping in the UK?"
- Section 5 answers "what are the strongest drivers, structural and individual, of homelessness and rough sleeping?"
- Section 6 answers "how do these drivers vary over time and geography (i.e. national contexts and regional within the UK)?"
- Section 7 answers "how do these drivers vary across types of homelessness and rough sleeping?"
- Section 8 answers "what are the pathways in and out of homelessness in the UK?"
- Section 9 concludes the review, discussing whether the strength of each driver can be quantified for the purposes of model development.

Alma Economics was commissioned to carry out a one-off study consisting of three elements – to summarise knowledge on the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping and provide advice on possible next steps towards developing a suite of quantitative, predictive models of homelessness and rough sleeping in England.

Accompanying this report is a second report "A review of homelessness models", which categorises and describes a range of models used to inform policy decisions on homelessness. The report also assesses the relative strengths and weaknesses of different models.

The final report is a feasibility study that considers existing evidence about i) the causes of homelessness, ii) models applied to measure and predict homelessness and iii) data availability to identify a range of options for the development of a suite of models that will inform homelessness policies.

While the evidence review aims to investigate the causes of homelessness in the UK, the majority of the UK-based research was only relevant to England. We found no evidence for Northern Ireland and Wales and limited evidence covering Scotland. Consequently, one gap in the evidence reviewed is around understanding of homelessness causes across the devolved nations. We note the focus of the later feasibility study is for modelling homelessness in England.

Terminology

For the purposes of this report, we break down homelessness into three categories using the following definitions:

- Homeless families – this could be a single parent or couple with dependent children in their care
- Single homeless people – the identifying feature of this group is that they do not have dependent children. This group includes a couple without children in their care and the hidden homeless population
- Rough sleeping – those who are homeless and bedded down on the streets including people new to the streets and people entrenched on the streets with multiple, complex needs
- With regards to the terms causes, drivers, and triggers, we try to replicate the terminology used in each study. The terms risk factors and predictors were also encountered during our review, but less frequently. Table 1 contains common definitions for these terms, though it is important to note that the terms are not explicitly defined in most papers we reviewed, and hence there may be occasions where the authors use them differently.

Table 1. Terms and descriptions

Term	Description
Cause	Act, condition, circumstance or characteristic that leads to and/or sustains homelessness.
Driver	Act, condition, circumstance or characteristic that contributes to and/or sustains homelessness, but does not necessarily cause it
Predictor	Act, condition, circumstance or characteristic systematically predates homelessness events, but is not necessarily a causal factor
Risk factor	Act, condition, circumstance or characteristic that increases the probability of homelessness, i.e has a causal impact at population level, but may or may not have an impact in the case of any particular individual/household
Trigger	Act, condition, circumstance or characteristic that immediately predates a homelessness event but does not constitute a fundamental cause

3. Review Methods

Search Strategy

We conducted a search of papers, reports and books relevant to answering the study's research questions (i.e. main causes of homelessness, how causes vary for different subgroups, how do causes vary among different types of homelessness or rough sleeping, how do causes vary geographically, over time etc.). The databases and online libraries searched included: Google Scholar, JSTOR, Science Direct, SpringerLink, SSNR eLibrary, IDEAS, NBER, PsychInfo and Cochrane. The search was conducted using combinations of different search terms.

We provide a list of the search terms we used for the REA in the following table:

Table 2. *Rapid evidence assessment search terms*

Primary terms	General secondary terms	Specific secondary terms
Homeless	Causes	Poverty
Homelessness	Drivers	Substance misuse
Rough sleeping	Risk factors	Housing benefit
Transitional housing	Structural causes	Welfare
Statutory homelessness	Predictors	Local housing allowance
Sofa surfing	Pathways	Universal Credit
Temporary accommodation	England	Housing benefit
No fixed abode	UK	Discretionary Housing
Hidden homeless	Triggers	Payments
Single homeless	Protective factors	Benefit cap
Supported housing	Transitional housing	Austerity
Non-statutory homeless	Transitional housing	Supporting People
Multiple exclusion		Housing (affordable)
Chronic homeless		Mental health
		Family breakdown
		Relationship breakdown
		Unemployment
		Labour market
		Complex needs
		Disability
		House prices
		Assured short-hold tenancy
		Migrant
		Immigrant

In addition, the references listed in some studies retrieved were screened in order to identify additional articles for possible inclusion in the REA. In total we screened the titles and abstracts of 144 studies. From this total number of studies, information from 58 were included in the review. While the focus was on studies covering the UK, studies that examined other countries – such as US, Australia, Germany – were also included in the review. Only studies written in English were included.

Inclusion criteria

Table 3. *Terms and descriptions*

Criteria	Review scope
Exposure of interest	• Homelessness and rough sleeping causes
Participants	• Statutory homelessness/families who are homeless - families with dependent children and households containing a vulnerable person • Single homeless people - all those who fall outside the statutory definition and could be staying in hostels, or sofa surfing. This category also includes the hidden homeless population • Rough sleeping - those who are homeless and bedded down on the streets, including people new to the streets, and people entrenched on the streets with multiple, complex needs
Peer review	• Prioritised peer reviewed evidence but we did include technical reports
Geographic location	• UK and international – a focus on UK but we also considered relevant research from comparable developed countries (e.g. Germany, US, Australia, Canada)
Dates of research	• Prioritised research from 2005 but some important, often cited papers pre-dated 2005 so these were included • Date of publications were considered on a case by case basis
Research methods/ study design	• All methods
Language	• English only
Type of publication	• Peer reviewed journal articles; non-peer reviewed academic outputs (reports, working papers, etc.); government commissioned research; publications by other research organisations (e.g. charity bodies in the Homelessness Sector); practitioner and provider evidence • Includes evidence reviews and original studies • Excludes editorials/newspaper articles

Search results

A total of 58 papers were included in the evidence assessment. Of these studies, 7 referenced international comparisons. The following types of papers were included:

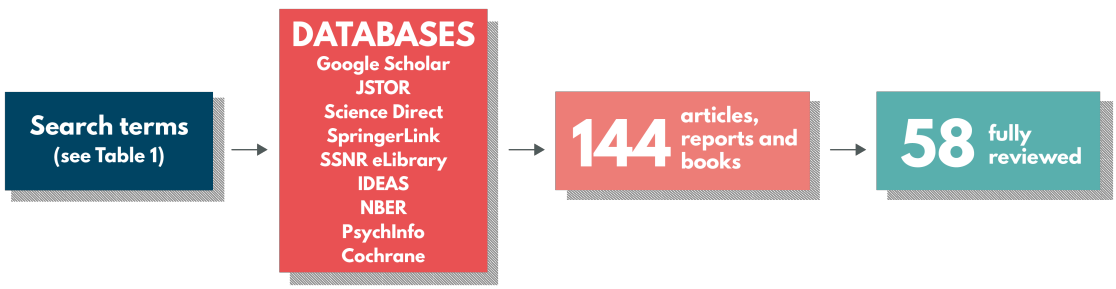
- Reviews of the literature (16 papers)
- Qualitative primary research (16 papers)
- Quantitative primary research (10 papers)
- A combination of the above - most often a review followed by qualitative primary research (16 papers)

There were many review questions and a limited amount of time to carry out the study – this led to judgements being made about the relevance of papers, based on screening the titles and abstracts. We recognise this review is not comprehensive and there is more relevant material that we did not have time to include.

Quality assessment

When considering the quality of evidence reviewed there are two key dimensions of interest – the standard of each research paper (i.e. its integrity and what it adds to knowledge generally) and the relevance to the review research questions. We use the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre's (EPPI-Centre) Weight of Evidence framework to assess the quality of evidence along both these dimensions. As outlined in Gough (2007), the Weight of Evidence framework gives a tool for making separate judgements about generic and review-specific criteria.

We have gone through each paper and made an assessment about the following four dimensions – Evidence A, Evidence B, Evidence C and Evidence D.[2] The descriptions below are adapted from Gough (2007).



[2] For more details on the assessment of each paper, the interested reader may refer to the appendix A.

Weight of Evidence A – General judgement on coherence and integrity

This is a generic and therefore non-review specific judgement about the coherence and integrity of the evidence on its own terms. It may align with the generally accepted criteria for evaluating the quality of the evidence by those who use and produce it. In making this judgement, we used a modified NICE checklist designed to assess qualitative or quantitative evidence and think about how research questions are answered.

- ➔ 37 papers received a ranking of high
- ➔ 17 papers received a ranking of medium
- ➔ 4 papers received a ranking of low

The papers that ranked low were either very outdated, or from short summary reviews with some detail missing that could not be found elsewhere.

Weight of Evidence B – Specific judgement on forms of evidence

This is a review specific judgement about the appropriateness of certain forms of evidence for answering the review questions, in other words whether the methodology used is suited to answer the review research questions. For example, the evaluation of a pilot programme which seeks to improve long term outcomes for homelessness individuals is not likely to be the most useful method for understanding causes of homelessness.

There was some overlap between Weight of Evidence A and B in the assessment. However certain reoccurring factors created variations such as i) when the research method was appropriate, but the sample came from country outside the UK (where Weight of Evidence A>Weight of Evidence B), and ii) where the small sample was appropriate for generic research but for the sake of the review specific questions (i.e. understanding the causes of homelessness), a larger sample would have been desirable to answer the research questions (again here Weight of Evidence A>Weight of Evidence B).

- ➔ 39 papers received a ranking of high
- ➔ 11 papers received a ranking of medium
- ➔ 18 papers received a ranking of low

Weight of Evidence C – Specific judgement on relevance

This is a review specific judgement about the relevance of the scope of the evidence for this review. For example, a research study may not have the type of sample, the type of evidence gathering or analysis required to answer the review research questions or it may not have been undertaken in an appropriate context from which results can be extrapolated. For example, a case study with a small sample may not

provide robust information on causes of homelessness in the UK.

There may also be issues of propriety of how the research was undertaken, such as the ethics of the research, that could impact on its inclusion and interpretation (Pawson *et. al.* 2003).

Studies that were marked as low in this area were those that discussed homelessness generally without having a focus on causes, whether set in the UK or internationally, and those focusing only on specific types of homelessness. Studies that were marked as medium were studies about causes of homelessness but outside of the UK context. Studies that were marked as high in this area were those about the causes of homelessness in the UK context, including for different types of homelessness, different geographic areas (within the UK) and including international comparisons where England was part of the set of countries examined.

- ➔ 30 papers received a ranking of high
- ➔ 19 papers received a ranking of medium
- ➔ 9 papers received a ranking of low

Weight of Evidence D – Overall judgement

This is a review specific judgement which combines the previous assessments to give an overall weighting.

Papers ranked as low quality for this specific review were based entirely out of the UK and their subject areas were not focused on causes of homelessness but other aspects of homelessness. The two papers that included primary data collection and were ranked low had very small samples, so it would be difficult to say how relevant the findings were to the UK homeless population as a whole.

These assessments of the quality of evidence, while based on structured frameworks, require making many subjective judgements. For example, how useful is research asking a small unrepresentative sample of homeless people in England to understanding the causes of homelessness in the UK? In these cases, we have given a medium overall assessment, where the research is of good quality.

- ➔ 31 papers received an overall ranking of high
- ➔ 24 papers received an overall ranking of medium
- ➔ 3 papers received an overall ranking of low

Overall the quality of research was medium-high to answer the research questions outlined earlier.

4. What are the key factors, drivers and causes of homelessness and rough sleeping in the UK?

Traditionally, the factors that cause homelessness, in the UK and internationally, have been divided between structural and individual factors (Bramley and Fitzpatrick, 2017; Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010; Fitzpatrick, 2005; Neale, 1997):

- Structural factors are wider societal and economic issues that affect opportunities and social environments for individuals. This includes unfavourable housing and labour market conditions, reduced welfare and benefits rising levels of poverty and the growing fragmentation of the family.
- Individual factors apply to the personal circumstances of a homeless person. These factors may include personal crisis, traumatic events, mental health or addiction challenges. Relationship problems can include domestic abuse and violence, addiction, mental health problems of other family members and a lack of financial resilience.

Even though this division of factors is well established in the literature, we did see some issues with the structure. Some incorrectly interpret individual factors as issues of personal agency (i.e. the individual is culpable), though there are individual factors that are outside a person's control (Bramley and Fitzpatrick, 2017).

In recent literature, most academic commentators attempt to weave together consideration of both structural and individual factors when studying homelessness – a blended or hybrid approach. This leads them to a position described by Pleace (2000) as the ''new orthodoxy''. The key assertions of this approach are the following: structural factors create the conditions within which homelessness will occur and people with personal problems are more vulnerable to these adverse social and economic trends than others. Hence, the high concentration of people with personal problems in the homeless population can be explained by their susceptibility to structural forces and not solely by their personal circumstances (Fitzpatrick, 2005).

However, it should be added that the hybrid approach – while providing a more rounded explanation for homelessness than the individual and structural accounts that preceded it –

is, according to Fitzpatrick (2005), unsatisfactory from a theoretical point of view, since:

- the individual/structural division of the explanations for homelessness is unhelpfully crude and reflects the discredited concept of a strict agency/structure dichotomy in sociological theory (Stones, 2001).
- it fails to convincingly host a whole range of factors that could contribute to homelessness – especially when structural factors are limited to macroeconomic social and economic forces and individual factors are limited to personal behaviours. For instance, the experience of poor parenting is neither a macro-structural nor a behavioural issue.
- there are many factors that could be interpreted as operating either at a structural or individual level. For instance, is the breakdown of a homeless person's marriage the result of personal behaviours or the result of a structural trend towards growing family fragmentation.
- the "new orthodoxy" is difficult to account for the cases of homelessness that are the result of acute personal crises where structural factors may seem almost absent.
- it lacks a clear conceptualisation of homelessness causation.

Furthermore, it might also be useful to note that Fitzpatrick (2005) proposed an alternative "conceptual framework" for thinking about homelessness causes, which identifies causal mechanisms on four levels:

- economic structures – social class interacts with other stratification processes and welfare policies to generate poverty and to determine poor individuals' and households' non-access to material resources such as housing, income, employment and household goods.
- housing structures – inadequate housing supply and a deterioration in affordability can squeeze out those on lower incomes; tenure and allocation policies, coupled with the collective impacts of private choices, can lead to residential segregation and spatial concentration of the least advantaged groups.
- patriarchal and interpersonal structures – can lead to the emergence of domestic abuse and violence, child neglect, weak social support, relationship breakdown, etc.
- individual attributes – personal resilience can be undermined by mental health problems, substance misuse, lack of self-esteem and/or confidence.

In what follows, we present a summary of some key papers that use the structural/individual factor split to discuss the causes of homelessness.

Bramley and Fitzpatrick (2017) find that – in the UK at least – the odds of experiencing homelessness are

systematically structured around a set of identifiable individual and structural factors, with most of the latter being outside the control of those directly affected. They state that factors such as demographics, housing and labour markets, poverty and teenage experiences are important drivers of homelessness and demonstrate their relative importance (see the next section). Their findings mainly support the structural analysis of homelessness, without discounting the possibility of wholly individual causes in specific cases. They also recognise the potentially protective impact of strong social support networks.

The National Audit Office (2017) analysed levels of homelessness since 2004-5 to understand its causes. The research found that the causes differ for individual households, who can become homeless for many different reasons (e.g. affordability of housing, relationship breakdown, parents no longer being willing or able to house children in their own homes). The report shows that, while it is possible for anybody to become homeless, the risk is highest for households who live in centres of economic activity and who are on the margins of being able to pay market rents for their homes. Throughout the analysis period, the risk of homelessness was highest in London and other urban centres. Since 2010-11, the risk of homelessness was lowest outside of urban centres in the South East and East of England.

Wilson and Barton (2018) also highlight the structural and individual factors that could lead to homelessness. On the one hand, structural factors include the lack of available affordable housing in England, the recent decline of the social housing sector as a proportion of all housing, tighter mortgage regulation and requirements for higher deposits from first-time buyers. On the other hand, individual factors include relationship breakdown, mental illness and addiction, discharge from prison and leaving the care system. The authors also mention that the circumstances in which families become homeless tend to differ from those of single homeless individuals, with the latter being more likely to experience more ‘chaotic’ lifestyles. However, no further details were provided.

Fitzpatrick et al. (2018) conclude that the causes of homelessness are complex, with no ‘necessary’ or ‘sufficient’ single ‘trigger’ event that one can point to. They also mention that individual, interpersonal and structural factors all play a role and interact with each other. To give an example of interactions take the example of poverty – Fitzpatrick and Bramley (2017) find that childhood poverty is a powerful predictor for adult homelessness. While poverty can lead to homelessness though a person not being able to pay for housing, Fitzpatrick and Bramley (2017) note other ways poverty can cause homelessness. They note that poverty has a strong causal effect on

mental and physical health outcomes and that entrenched poverty is also linked to serious forms of drug misuse and chronic offending. For research on interactions and overlaps (also known as multiple disadvantage), see the summaries of Fitzpatrick et al. (2011) and the Bramley et al. (2015) report in the next section.

With respect to the main structural factors, Fitzpatrick et al. (2018) further mention that international comparative research and the experience of previous UK recessions suggests that housing market trends and policies have the most direct impact on levels of homelessness. The influence of labour market change is more likely to be lagged and diffuse, and strongly mediated by welfare arrangements and other contextual factors.

Moreover, Loopstra et al. (2016) demonstrate that reductions in spending on social welfare by local authorities and central government in the UK are strongly associated with increased homelessness.

Finally, Fitzpatrick et al. (2018) also discuss how individual vulnerabilities, support needs, and 'risk taking' behaviours implicated in some people's homelessness are themselves often, though not always, rooted in the pressures associated with poverty and other forms of structural disadvantage. At the same time, 'anchor' social relationships – such as family bonds – that could act as a primary 'buffer' to homelessness, can be put under considerable strain by stressful financial circumstances.

Thus, deteriorating economic conditions in England could also be expected to generate more individual vulnerabilities to homelessness over time.

Section highlights

In conclusion, the strongest evidence we found was in the areas where there is a broad consensus in the literature about i) the way to organise the various causes of homelessness (i.e. structural and individual), ii) the fact that a combination of structural and individual factors can lead to homelessness, iii) which causes are important (e.g. affordability of housing, relationship breakdown and poverty) and iv) that causes vary over a number of dimensions.

There are two main gaps in the evidence reviewed about overall causes of homelessness (without considering specific subgroups or types of homelessness). Firstly, there is a lack of clarity around the importance of different factors (see next section) and secondly while we saw acknowledgement that some causes of homelessness do interact, these overviews did not attempt to gain an understanding about how a set of causes interacts or any dynamic effects of different causes on homelessness.

Subgroups

The previous discussion demonstrates that there is much variation in explaining why some people become homeless. For example, individual factors play a more important role for some people in falling into homelessness (Clarke, 2016). It seems reasonable to expect that different types of individuals may experience homelessness for different reasons. To attempt to unpick the causes of homelessness, we investigate the available research on different population subgroups, such as different age groups (young and older people) and women. For a discussion on family homelessness, see section 7 which covers types of homelessness.

Young People

Even though the rate of youth homelessness is difficult to quantify, roughly half of the individuals in supported homeless accommodation in England are between the ages of 18-24 (Homeless Link, 2017). Relationship breakdown between young people and their family, or their primary caregivers has consistently emerged as a leading cause of youth homelessness (Homeless Link, 2015 and 2018).

Recent research by Homeless Link (2018), reflecting on findings from surveys with 188 homelessness services and local authorities (LAs) across England as well as in-depth interviews with 25 young people who have experienced homelessness, finds that structural factors relating to financial hardship, housing, and labour market pressures greatly contribute to family tensions and conflict. This indicates a difference in the order of how structural and individual factors interact compared to the "new orthodoxy". For young people relationship breakdown tends to be the initial driver of homelessness (Watts et al., 2015) – though this particular driver can be influenced by both structural factors (e.g. employment) or other individual factors (e.g. mental and physical health issues).

The research also examined the views of LAs and homelessness service providers on the impact of welfare benefit changes as introduced within Universal Credit and wider welfare reforms in the past year.

To be more specific, the findings of Homeless Link (2018) strongly suggest that the administrative changes and delays under Universal Credit, including delayed payments, housing costs paid direct to claimant, monthly payments in arrears, removal of automatic entitlement to housing costs for 18-21 year olds, digital by default and youth obligation, adversely affected young people's access to housing.

As for wider reforms – that is, sanctions, capping of local housing allowance to shared accommodation rate, benefit cap, abolition of the spare room subsidy (i.e. bedroom tax) and non-dependent deductions – the findings showed that both benefit

sanctions and the capping of the local housing allowance to the shared accommodation rate particularly influenced young people's housing options. More specifically, benefit sanctions and the capping of the local housing allowance to the shared accommodation rate were considered by about 50% and 40% respectively of respondents to have influenced young people's ability to access and sustain their accommodation.

Moreover, individual factors – such as mental and physical ill health or substance misuse – played a key role in them either choosing or being asked to leave home. Some young people also reported that experiences of domestic abuse and violence or neglect contributed to leaving the family home.

Watts et al. (2015) reviewed the empirical evidence on the immediate triggers of homelessness among young people. The authors reported that relationship breakdown has been, and continues to be, a main cause of homelessness in the UK. However, they state that – according to the data – this factor is even more important for triggering youth homelessness. For example, according to statutory statistics for Scotland for 2014/15, 39% of the 16-24 year olds accepted as homeless cited being asked to leave as the immediate reason for homelessness – compared to 25% among all age groups – while a further 28% cited a dispute within the household as the immediate reason (Scottish Government, 2015). In addition, Homeless Link (2014) found that 36% of young people at responding providers and LAs were homeless because their parents/caregivers were no longer able or willing to accommodate them, with a further 24% no longer able to stay with other relatives or friends.

Nevertheless, the authors noted that the importance of family conflict in forcing young people to leave the family home does not necessarily reveal the full story of the causes of youth homelessness and how they are changing. Family conflict can be the result of individual problems and support needs, interpersonal problems or manifestation of childhood trauma. In addition, problems within families may also be due to structural factors, such as changes in housing/labour market conditions.

Interestingly, some of the study's key participants suggested that increasing financial difficulties – due mainly to welfare reform – started to play a key role in causing family conflict and youth homelessness, while another participant discussed on how general socio-structural changes – in education and labour market – created a context in which certain groups of young people were more exposed to homelessness. Watts et al. (2015) noted that these comments, which suggest a shift towards structural causes of youth homelessness, align with findings from other studies, such as YHNE (2014) and Homeless Link (2014).

Watts et al. (2015) also presented the available evidence on the main

characteristics of young people who experienced homelessness in the UK. Part of the report looked at the following topics: socio-economic background, age, gender, ethnicity, household type and nationality/migration status. Regarding the socio-economic background, Watts et al. (2015) referred to the results of the UK Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey 2012 (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2013), which showed that increased risk of homelessness is linked with socio-economic disadvantage of various kinds, such as being a lone parent, living in material deprivation and living in a deprived neighbourhood. The authors also referred to evidence from Quilgars et al. (2008), that some black and minority ethnic groups are at higher risk of homelessness – a fact that reflects the increased risks of socio-economic disadvantage amongst these groups. Quilgars et al. (2008) also conclude that the vast majority of young homeless people come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Lastly, citing Bramley and Fitzpatrick (unpublished), the authors mention that analysis of survey data in England and Scotland suggests that the strong association between young age and homelessness is explained by the disproportionate experience of poverty among young people, rather than their youth per se.

Young LGBT

Everything mentioned above regarding young people also applies to the young members of the LGBT community. However, young people who identify as LGBT experience more acute challenges and are more likely to find themselves homeless than their non-LGBT peers.

According to AKT (2015), being a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender young person increases the risk of experiencing parental rejection, alongside familial physical, sexual and emotional abuse and/or violence, discrimination, substance abuse, mental health problems and sexual exploitation.[3] Cull et al. (2006) and TUC (2016) mention that young LGBT individuals experience high levels of homelessness as a result of homophobia experienced.

Older people

Drivers leading older people to homelessness appear to be different compared to the general population. For example, Warnes and Crane (2006) focus on the causes of new episodes of homelessness in the UK by examining information from 131 people aged 50 years and over and their key-workers or case managers.[4] Two thirds of the respondents had become homeless for the first time in later life. The findings of the paper suggest that the reasons for

[3] This has also been highlighted by Cochran et al. (2002) and Durso and Gates (2012) in the US.

[4] The authors note that most hostels and projects for homeless people assign key workers (or case managers) to assess a client's problems and to advise and support them, as was the case for all except seven respondents.

homelessness among older people are multiple, complex and for many deep-seated. Furthermore, both sources indicated that fewer than half of the identified reasons were personal to them, while a third pointed to service deficiencies.

Crane et al. (2005) used – along with the UK data from Warnes and Crane (2006) – similar information from 122 people aged 50 years and over in Boston (US) and 124 in Melbourne (Australia). The findings indicate that the reasons why older people become homeless were similar in the three cities, including mortgage or rent problems, housing was sold, converted, or needed repair and relationship breakdown. It is further shown that previous experiences of homelessness were more common amongst men than women, and that men were significantly more likely than women to have been homeless for periods of more than three years. Women are considered to be more likely to have first become homeless after the age of 50 years (Crane and Warnes, 2012).

A recent survey in Australia revealed that the causes of homelessness among older people include lack of affordable housing, declining rate of home ownership, death of a spouse resulting in reduced income, leaving a violent partner or spouse and inability to live on the Government pension (Homelessness Australia, 2016). The survey also highlights the significant impact of housing costs on the financial security of older people.

We note the UK evidence on the causes of homelessness among older people is relatively dated.

Women

Though not only affecting women, experiences of violence and sexual exploitation – both in their own personal relationships and in the relationships they witnessed growing up – play a particularly important role in women's pathways into homelessness (Jones, 1999; May et al., 2007). Pleace et al. (2008) drew on data from 5 linked surveys on families and 16-17 year olds accepted as homeless by English LAs,[5] conducted in 2005 by BMRB Social Research and analysed by the Centre for Housing Policy and found that:

- family homelessness tends to be experienced primarily by younger women, who are socially and economically marginalised lone parents with young dependent children.
- there exists a strong association between male domestic abuse and violence and experience of family homelessness, reflected in the presence of a disproportionate number of female lone parents who had experienced violence or abuse.
- the largely female-headed lone parent households who sought

[5] The total number of usable interviews from each survey was: 2053 (Survey 1), 450 (Survey 2), 350 (Survey 3), 571 (Survey 4) and 180 (Survey 5).

assistance under the homelessness law often tried to avoid using the statutory system. Women and female lone parents experiencing homelessness tended to exhaust informal options (i.e. staying with family, friends and acquaintances) prior to seeking assistance under the homelessness laws. Moreover, women and their children had often been homeless for some time before seeking formal help.

Furthermore, a German study based on interviews with homeless women suggested that poverty, poor school education, violence and addiction in families were the main causes of homelessness (Enders-Dragasser, 2010).[6] Large and Kliger (2013) note that women live longer than men but continue to earn less, due to lower wages and more part-time work which leads to lower savings, increasing the probability they end up homeless. McFerran (2010) highlights that the persons most likely to be tenants after the age of 45 are never-married people, sole parent households or those who have experienced the dissolution of a relationship.

[6] This research was based on a small sample of 37 interviews with women in Germany.

5. What are the strongest drivers, structural and individual, of homelessness and rough sleeping?

The previous section presented some findings on the causes of homelessness. We next seek to understand what the published evidence tells us about the relative importance of these causes. For each relevant paper that adds to the literature, we briefly set out i) how the researchers identified the relative contribution of each cause and ii) the results, which are displayed as a ranking of causes of homelessness.

Bramley and Fitzpatrick (2017) determine the strength of various factors that cause homelessness by analysing three large-scale UK surveys:

- Scottish Household Survey from 2001-2007 and 2010
- Poverty and Social Exclusion survey for 2012
- British Cohort Study – provides systematic data from birth to young adulthood on every individual born in England, Scotland and Wales in one specific week in 1970

By examining surveys covering different samples of the UK population, the authors allow for an assessment of how consistent the causes of homelessness are in different datasets.

According to the researchers, the results of the Scottish Household Survey analysis suggest that – demographics aside – housing market conditions are the most important factor 'explaining' homelessness, followed by labour market conditions and poverty. The analysis of the other two datasets further reinforces the messages on the significant effects of poverty, employment, tenure and family relationships.

In sum, Bramley and Fitzpatrick (2017) find that homelessness causes are consistent across surveys. However, their ranking is different, probably because of differences in data availability within each survey and model specifications.[7] The fact that the ranking of factors is not the same across surveys implies that the relative

[7] For example, variance in time – the British Cohort Study data were collected pre-2000, while the Scottish Household Survey data were collected in late 2010 and geography (Scottish Household Survey vs British Cohort Study) could be very important drivers of this result.

importance of distinct causes may differ across individuals, geographic locations and over time. To be more specific, Bramley and Fitzpatrick (2017) use a logistic regression model for all three datasets mentioned above. In order to determine the strength of each factor, they calculate the net addition to the overall explanatory power of the model – in other words, how much of the variation in homelessness is 'explained' by each factor – by introducing the variables in blocks and in different sequences. One such sequence could for instance involve adding to the model the variables block covering demographics first, followed by the labour market variables block and finally the poverty variables block. Another sequence might involve introducing the poverty block following demographics and then the labour market block, etc.

There is consistency in the most important cause of homelessness identified in the Scottish Household Survey, which is demographics or individual characteristics. Regarding the remaining (non-demographic) blocks of variables, if they were completely unrelated, their percentages in the table below would have been the same regardless of the order they have been introduced in the model. But, the fact that the percentage of explanation changes so much is a clear indication that they

Table 4. ***Scottish Household Survey***

Sequence 1		Sequence 2		Sequence 3	
Block of variables	% of explanation	Block of variables	% of explanation	Block of variables	% of explanation
Demographics	38	Demographics	38	Demographics	38
Poverty	24	Housing market	30	Labour market	16
Labour market	27	Poverty	6	Housing market	18
Housing market	10	Labour market	2	Poverty	5

Source: Bramley and Fitzpatrick (2017)

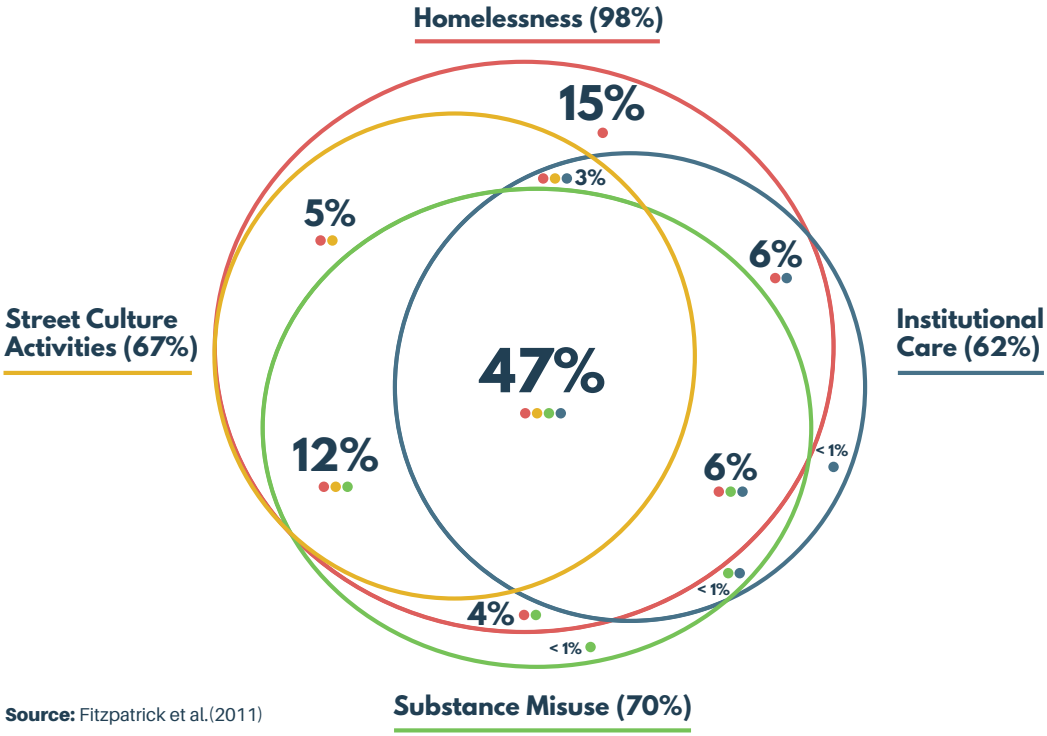
often coexist (e.g. unfavourable labour market conditions coexist with poverty, making it tricky to speak about the effect of one independently of the other).

Then, according to the table above – excluding demographics – housing market conditions appear to be the set of factors that adds the most to the explanatory power of the model (i.e. they are most closely correlated with homelessness), followed by labour market conditions and poverty. For the analysis of the other two datasets, see the appendix B.

Fitzpatrick et al. (2011) examine 'multiple exclusion homelessness' (MEH) in seven urban locations across the UK – Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds and Westminster. This paper is included as it was one of the few examples quantifying overlapping factors. According to the researchers, many people who have experienced MEH have also experienced one or more of the following additional domains of deep social exclusion: institutional care, substance misuse or participation in street culture activities (e.g. begging). The study is based on data gathered between February and May 2010 and over 450 interviewers with people who have experienced MEH.

Bramley et al. (2015) attempted to provide a statistical profile of a major manifestation of Severe and Multiple Disadvantage (SMD) in England. In the study, the term SMD is used as shorthand for representing "the problems faced by adults involved in homelessness, substance misuse and criminal justice systems in England" – with complicating factors, including

Overlaps between domains of deep social exclusion



Source: Fitzpatrick et al.(2011)

poverty and mental ill-health.

Among other things, the study found that:

- SMD, as defined in the report, is distinguished from other forms of social disadvantage due to "the degree of stigma and dislocation from societal norms that these intersecting experiences represent."
- the people affected by SMD were mostly men aged 25-44 with long histories of economic and social marginalisation and in most cases of childhood trauma.
- apart from general background poverty, SMD's most prominent early roots seem to come from very difficult family relationships and very poor educational experiences.
- the distribution of SMD cases varies widely throughout the country, and is widely concentrated in northern cities, some coastal towns and central London Boroughs.
- The quality of life reported by persons facing SMD is much worse than that reported by many other low-income and vulnerable people, particularly regarding their mental health and the sense of social isolation.

Subgroups

Family homelessness

As far as family homelessness in England is concerned, Pleace et al. (2008) (see section 4) note that the reasons for applying as homeless include relationship breakdown, eviction, overcrowded housing, outstaying welcome or no longer able to be accommodated, inability to pay the mortgage or rent, anti-social behaviour and mental or physical health problems. The study is fairly dated and it is possible that reasons for applying as homeless have changed. Section 6 has a more detail discussion on how causes of homelessness have varied over time.

Table 5. Family homelessness - reasons for applying as homeless

Reason[8]	%
Relationship breakdown	38
Eviction or being threatened with eviction	26
Overcrowded housing	24
Outstaying welcome/could no longer be accommodated	20
Inability to pay the mortgage or rent	7
Harassment, anti-social behaviour or crime	4
Mental or physical health problems	2

Source: Pleace et al. (2008)

[8] Multiple responses were possible.

A more recent report by Wilson and Barton (2018) presented the reasons for statutory homelessness recorded by LAs in 2017/18 across England and involved 56,580 households. The findings related to loss of last settled home are outlined in table 6.

Table 6. Reasons for loss of last settled home (proportion of all households accepted as homeless in 2017/2018)

Reason	%
End of assured shorthold tenancy	27
Parents no longer able to accommodate	15
Other relatives/friends no longer able to accommodate	12
Relationship breakdown - violent	12
Loss of other rented or tied housing	6
Relationship breakdown - other	6
Mortgage or rent arrears	1
Other	18

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Statutory homelessness live table 774, 29 June 2018

Even though homelessness causes are also consistent across these studies, we should point out that their ranking is not the same. For example, inability to pay the mortgage/rent is found to rank 5th in Pleace et al. (2008) and 7th in Wilson and Barton (2018). Clearly, the ranking of causes is highly dependent on which questions are asked and what information is available from administrative data or surveys. If data were collected following a uniform procedure, we could better identify the changes in causes of homelessness over time.

Young people

The results of the Homeless Link (2018) survey (see section 4) indicate that young people accessing homelessness accommodation services became homeless due to a variety of reasons, as outlined in table below.

Table 7. Young people accessing homelessness accommodation services in August 2017 needed accommodation for the following reasons

Reason	%
Parents/caregivers were no longer able or willing to accommodate	49
Drug or alcohol problems	31
Mental or physical health problems	26
Leaving care	17
Anti-social behaviour or crime	17
Overcrowded housing	12
Other debt-related issues	12
Unemployment	11
Domestic abuse	11
Financial problems caused by benefits reduction	9

Source: Homeless Link (2018)

Rough Sleeping

According to the CHAIN (2018) annual report, the people rough sleeping for the first time in the area of Greater London from April 2017 to March 2018 reported various reasons for leaving their last settled base, as listed in Table 8.

Table 8. Reason for leaving last settled base

Reason	%
Asked to leave or evicted	36
Employment and education	18
Relationship breakdown/ death of relative or friend/ move nearer family/friends/community	15
End of stay in short or medium-term accommodation	6
End of stay in institution	5
Financial issues	4
Victim of violence, harassment or abuse	4
Housing conditions	1.1
Transient/travelling around	1.1
Domestic violence – perpetrator	0.3
Other	10.2

Source: CHAIN (2018)

Being asked to leave or evicted was the most commonly reported overall category of reason for leaving last settled base, cited by 36% (33% in 2016/17) of the people who were seen sleeping rough for the first time. The reasons that fall under the employment and education category account for 18% (down from 22% in 2016/17). Relationship breakdown was cited as reason for leaving last settled base by 12% of the people who were seen sleeping rough for the first time (the same proportion as in 2016/17).

An overview of the strength of evidence

There is a large body of evidence on the causes of homelessness – the majority of the research covered in this report was from reviews of the literature and qualitative evidence. Qualitative research tended to be drawn from small scale surveys of homeless individuals or staff working with them. We recognise that, while the samples are relatively small, they are dealing with a typically hard to reach population. Another source of information was surveys of subject experts. For example, Baptista et al. (2017) questioned leading academics to understand the causes homelessness in a number of countries. However, the results of such analyses should be interpreted

with caution as the definition of homelessness tends to vary across countries (Fitzpatrick and Stephens, 2007) and the available data are often incomparable (Baptista et al., 2017).

The quality of the review papers was generally good. They also effectively answered the questions they were asking (e.g. what does the current literature say about the causes of homelessness across countries?). However, this research was often not sufficient for model development purposes as it did not provide a solid evidence base which quantified the different causes of homelessness.

From the perspective of having a useful evidence base for model development, we considered the quality of research which uses either qualitative or quantitative data to estimate relative effects of the causes of homelessness.

Primary data collection about understanding the causes of homelessness is mostly from two sources: i) surveys designed specifically to understand the causes of homelessness - where people are asked about how they became homeless (e.g. CLG statistics[9]) and ii) broader surveys, which formed the basis for quantitative analysis, which ask about homelessness experiences as well as many other areas (e.g. the Scottish Household Survey).

The quality of survey evidence is mixed. The main issue with the questionnaire evidence is around i) asking the right questions, ii) sample representativeness and iii) sample sizes.

In terms of asking the right question, we frequently see that the reason for homelessness reported by many is eviction. For example, one survey asked homeless people their reasons for being homeless and the most common response was that they were evicted (over 35% of respondents) while only 4% of respondents said they had financial issues (CHAIN, 2018). While this finding is interesting, if the goal is to inform policy development this is only partially helpful – it would be more useful to understand the factors that led to the eviction for the homeless population.[10] This is why the individual pathways / journeys research is important – especially for designing policies to prevent homelessness, though this work often has very small samples.

On the sample, it is understandable that access to homeless people who are willing to share personal information makes it difficult to collect large, representative samples. While learning about a single person's homelessness experience is valuable, when building national statistical models, it is ideal to understand information about the entire homeless

[9] We also saw an example of a survey of those who worked at accommodation projects recording information about individual characteristics of those making use of the shelter (Homeless Link, 2018).

[10] The introduction of the new data collection system HCLIC will be useful for this purpose.

population. We acknowledge the composition of this population is changing, which alongside data collection issues make quality empirical evidence difficult to obtain.

Overall the research that discussed directions of causality or aimed to statistically establish causality of factors was very limited.

We reviewed a smaller evidence base around homelessness pathways. Pathways will explicitly attempt to map individuals' journeys, telling the story of all the experiences that led to homelessness. The pathway to homelessness for each individual is unique. However, research does indicate some similar features in the pathways of some subgroups. For example, for homeless single parents, experiencing domestic abuse and violence is often a common experience. We have seen small sample examples of mapping homelessness journeys. Expanding this research for larger samples will be important to drill down to further understand both interactions between causes and the order of events that can lead to homelessness for different subgroups of the population.

One area where further information would be useful is around understanding the interactions between different homelessness drivers – this is currently a gap in the literature. Beyond the consensus that housing pressures cause some vulnerable individuals to be at risk of homelessness, we saw limited evidence explaining and quantifying specific interactions. Much research acknowledges that the set of causes do interact, though we only saw one paper that measured the overlaps between homelessness, institutional care and substance misuse (amongst other factors).

Our interpretation of the evidence reviewed is that there was more agreement about the relative importance of different factors the more specific a subgroup considered is (e.g. young single mothers, older homeless men).

Section highlights

There are many gaps in our knowledge, most notably a consensus on the relative size of different drivers and an agreed ranking of specific factors.

We saw relatively little quantitative work attempting to measure the relative strength of different factors with Bramley and Fitzpatrick (2017) being the exception. This paper was of high quality and more research in this space is needed – for example, extensions for different types of homelessness or different subgroups.

The analysis of the reasons people became homeless was limited in its usefulness. The way the questions are asked of homeless people was often unhelpful from a policy perspective. For example, eviction is present in most lists of reasons and rank highly across all types of homelessness and the subgroups mentioned above, it is problematic to view this as a

fundamental reason behind homelessness. Clearly, the more pertinent question for the policy maker trying to reduce homelessness would be about what led to the eviction (e.g. employment issues, landlord increasing rent).

As with the previous section, the quantitative work looking at the different reasons for homelessness did not consider how factors relate to each other or overlap. Understanding how multiple disadvantage is present in the homeless population should lead to an increased understanding of the routes into homelessness.

For example, what proportion of the homeless population have experienced mental health issues and unsustained employment compared to the proportion who have only experienced mental health issues, recognising that not all who experience these drivers will become homeless.

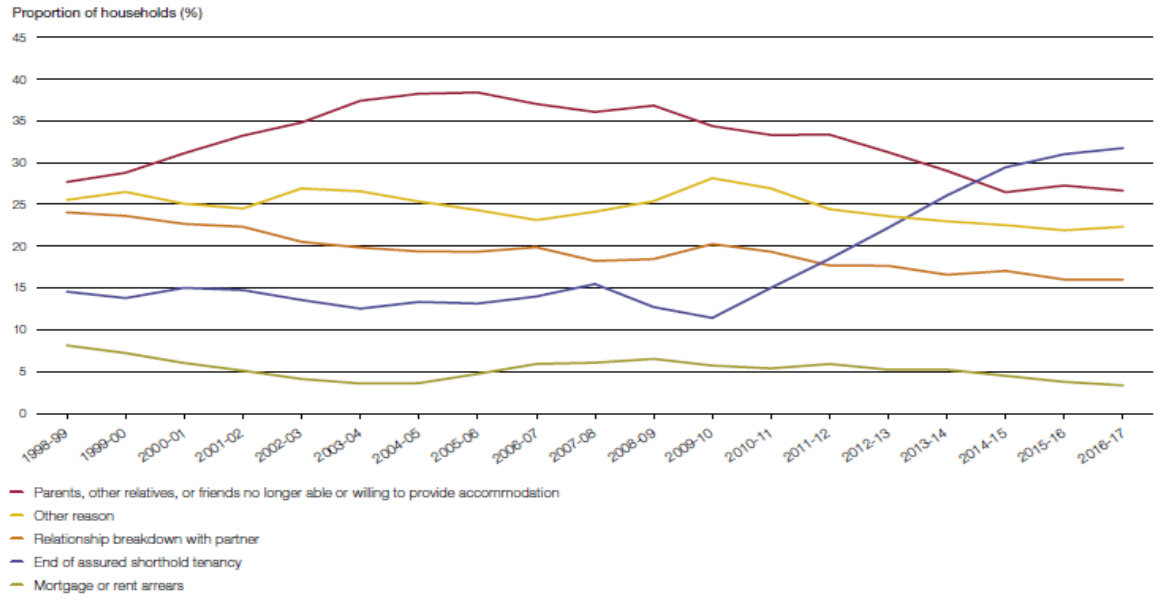
6. How do these drivers vary over time & geography (national contexts and regional within the UK)?

Time

Disentangling whether the causes of homelessness have actually changed, or whether our understanding of causes has developed can be difficult.

With regards to the first point, while the DCLG (2012) report mentions that the immediate causes of homelessness have remained fairly constant over the years, Fitzpatrick et al. (2018) note that their balance differs over time. This is largely verified in a recent report by the National Audit Office (2017), where they examined trends in the causes of statutory homelessness in England (see figure 1 below).[11]

Figure 1. Reason for loss of last settled home for statutory homelessness in England



Source: National Audit Office analysis of the DCLG 's P1E data

[11] The latest statistics are available at the following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721292/Acceptances_and_Decisions.xlsx

The proportion of households that lost their last settled home due to the ending of private sector tenancies has increased dramatically, becoming the biggest single reason given for statutory homelessness in the last few years. Before this, homelessness was primarily driven by more personal factors – such as relationship breakdown and parents no longer being willing or able to house children in their own homes. Both Wilson and Barton (2018) and the National Audit Office (2017) identify the end of the assured shorthold tenancy as the defining characteristic of the increase in homelessness that occurred since 2010.

In terms of the second point, according to Fitzpatrick (2005), up until the 1960s, homelessness in the UK was explained with emphasis on individual pathology, often focusing on the ill-health and/or substance dependencies of homeless people. However, the latter part of the decade saw a shift from individual factors dominating explanations for becoming homeless towards a focus on more structural factors.

This was reinforced by a series of academic studies which forcefully put the case that homelessness was the result of social and economic forces. The influential report by Drake et al. (1981) attributed homelessness primarily to an insufficient supply of affordable accommodation for those in weak economic positions.

The housing market-based account of homelessness quickly ran into trouble during the 1980s, as research repeatedly demonstrated the non-housing problems experienced by many single homeless people, particularly with regards to mental health, drugs and alcohol (Pleace, 1998). This led to the hybrid approach outlined previously.

Geography

Our reading of the literature around the causes of homelessness in different geographic areas is that, broadly, the general causes of homelessness are the same as those outlined for overall homelessness in section 4, though the characteristics of distinct geographic areas means that different causes have varying degrees of importance within each area.

Rural areas

Some research finds that the drivers of rural homelessness are often similar to those in urban areas, including relationship breakdown, being a victim of domestic abuse, becoming unemployed or losing a source of income (Snelling, 2017).

However, while drivers of homelessness may be similar across areas, the characteristics specific to some local areas can contribute to explaining homelessness. For example, the lack of affordable housing is a cause of homelessness generally. However, house price pressure in some rural areas comes

from characteristics specific to rural areas. These include:

- high demand for second homes and holiday lets from an affluent population moving into the area
- restrictions on further property development (e.g. to protect the greenbelt and preserve the characteristics of rural villages)

These issues leave a gap between housing supply and demand (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000; Snelling, 2017). According to DEFRA (2018), house prices are less affordable in predominantly rural areas than in predominantly urban areas (excluding London).[12]

Our review found very limited evidence that individuals in rural areas are more likely to rely on support from their social network. Robinson and Coward (2003) found that in urban centres, such as London, 69% of individuals had stayed with family and friends since becoming homeless, rising to 72% in Sheffield and up to 77% in the mainly rural Craven. Understanding the factors explaining these findings would be useful.

We have seen that labour market conditions are an important structural determinant of homelessness generally. There are aspects of labour market conditions specific to rural areas. Notably, a high level of part-time or seasonal employment alongside lower wages, as well as a general decline in employment in the agricultural sector (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000). A lack of employment opportunities was a key explanation behind young people's homelessness in geographically isolated areas, so this issue may extend beyond rural areas to include coastal areas (see Homelessness Link, 2018). This research demonstrates the interaction between geography, labour market conditions and personal relationships leading to youth homelessness.

Finally, the lack of transportation has also been associated with homelessness in rural areas, as it impedes the rural homeless' access to jobs, services, healthcare, education and affordable housing (Fitchen, 1992), though we acknowledge this research is dated. The geography of rural areas compounds these problems as large distances must be travelled to reach these services, and often there is limited or no public transportation available.

We note that while rural areas have their own characteristics that affect different causes of homelessness, homelessness remains more prevalent in urban centres. The National Audit Office (2017) found the risk of homelessness was higher in London than other cities consistently over time.

[12] In 2017, the average lower quartile house price was 8.6 times the average lower quartile earnings in predominantly rural areas. This compares with 7.4 times in predominantly urban areas (excluding London), 15.1 times in London and 9.1 times in England as a whole.

Coastal Areas

Coastal areas have some similarities with rural areas with respect to two homelessness drivers i) housing affordability and ii) labour market conditions. There is pressure on house prices due to migration from retirees and holidaymakers and there is a lack of available affordable, mainstream accommodation in coastal areas. Also, these areas have seasonal labour markets and have seen employment and household incomes fall due to the decline of the tourism industry (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000).

The above evidence suggests that the availability of affordable housing is the main driver of homelessness in rural areas, while the labour market conditions in those areas (e.g. seasonal nature of employment, low-wages) further contribute to the problem.

Local research

We saw unpublished research from a LA who commissioned a qualitative research of the causes of homelessness in that area. The study was based on interviews with 24 individuals. The key findings are that the balance of factors at play in causing homelessness varied greatly between different homeless groups. The structural factor of the housing market was important in all cases, while personal and interpersonal factors played a much greater role in some cases (i.e. young women all attributed their homelessness to problems in their childhood). Repeat homelessness was common, with many respondents moving between different forms of accommodation and different types of homelessness over the course of their housing pathways.

The researchers identified four subgroups with similar homeless journey features – single men, young people (all single women), homeless families and highly vulnerable migrants. In addition, many causes of homelessness in the specific area were common to the general causes of overall homelessness described in section 4. However, there are likely to be some important local factors (e.g. some areas may have higher migrant populations).

Section highlights

The end of an assured shorthold tenancy as a reason for homelessness has increased dramatically in recent years. Again, from a policy perspective more information would be helpful – is the issue growing because of a general increase in private rentals in the UK or is it a change in terms of rental accommodation (e.g. increase in rent, reduction in support)?

The strength of evidence about rural and coastal areas is fairly weak – we did not include many papers in the review and those we found were fairly dated. However, the research did find that some characteristics of rural areas can contribute to causes of homelessness through structural factors such as limited housing stock and seasonal low-paid employment.

International evidence

As well as examining the causes of homelessness for different areas within the UK, we briefly considered the causes of homelessness in comparable developing countries, such as Canada and the US.

Regarding international comparisons of causes of homelessness, Fitzpatrick and Stephens (2007) note that caution is required. Comparing homelessness across countries is complicated due to variation in research traditions and ideological assumptions, as well as actual differences in homelessness. They go on to discuss the differences in the causes of homelessness in England, Canada and the US.

The authors find that in all three countries there seems to be a consensus that structural factors – especially the shortage of affordable housing and cutbacks in social programmes – are the fundamental drivers of the overall scale of homelessness, while personal problems and 'trigger' events – such as relationship breakdown, mental health problems, and substance misuse – increase an individual's vulnerability to homelessness. They also mention that in England and Canada, housing affordability is particularly emphasised in the more prosperous regions (i.e. London and the South of England). Housing affordability in the US seems to be a more national-level concern.[13] Warnes and Crane (2006) also find similarities in causes of homelessness for older people in UK and US, notably marital breakdown, job termination, death of a spouse and eviction for rent arrears.

[13] See also Hanratty (2017)

7. How do these drivers vary across types of homelessness and rough sleeping?

We have seen that there are differences in the causes of homelessness for different types of individuals. We have also seen that local characteristics can lead to variations in the acuteness of different causes. Therefore, if the individual characteristics or geographic locations differ across groups, we may expect that the drivers of different types of homelessness to vary. On this issue, Watts et al. (2015) note that

"the structural economic and housing market context may be important for some particular groups experiencing homelessness, with personal factors playing a more minor role, whereas for other groups in other contexts, interpersonal and individual factors may be more important."

Our overview of the research supports this statement. To summarise the research which is outlined in more detail below, families are more likely to be homeless because of structural factors, most significantly housing market pressures. We have also seen limited evidence that many families are more likely to be hidden homeless and not seek out support until they have been homeless for some time. That is not to say that interpersonal factors are not important. The most prevalent final trigger for homelessness was reported to be relationship breakdown, which was more important than eviction/threat of eviction.

As noted previously, the circumstances in which families become homeless tend to differ from those of single homeless individuals (Wilson and Barton, 2018). Family homelessness tends to be an issue primarily related to housing market pressure and affordability (Pleace et al., 2008). On the other hand, relationship breakdown plays a stronger role in the case of single homelessness. The lack of affordable housing as well as relationship breakdown were identified as key drivers of rough sleeping in Greater London (CHAIN, 2018). Young single homeless people are also more likely to be rough sleeping (Homeless Link, 2018).

Research in England by Reeve (2011) found that hidden homelessness – a phenomenon that is very difficult to measure given its nature – was highly prevalent: 62% of the 437 single homeless people surveyed were hidden homeless (see also Fitzpatrick

et al., 2000). Women in particular have reported purposely remaining hidden while sleeping rough, and as a result are less likely to appear in official rough sleeping counts and estimates (Hutchinson et al., 2014).

Family homelessness

Research into homeless families suggests that structural factors, such as housing market pressures, are most important in causing homelessness (see below). There can also be difficulties in labour market participation driven by childcare costs (Baptista et al., 2017).

Evidence from England indicates that structural factors – especially a shortage of affordable housing – are the underlying drivers of the overall scale of homelessness (Busch-Geertsema and Fitzpatrick, 2008). However, regarding the immediate 'triggers' for homelessness, the data available from a nationally representative survey on statutory homeless families in England revealed that the most important factor was relationship breakdown (accounting for 38% of homeless families), followed by eviction or threatened eviction (affecting 26% of all homeless families), overcrowding and overstaying welcome (Pleace et al., 2008).[14] Further, Busch-Geertsema and Fitzpatrick (2008) point out that reasons relating to individual 'personal' problems, including drug, alcohol or mental health problems, were reported by a very small share of homeless families.[15]

The results above tend to be support by research in other European countries. Baptista et al. (2017) examine family homelessness in 13 EU countries, including the UK. They conclude that, in most countries surveyed, family homelessness was reported as being more likely to be caused by structural factors, such as lack of affordable housing, poverty and the increasing gap between rent levels and welfare benefits. They describe the group of homeless families as most likely to be single female parents, often victims of domestic abuse and violence, who are frequently excluded economically

Single homelessness

There is a range of established triggers that can lead to homelessness for single people including (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000):

- Leaving the parental home after arguments
- Marital/relationship breakdown

[14] However, Pleace et al. (2008) mentioned that the last two reasons often seemed to reflect a breakdown in informal arrangements entered into after losing settled accommodation.

[15] Notice that these two studies are fairly dated and hence it is possible that reasons for which families apply as homeless could have changed.

- Widowhood
- Discharge from armed forces
- Leaving care
- Leaving prison
- Sharp deterioration in mental heath
- Increase in substance misuse
- Financial crisis/mounting debt
- Eviction

With respect to single homeless people in England, Fitzpatrick et al. (2000) state that the available (mainly qualitative) research, suggests that relationship breakdown is the predominant factor. This is supported by Busch-Geertsema and Fitzpatrick (2008) who report that a major survey of single homeless people in England – found in Anderson et al. (1993) – showed that family/relationship difficulties was the most common reason given by respondents for leaving their last settled home.

Young people

In order to examine young peoples' experience of rough sleeping and sofa surfing, Clarke (2016) used an online survey of 2,011 people aged16-25 in the UK. The survey showed that the main reasons for rough sleeping and sofa surfing were the negative home environment and young people being asked to leave by their parents. Pleace et al. (2008) concluded that for 16-17 year olds relationship breakdown with parents or step-parents was by far the most important reason for applying as homeless. Clarke (2016) also found that other important reasons included a split from a partner, no longer being able to stay with friends or extended family, overcrowding and tenancy ending.

Rough Sleeping

People who are sleeping rough have often spent time as hidden homeless (McDonagh, 2011) and exhausted their options.

Among the main causes of why people are sleeping rough in Greater London include eviction, unemployment, relationship breakdown, end of stay (in accommodation or institution) and violence, harassment or abuse (see section 5 for more details).

Furthermore, Fountain et al. (2003) found that drug and alcohol users who had experienced rough sleeping reported other reasons for falling into homelessness, such as problems with parents (58%) or partners (34%), financial challenges (49%), mental health issues (21%) and problems with the police (44%). Homeless Link (2018) also note that a lack of affordable housing and emergency accommodation are key drivers of rough sleeping and youth homelessness (illustrating the overlap between the two groups).

Fitzpatrick et al. (2011) – summarised in McDonagh (2011) – identified four phases associated with multiple exclusion homelessness, a subgroup that forms part of the rough sleeping population:

Stage 1 – substance misuse - the earliest experiences were around alcohol, drugs or solvents abuse. Leaving home or care was also part of this initial stage.

Stage 2 – transition to street lifestyles – experiences that indicated worsening problems were often the next phase such as survival shoplifting, survival sex work, spending time in prison, anxiety or depression.

Stage 3 – confirmed street lifestyles – these experiences occurred in the middle-late phase of individual journeys and included sleeping rough and begging, intravenous drug use. Being admitted to hospital with mental health issues, bankruptcy and getting divorced occurred at this stage.

Stage 4 – “official” homelessness – this set of experiences occurred late in an individual’s multiple exclusion homelessness sequence – applying to councils as homeless, staying in temporary accommodation, death of a partner or being evicted/repossessed.

8. What are the pathways in and out of homelessness in the UK?

Pathways into homelessness

While we have seen in previous sections there is a trigger event that causes a person to become homeless, there are many, often inter-related, reasons that have led to that point. For example, many homeless people when questioned about why they are homeless will say they were evicted. While the cause of homelessness was eviction, the question of interest is what led to that eviction? There could be a number of interacting stages in someone's life experience that led to that eviction (e.g. low financial resilience caused by poor education outcomes linked to abuse in childhood).

The pathway to homelessness for each individual is unique. However, research does indicate some similar features in the pathways of some subgroups.

To mention an example, Watts et al. (2015) note that certain groups are at higher risk of homelessness such as care leavers, young offenders, individuals with childhood experiences of abuse and/or neglect, poor education experiences and mental health problems. We have seen in earlier sections that many of these factors interact, which points to possible pathways into homelessness including some combination of these factors. We note that each factor or combinations of factors is not necessary or sufficient to cause homelessness – and many experiencing them will never be homeless.

Research outlined previously shows that the experiences of single mothers have some similar features, they often experience domestic abuse and violence, are economically excluded (i.e. cannot work due to high childcare costs) and tend to engage with services later on in their homeless journey (see section 4 for more on women's homelessness).

The difference between thinking about causes and pathways is the time dimension. Pathways will explicitly try to map individuals' experiences to tell the story of all the experiences that led to homelessness. Mackie and Thomas (2014) explore the experiences of single homeless people across Great Britain by adopting a three-stage, multimethod design. The initial phase explored LA implementation of

statutory homelessness duties.[16] Stage two of the study sought to examine experiences and perceptions of homelessness services, both from the perspectives of service users and providers. In total, 480 single homeless people completed a questionnaire across 16 LAs and 14 individuals completed a telephone interview. Finally, stage three of the study used in-depth interviews with 30 single homeless people in order to explore their homelessness pathways.

Mackie and Thomas (2014) found that homelessness began at an early age, often due to a relationship breakdown at home. Many people then faced a vicious cycle of recurrent homelessness, with most having experienced rough sleeping. The earlier a person becomes homeless, the greater the chance of repeatedly facing homelessness.

Nearly 50% of respondents became homeless when they were 20 or younger. In addition, 44% of them first became homeless when they left their parental/family home, 21% exiting the social rented sector and 11% leaving the private rented sector. The main reasons why people left their accommodation during their first episode of homelessness were: a non-violent dispute (41%), a violent dispute (19%), being given notice by a landlord (15%), and discharge from an institution (12%). After the first experience of homelessness, the percentage of people leaving housing due to a violent or non-violent dispute decreases. On the other hand, the percentage of those who become homeless after leaving an institution increases.

The study further shows that 10% of respondents never lived in permanent housing during their adult life and almost 80% had slept rough. The vulnerability of young people is prominent: a quarter of them have never lived in permanent housing.

Nearly 75% of people experienced more than one period of homelessness and more than 50% had faced three or more experiences. In addition, about one-third of people first became homeless in a different UK local authority to the one where they most recently faced homelessness.

Petersen and Parsell (2014) group the pathways into homelessness for older people in Australia. A framework proposed includes i) those who have been homeless for many years (called long term) and ii) those who become homeless later in life (first time). The authors find that homelessness in older women is more likely to come from a family crisis such as domestic abuse and violence, separation or widowhood, compared to older males for whom work-related challenges are usually the main reason (e.g. loss of employment).

Jones and Petersen (2014) identify five topics highlighted by the research

[16] They had data from 207 local authorities (51%).

characterising pathways into older-age homelessness in Australia: i) structural disadvantage experienced during the course of life, ii) vulnerabilities associated with older age (e.g. poor or declining physical and/or mental health and cognition, reduced income etc.) are directly related to homelessness for many elderly people iii) the frequent occurrence of triggers or 'critical incidents' that resulted in actual or imminent homelessness (e.g. falling behind with the rent or unaffordable rent increase, breakdown of a family relationship, and death of a partner). [17] The authors also report that some studies emphasised the role of public policy and aspects of the housing system in shaping pathways into homelessness for older Australians – see for example Batterham et al. (2013) and Morris et al. (2005).

Pathways out of homelessness

Targeted preventative and alleviative interventions, in England at least, are found to contribute to getting people out of homelessness. This finding however, does not seem to be backed up by international evidence, possibly due to the small number of studies and the heterogeneity of interventions, methods and outcome measures. Further and more systematic research could be required to obtain a deeper Busch-Geertsema and Fitzpatrick (2008) study the downward trend of homelessness which was at that time observed in England and Germany. The authors claimed that targeted preventative interventions were to some extent responsible for the decline.

Concerning England, Busch-Geertsema and Fitzpatrick (2008) report that the central government has greatly increased the emphasis on preventative approaches since 2002. The Homeless Act (2002) placed a statutory duty on LAs to produce a strategy for preventing and alleviating homelessness. Also, substantial funding – dependent on LAs committing to goals related to homelessness – was provided to support local preventative activities. The authors also noted the national target to cut the number of statutorily homeless households in temporary housing in half from 2004 to 2010. This new focus on preventing homelessness seems to have been widely welcomed by LAs.

As noted in Pawson et al. (2007) and Busch-Geertsema and Fitzpatrick (2008), common preventive measures taken by LAs, include 'enhanced' housing advice, rent deposit and related schemes, family mediation, domestic abuse and violence victim

[17] These critical triggers may also include receiving a notice to vacate the premises, a worsening disability making an accommodation inaccessible, a change in family circumstances leading to overcrowding, a sudden deterioration in the quality of the dwelling, and a violent episode in shared housing.

support and tenancy sustainment.

Busch-Geertsema and Fitzpatrick (2008) also attempted to assess the contribution of targeted preventive interventions to reducing homelessness in England and Germany and reflected on the lessons of their analysis.[18]

A noteworthy result of this paper is that homelessness can be reduced by targeted prevention policies and that positive results can be achieved even in the face of unfavourable structural trends. Successful prevention policies at secondary and tertiary levels[19] should be carefully targeted at the key homelessness causes, which may differ to some extent between countries. Relationship breakdown and eviction often seem to be the most prominent causes targeted – see for instance Fitzpatrick and Stephens (2007) and Pleace et al. (2008). The authors also highlight that such policies must be supported by appropriate resources (e.g. the case of England) and have an effective governance framework for implementation (e.g. the case of Germany). A strong steer by central government/umbrella organisations can also be helpful.

Evidence from both countries showed that local administrations may have a positive attitude towards prevention programmes. However, a lesson from England in particular, revealed that attention should be paid to any perverse incentives generated by prevention programmes. In addition, experience from both countries further suggested that legal duties to provide temporary housing for homeless households can be a key policy driver for improved preventive interventions. The expense and political embarrassment of having many households in temporary housing, has acted as an important stimulus to find more proactive ways of preventing homelessness.

Altena et al. (2010) presented an international review of quantitative studies for effective interventions for homeless young people. Only 11 studies published between 1985 and 2008 were identified for evaluation according to predefined criteria. Four of these studies were of fair quality, while the rest were poorly rated. No study received a ranking of good. Almost all intervention studies were developed and conducted in the US, and two were carried out in Canada and South Korea.

The authors reported that there is no compelling evidence that specific interventions are effective for the homeless, due to the poor study quality and the small number of

[18] The paper also underlines the profound impact of transnational institutional and conceptual differences on understanding homelessness and preventing it, warning of the dangers of international comparisons that do not pay enough attention to national contexts.

[19] Secondary prevention concerns interventions focused on people at high potential risk of homelessness because of their characteristics or in crisis situations which are likely to lead to homelessness in the near future. Tertiary prevention refers to measures targeted at people who have already been affected by homelessness.

intervention studies. The conclusions that can be drawn from the studies are limited by the heterogeneity of the interventions, participants, methods and outcome measures. Many interventions focused on reducing substance abuse, while other important outcomes, such as quality of life, received little attention. The most convincing, but still marginal, were results of interventions based on approaches of cognitive behaviour, which revealed some positive effects on psychological measures.

9.Conclusion

We have seen that there is a large evidence base on the causes of homelessness. Generally speaking, the quality of evidence is medium-high in terms of understanding causes in broad terms. The quality of evidence on the causes of homelessness was assessed on the basis of understanding causes generally and not made in relation to using the research for model development specifically.

One issue encountered investigating the causes of homelessness is that identifying a cause will depend on the perspective of the researcher. For example, some will want to understand the final trigger that led to someone becoming homeless, while others will want to think about issues from an individual's past that may have increased the risk of them becoming homeless (e.g. low education outcomes).

It is important when asking about causes to be clear about the intended purpose for understanding them. If one is interested in predicting homelessness, then it is important to identify leading indicators that can be used as early warning signals of changes in homelessness – but this will not require understanding all structural factors that can cause homelessness. However, if one's focus is around designing prevention policies, then information that establishes causal factors that can be changed by policy levers will be the most important.

This review has summarised the evidence on causes and discussed gaps with respect to an evidence base for designing prevention policies.

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Appendix A

Author(s)	Year	Title	Weight of Evidence			
			A	B	C	D
			General judgement on coherence and integrity	Specific judgement on forms of evidence	Specific judgement on relevance	Overall judgement
Altena, A.M., Brilleslijper-Kater, S.N., Wolf, J.R.L.M.	2010	Effective interventions for homeless youth	Medium	Low	Low	Low
Baptista, I., Benjaminsen, L., Pleace, N., Busch-Geertsema, V.	2017	Family homelessness in Europe: 7 EOH comparative studies in homeless	High	High	Medium	High
Batterham, D., Yates, E., Mallett, S., Kolar, V., Westmore, T.	2013	Ageing out of place? The impact of gender and location on older Victorians in homelessness: a pilot study	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
Bramley, G., Fitzpatrick, S.	2017	Homelessness in the UK: who is most at risk?	High	High	High	High
Bramley, G., Fitzpatrick, S., Edwards, J., Ford, D., Johnsen, S., Sosenko, F., Watkins, D.	2015	Hard Edges: Mapping severe and multiple disadvantage in England	High	High	High	High
Busch-Geertsema, V., Edgar, W., O'Sullivan, E., Pleace, N.	2010	Homelessness and homeless policies in Europe: lessons from research	High	High	Low	High
Busch-Geertsema, V., Fitzpatrick, S.	2008	Effective homeless-ness prevention? Explaining reductions in homelessness in Germany and England	Medium	High	Low	Medium
CHAIN	2018	CHAIN annual report - Greater London:	High	High	High	High

		April 2017 - March 2018				
Clarke, A.	2016	The prevalence of rough sleeping and sofa surfing amongst young people in the UK	High	High	High	High
Cochran, B.N., Stewart, A.J., Ginzler, J.A., Cauce, A.M.	2002	Challenges faced by homeless sexual minorities: comparison of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender homeless adolescents with their heterosexual counterparts	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Crane, M., Byrne, K., Fu, R., Lipmann, B., Mirabelli, F., Rota-Bartelink, A., Ryan, M., Shea, R., Watt, H., Warnes, A.M.	2005	The causes of homelessness in later life: findings from a 3-nation study	High	High	High	High
Crane, M., Warnes, A.M.	2012	Homeless people: older people	High	High	High	High
Cull, M., Platzer, H., Balloch, S.	2006	Out on my own: understanding the experiences and needs of homeless lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
DCLG	2012	Making every contact count - A joint approach to preventing homelessness	High	High	High	High
DEFRA	2018	Statistical digest of rural England - September 2018	High	High	Medium	High
Durso, L., Gates, G.	2012	Serving our youth: findings from a national survey of service providers working with LGBT who are homeless or	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium

		at risk of becoming homeless				
Enders-Dragasser, U.	2010	Women and homelessness in Germany	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
Fitchen, J.M.	1992	On the edge of homelessness: rural poverty and housing insecurity	Low	Low	Low	Low
Fitzpatrick, S.	2005	Explaining homelessness: a critical realist perspective	High	High	Medium	High
Fitzpatrick, S., Johnsen, S., White, M.	2011	Multiple exclusion homelessness in the UK: key patterns and intersections	High	High	High	High
Fitzpatrick, S., Kemp, P., Klinker, S.	2000	Single homelessness: an overview of research in Britain	High	High	High	High
Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S., Watts, B.	2013	The homelessness monitor: England 2013	High	High	High	High
Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S., Watts, B., Wood, J.	2018	The homelessness monitor: England 2018	High	High	High	High
Fitzpatrick, S., Stephens, M.	2007	An international review of homelessness and social housing policy	High	High	Low	Medium
Fountain, J., Howes, S., Marsden, J., Taylor, C., Strang, J.	2003	Drug and alcohol Use and the link with homelessness: results from a survey of homeless people in London	High	High	High	High
Hanratty, M.	2017	Do local economic conditions affect homelessness? Impact of area housing market	High	Medium	Low	Medium

		factors, unemployment, and poverty on community homeless rates				
Homeless Link	2018	Young and homeless	High	High	High	High
Homeless Link	2017	Single homelessness support in England: annual review	High	High	High	High
Homeless Link	2015	Young and homeless	High	High	High	High
Homeless Link	2014	Young and homeless	High	High	High	High
Homelessness Australia	2016	Homelessness and older people	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
Hutchinson, S., Page, A., Sample, E.	2014	Rebuilding shattered lives	High	High	Medium	Medium
Jones, A., Petersen, M.	2014	Older people	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
Large, J., Kliger, B.	2013	Ageing and women's homelessness: overcoming the bag lady syndrome	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
Loopstra, R, Reeves, A., Barr, B., Taylor-Robinson, D., McKee, M., Stuckler, D.	2015	The impact of economic downturns and budget cuts on homelessness claim rates across 323 local authorities in England, 2004–12	High	High	High	High
Mackie, P., Thomas, I.	2014	Nations apart? Experiences of single homeless people across Great Britain	High	High	Medium	Medium
May, J., Cloke, P., Johnsen, S.	2007	Alternative cartographies of homelessness: rendering visible British women's experiences of 'visible' homelessness	Medium	Low	High	Medium

McDonagh, T.	2011	Tackling homelessness and exclusion: understanding complex lives	High	High	Medium	Medium
McFerran, L.	2010	It could be you: female, single, older and homeless	Medium	Low	Low	Low
Morris, A., Judd, B., Kavanagh, K.	2005	Marginality amidst plenty: pathways into homelessness for older Australians	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
National Audit Office	2017	Homelessness	Medium	High	High	High
Neale, J.	1997	Theorising homelessness: contemporary sociological and feminist perspectives	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium
Pawson, H., Netto, G., Jones, C., Wager, F., Fancy, C., Lomax, D.	2007	Evaluating homelessness prevention	High	Medium	Low	Medium
Petersen, M., Parsell, C.	2014	Older women's pathways out of homelessness in Australia	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
Pleace, N.	2000	The new consensus, the old consensus and the provision of services for people sleeping rough	Medium	High	High	High
Pleace, N.	1998	Single homelessness as social exclusion: the unique and the extreme	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Pleace, N.	2008	Statutory homelessness in England: the experience of families and 16-17 year olds	High	High	High	High
Quilgars, D., Johnsen, S., Pleace, N.	2008	Youth homelessness in the UK: a decade of progress?	High	High	High	High

Reeve, K.	2011	The hidden truth about homelessness: experiences of single homelessness in England	High	High	High	High
Robinson, D., Coward, S.	2003	Hidden homelessness: your place, not mine	High	High	High	High
Scottish Government	2015	Youth homelessness ad hoc analysis	High	High	High	High
Snelling, C.	2017	Rethinking homelessness in rural communities	High	High	High	High
AKT	2015	LGBT youth homelessness: a UK national scoping of cause, prevalence, response and outcome	Low	Medium	High	Medium
TUC	2016	Housing, homelessness and young LGBT people	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Warnes, A., Crane, M.	2006	The causes of homelessness among older people in England	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
Watts, B., Johnsen, S., Sosenko, F.	2015	Youth homelessness in the UK: a review for the OVO Foundation	High	High	High	High
Wilson, W., Barton, C.	2018	Statutory homelessness in England (briefing paper No. 01164)	High	High	High	High
YHNE	2014	Youth Homelessness in the North East: survey findings	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium

Appendix B

According to the analysis conducted on the data of the Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey, demographics aside, the factor most adding to the overall explanatory power of the model appears to be poverty, followed by health and life events, housing and labour market conditions.

The British Cohort Study on the other hand measures different information from the previous two, as it has richer data regarding childhood poverty indicators and individual factors, including teenage and adult life experiences and experiences.

In this analysis, poverty is most closely correlated with homelessness, followed adult economic situation, teenage experiences, adult family and life events and geography.

Table 9. ***British Cohort Study***

Sequence 1	
Block of variables	% of explanation
Demographics	1.6
Poverty	52
Geography	6
Teenage experiences	15
Adult economic situation	*16*
Adult family and life events	*10*

Source: Bramley and Fitzpatrick (2017)

Table 10. ***Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey***

Sequence 1		Sequence 2	
Block of variables	% of explanation	Block of variables	% of explanation
Demographics	22	Demographics	22
Poverty	54	Health and life events	35
Labour market	5	Poverty	30
Housing market	8	Labour market	5
Health and life events	11	Housing market	7

Source: Bramley and Fitzpatrick (2017)

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