

Research Briefing

By Wendy Wilson ,
Cassie Barton

22 April 2022

Rough sleeping (England)



Summary

- 1 Local authorities' duties
- 2 The causes of rough sleeping
- 3 The number of rough sleepers
- 4 Tackling rough sleeping (2010 onwards)
- 5 Comment

Image Credits

homeless by Leo Reynolds. Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 / image cropped.

Disclaimer

The Commons Library does not intend the information in our research publications and briefings to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. We have published it to support the work of MPs. You should not rely upon it as legal or professional advice, or as a substitute for it. We do not accept any liability whatsoever for any errors, omissions or misstatements contained herein. You should consult a suitably qualified professional if you require specific advice or information. Read our briefing [‘Legal help: where to go and how to pay’](#) for further information about sources of legal advice and help. This information is provided subject to the conditions of the Open Parliament Licence.

Feedback

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Please note that authors are not always able to engage in discussions with members of the public who express opinions about the content of our research, although we will carefully consider and correct any factual errors.

You can read our feedback and complaints policy and our editorial policy at commonslibrary.parliament.uk. If you have general questions about the work of the House of Commons email hcenquiries@parliament.uk.

Contents

Summary	5
1 Local authorities' duties	7
1.1 Is the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 reducing rough sleeping?	9
2 The causes of rough sleeping	14
3 The number of rough sleepers	20
3.1 The number of rough sleepers, 2010 – present	20
Trends in the number of rough sleepers	20
The effect of Covid-19 measures	21
Where is rough sleeping most common?	24
Demographics of rough sleepers	25
Quality of official rough sleeping statistics	25
3.2 Statistics from the London CHAIN database	26
3.3 Deaths of homeless people	29
3.4 Past approaches to counting rough sleepers	29
4 Tackling rough sleeping (2010 onwards)	33
4.1 The Coalition Government	33
4.2 The Conservative Governments 2015 and 2017	35
Halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it by 2027	38
The Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) March 2018	39
4.3 Conservative Government 2019	42
Ending rough sleeping by the end of the Parliament	42
Funding in 2021/22	44
Funding up to 2024/25	45
4.4 London	46
5 Comment	48
5.1 Views on the Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018	48

5.2	Welfare reform	49
5.3	The funding context	51
5.4	Learning lessons from the pandemic to end rough sleeping by 2024	53

Summary

Local authorities in England do not have a duty to secure accommodation for all homeless people. Rough sleepers are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Studies have found strong correlations between homelessness and a multiplicity, and increased severity, of both physical and mental health conditions.

In 2020, an estimated 688 homeless people died in England and Wales. Men accounted for the majority of deaths. The average age of death was 45.9 years for men and 41.6 years for women. Most deaths recorded were due to drug-related poisoning, suicide, and alcohol-specific causes.

An estimated 2,440 people slept rough on a single night in autumn 2021, of whom 640 were in London.

A target to end rough sleeping

Successive Governments have put in place initiatives to tackle rough sleeping.

The [Conservative Manifesto December 2019](#) (PDF) committed to ending “the blight of rough sleeping by the end of the next Parliament” through an extension of the Rough Sleeping Initiative which began in 2018, Housing First, and using local services to meet the health and housing needs of people living on the streets.

Policy impact

Despite considerable efforts, the official rough sleeper counts showed increases every year after new methodology was introduced in autumn 2010 up to the autumn 2017 count. The results of the 2017 count were published on 25 January 2018 – a 169% increase in the number of people sleeping rough in England since 2010 was recorded.

The recorded number of rough sleepers then fell by 2% in 2018 and 9% in 2019, although the 2019 count still represented a 141% increase on the 1,768 recorded in 2010. The 2020 count recorded a 37% drop in rough sleeping on 2019. This count coincided with a national lockdown and tier restrictions in response to Covid-19. The 2021 count recorded a further 9% fall on 2020 but was still up by 670 people (38%) on 2010.

The latest financial year report from the Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) database, [CHAIN Greater London Annual Report 2020-21](#) reported that a total of 11,018 rough sleepers were contacted by outreach workers or building-based teams in London during 2020/21. This represented a 3% increase on the previous year. 7,531 (68%) were seen rough sleeping for the first time.

‘Everyone In’ and ending rough sleeping by 2024

The Government’s ‘Everyone In’ programme to assist rough sleepers through the Covid-19 crisis is hailed as one of the most effective of its responses to the pandemic. The sector is keen to take to the opportunity to build on its success to achieve the Government’s target of ending rough sleeping by 2024.

Numerous reports have identified measures viewed as necessary to the target’s achievement. There’s a good deal of agreement over the need for action in the following areas:

- A long-term strategy with regular progress reviews and which reflects lessons learned from Everyone In, backed up with sufficient long-term funding.
- A need to develop a solution for those with no recourse to public funds. There’s reference to addressing the “tensions” between the rough sleeping target and immigration policy.
- Addressing barriers to housing access arising from certain welfare reforms, such as limits on Local Housing Allowance rates and their failure to keep pace with market rent levels.
- A need to increase grant funding to support the delivery of 90,000 units of social rented housing a year.
- The need for concerted cross-government working.

The Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 built on investment since 2017 and announced £639 million resource funding by 2024-25, representing “a cash increase of 85% compared to 2019-20.” This three-year settlement was welcomed as delivering the certainty organisations need to plan service delivery.

A review of the Government’s [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) (2018) was announced in 2020 but is still outstanding. On 3 March 2022, the Minister, Eddie Hughes, [wrote to local authorities](#) (PDF) saying “we will bring forward a bold, new strategy to end rough sleeping.”

1 Local authorities' duties

Local authorities' duties towards homeless people are found in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Local authorities have a duty to secure permanent accommodation for unintentionally homeless people in priority need.¹ The safety net operated by local authorities does not extend to securing accommodation for homeless people who are deemed not to be in priority need.

On 3 April 2018, English local authorities gained additional duties which apply to all eligible² applicants irrespective of whether they fall into a priority need category. The main thrust of changes introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) is to refocus English local authorities on efforts to prevent homelessness. Authorities now have:

- a duty to **prevent** homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness; and
- a duty to **relieve** homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants.

Housing authorities have a duty to provide or secure the provision of advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness, free of charge. This advice and assistance must be made available to any person in the district “including people who are not eligible for further homelessness services as a result of their immigration status.”³

Research has identified these groups of people face a higher risk of homelessness and rough sleeping

The HRA amended the 1996 Act to provide advice and information services must be designed to meet the needs of people within the district. The particular needs of the following groups must be taken into account:

- a. people released from prison or youth detention accommodation;
- b. care leavers;
- c. former members of the regular armed forces;
- d. victims of domestic abuse;

¹ The priority need categories are set out in section 189 of the Housing Act 1996. Note that three linked cases considered by the Supreme Court in 2015 strengthened the test that authorities must apply when considering whether a homeless applicant should be regarded as vulnerable and therefore owed a full rehousing duty. The [Nearly Legal Housing Law and Comment website](#) (13 May 2015) has detailed information on the Court's decision.

² Eligibility is largely determined by an applicant's immigration status.

³ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), [Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities](#), para 3.1

- e. people leaving hospital;
- f. people suffering from a mental illness or impairment; and,
- g. any other group that the authority identify as being at particular risk of homelessness in their district.

In addition to direct applications from homeless people/households, authorities may receive notifications from certain public bodies where they believe a service user may be homeless or threatened with homelessness. The public authorities subject to the **duty to refer** are specified in the [Homelessness \(Review Procedure etc.\) Regulations 2018](#) and include:

- prisons;
- youth offender institutions;
- secure training centres;
- secure colleges;
- youth offending teams;
- probation services (including community rehabilitation companies);
- Jobcentre Plus;
- social service authorities;
- emergency departments;
- urgent treatment centres; and,
- hospitals in their function of providing inpatient care.

The Secretary of State for Defence is subject to the duty to refer in relation to members of the regular forces, ie the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the regular army and the Royal Air Force.

The public bodies listed above must have the consent of the individual before making a referral to a housing authority and must allow the individual to identify the authority to which the referral should be made. The individual must also have given consent to sharing their contact details with the housing authority.

Local authorities are required to **agree a personalised plan** for all eligible applicants which should identify reasonable steps the individual and local authority will be expected to take to prevent homelessness.

1.1

Is the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 reducing rough sleeping?

Prior to the 2017 Act coming into force, there was evidence of inconsistent standards in the advice and assistance given to homeless people who were not obviously in a priority need category.

Research by Crisis (2014) highlighted issues with the standard of assistance provided by local authorities to people deemed not to be in priority need. A mystery shopping exercise saw a number of formerly homeless people turned away without an assessment despite displaying vulnerabilities.⁴

Additional evidence submitted to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's 2015-16 inquiry into homelessness demonstrated variations in the standard and extent of assistance provided by local authorities to applicants deemed to be homeless but not in priority need.⁵ There was a reasonable likelihood that homeless people who were not successful in obtaining alternative accommodation, despite advice and assistance provided by local authorities, or who did not approach an authority for assistance, might find themselves sleeping rough.

It was hoped that focusing attention on the prevention and relief of homelessness for all eligible applicants would result in fewer instances of rough sleeping.

Section 3 of this paper shows that the autumn counts in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 recorded falls in rough sleeping of 2%, 9%, 37% and 9% respectively.⁶ However, the number of rough sleepers in 2021 was still 38% higher than the number in 2010 (1,770 people).

[Data](#) collected in London over 2020/21 recorded that 1,147 people seen rough sleeping for the first time had approached their Local Authority Housing Options service for help in the 12 months prior to first being seen rough sleeping:

This is 29% of those new rough sleepers for whom this information was recorded (and 15% of all new rough sleepers in the year). Of these, 1,104 (96%) had approached Housing Options teams in London boroughs.⁷

This is an increase on the number recorded for 2019/20 (893)⁸ and demonstrates scope for improvement in local authority advice and assistance services to prevent rough sleeping. Research into the impact of the HRA supports this conclusion.

⁴ Crisis, [Turned Away: the treatment of single homeless people by local authority homelessness services in England](#), 2014

⁵ Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, [Homelessness](#), 18 August 2016, HC 40 2016-17

⁶ Note that the significant reduction in 2020 is largely accounted for by the Government's 'Everyone In' initiative during the coronavirus pandemic.

⁷ [CHAIN Greater London Annual Report 2020/21](#), June 2021, p13

⁸ [CHAIN Greater London Annual Report 2019/20](#), September 2020, p13

Crisis published [A foot in the door: Experiences of the Homelessness Reduction Act](#) in March 2020. This is an interim report of a three-year study on the implementation of the 2017 Act. The research recorded:

- An expansion in homeless assistance, particularly for single people.
- More positive experiences when approaching Housing Options Teams for assistance.
- Some clear examples people having poor assessments.
- The intention and ambition of the HRA is constrained by the housing market, welfare system and funding.
- Significant barriers and issues with the support on offer and people's housing outcomes persist.
- The most common form of intervention offered is information on accessing the private rented sector.
- Lack of affordable housing, both social and privately rented, means local authorities are increasingly constrained in the realistic outcomes that they can achieve.⁹

Authorities in England argued funding provided to implement the HRA was insufficient. Following publication of the Crisis report in March 2020, the Local Government Association (LGA) called on Government to close a predicted funding gap of £400 million in council homelessness services by 2025.¹⁰

In July 2019, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, DLUHC) issued [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017: call for evidence](#) – submissions were invited up to 15 October 2019. [The Government response](#) to the call for evidence,¹¹ together with the [Evaluation of the Implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act: Final Report](#) were published on 25 September 2020.¹² This report was commissioned by MHCLG from ICF Consulting Services Ltd with Kantar Public and Heriot-Watt University. Successes were recorded alongside recommendations for ongoing implementation. Amongst the detailed findings, the authors noted:

⁹ Crisis, [A foot in the door: experiences of the Homelessness Reduction Act](#), 10 March 2020

¹⁰ LGA Responds to Crisis report on Homelessness Reduction Act, 10 March 2020

¹¹ MHCLG, [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017: government response to the call for evidence](#), 25 September 2020

¹² MHCLG, [Evaluation of the Implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act: Final Report, 16 March 2020 \(publicly available 25 September 2020\)](#)

- Assessments and personalised plans were being delivered by authorities but there were mixed views on impact. This was mirrored in the views of service users.
- The extended prevention duty was assessed as most effective in delivering more positive outcomes for service users. Clients with complex needs presented challenges for tenancy retention work.
- In contrast, the effectiveness of relief duty was seen as variable with much depending on the local supply of affordable housing.
- Examples of improved advice and information services were identified.
- Challenges for authorities implementing the HRA included:
 - Insufficient access to affordable housing, particularly in London.
 - An increased administrative burden.
 - Meeting the H-CLIC data requirements.
 - Uncertainties over future funding.
- Not all the bodies subject to the duty to refer were viewed as having implemented it effectively. Jobcentres and probation services were the most successful, with adult and children’s social services and health providers referring fewer people. The report contained suggestions for more work in this area.

The authors included several recommendations for MHCLG to consider, including:

- National promotion of the duty to refer and further review of its scope with the possibility of reformulation as a “duty to collaborate”.

Recommendations for authorities included:

- Additional training to reinforce culture change and strengthen casework.
- Obtain and use service users’ feedback.
- Consider more senior staff recruitment – this was linked to improving capacity to deal with more complex aspects of the Act.
- Review/reflect on homelessness service expenditure with a view to refining services.
- Feedback to public authorities on their use of the duty to refer.

There was a further recommendation for other national government departments and agencies to “introduce national guidelines and monitoring arrangements around the Duty to Refer.”¹³

The Government response contained a series of commitments, including:

- An awareness raising exercise around the new duties.
- A post-implementation review of new burdens funding to “fully understand the impact of the new duties on local authorities”. There was an expectation that the results would be published in autumn 2020.
- Promotion of the duty to refer at a national level to the relevant public bodies and monitoring how it is being implemented via H-CLIC returns. Action taken by various departments in relation to the duty to refer is summarised in paragraphs 64-72 of the Government response. There was a further commitment to explore how to improve joint working, including consideration of extending the duty to other agencies.
- Additional guidance on personalised plans would be considered as would sharing best practice in this area.¹⁴

[The homeless monitor: England 2019](#) (May 2019), an annual state-of-the-nation report commissioned by Crisis which looks at the impact of economic and policy developments on homelessness, recorded some encouraging impacts:

Most local authorities reported that the HRA has enabled a more person-centred approach to managing homelessness in their area and two-thirds of authorities saw the Act as having positive impacts for single people. While this is a positive step forward, there remain pressing structural issues that if unresolved risk reversing the positive steps achieved by the HRA so far.¹⁵

[Homelessness Monitor England 2020: COVID-19 Crisis Response Briefing](#) recorded an impact on implementation of the HRA during the pandemic. The “crisis imperative” drew authorities and partners away from “wider prevention activities” including duties under the HRA 2017.¹⁶

[The homelessness monitor: England 2022](#) records continuing challenges for local authorities:

Resourcing and administration of the Act is a key challenge for local authorities. Stakeholders nevertheless see the Act as failing to adequately expand statutory support for homeless households: the continued lack of

¹³ MHCLG, [Evaluation of the Implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act: Final Report](#), 16 March 2020 (publicly available 25 September 2020)

¹⁴ MHCLG, [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017: government response to the call for evidence](#), 25 September 2020

¹⁵ Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wood, J., Watts, B., Stephens, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2019) [The Homelessness Monitor: England 2019](#). London: Crisis,

¹⁶ Fitzpatrick, S, Watts, B., & Simms, R. (2020) [Homelessness Monitor: England 2020: COVID-19 Crisis Response Briefing](#). London: Crisis.

entitlement to accommodation for some groups and the ‘duty to refer’ (rather than cooperate) placed on wider partners are two key weaknesses. New provisions according automatic ‘priority need’ status to households homeless as a result of domestic abuse were strongly welcomed and anticipated to contribute to increased demand from this group in the future.¹⁷

The Kerlake Commission on homelessness and rough sleeping (September 2021) called for an extension of the duty to refer:

...the Government should extend the Homelessness Reduction Act’s Duty to Refer to a Duty to Collaborate with relevant public agencies to both prevent and respond to homelessness. This should include the Department of Health and Care (DHSC) and health services, Department of Work and Pensions and its agencies, the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice and its agencies and other government agencies with an involvement in homelessness and rough sleeping services.¹⁸

¹⁷ Fitzpatrick, S., Watts, B., Bramley G., Pawson H., Young G., & McMordie L., (February 2022) [Homelessness Monitor: England 2022](#). London: Crisis, p61

¹⁸ The Kerlake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, [A new way of working: ending rough sleeping together](#), September 2021, p11

2

The causes of rough sleeping

There are similarities in the reported causes behind the first episode of rough sleeping and those given by households to whom authorities usually owe a full rehousing duty. For example, relationship breakdown is a significant factor.¹⁹ However, single homeless individuals tend to have experienced more chaotic lifestyles.

The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) database contains information about rough sleepers in London who have been contacted by outreach teams or who have accessed accommodation for rough sleepers in London. CHAIN is used by people working with rough sleepers in London and it is maintained by St Mungo's, a London-based homeless charity. [The CHAIN Greater London Annual Report 2020/21](#) recorded the reasons given by 5,229²⁰ new rough sleepers for leaving their last settled base, shown in the table below.

A significant number of new rough sleepers in 2020/21 (24.4%) recorded their last settled accommodation as private rented housing. Restrictions to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA)²¹ implemented in April 2011, together with the extension of the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) to single people up to age 35 in January 2012,²² are identified as factors which make it more difficult for single people to find and retain affordable private rented housing, particularly in London.

LHA rates were frozen for four years (with some limited exceptions in areas with the highest private sector rents) from April 2016 up to April 2020.²³ There is evidence of some private landlords being reluctant to let to people in receipt of the LHA.²⁴

A disproportionate number of rough sleepers have experienced institutional life, such as being in local authority care, prison or the armed forces. They are also associated with having high support needs:

¹⁹ Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), [Making every contact count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness](#), (PDF) August 2012, paras 17-20

²⁰ The total number of new rough sleepers recorded in 2020/21 was 7,531 but a number did not record the reason for leaving their last accommodation.

²¹ This is the Housing Benefit paid to people living in the private rented sector.

²² The SAR limits the Housing Benefit a single person or couple (with no children) up to age 35 can claim to an amount to cover a room in a shared house. Some exemptions apply.

²³ See section 5.2 for information on Government policy on LHA rates during the coronavirus pandemic.

²⁴ See Library Briefing Paper: [Can private landlords refuse to let to Housing Benefit claimants? \(CBP07008\)](#)

The most frequently reported support need amongst people seen rough sleeping in 2020/21 was mental health, with 44% of those assessed during the period having a need in this area. 29% of people assessed had a support need relating to alcohol, while 31% were found to have a support need around drug use. Just under a third (30%) of those assessed were found to have more than one of the three support needs, while a similar proportion (32%) had no support needs in these areas.²⁵

Reasons for leaving last settled base		
People sleeping rough in Greater London during 2020/21		
Reason	Number of people	% of total recorded
Asked to leave or evicted	2,201	42%
<i>Asked to leave</i>	1,719	33%
<i>Evicted - arrears</i>	209	4%
<i>Evicted - anti-social behaviour</i>	39	1%
<i>Evicted - end of tenancy</i>	44	1%
<i>Evicted - other</i>	190	4%
Employment and education	790	15%
<i>Loss of job</i>	572	11%
<i>Seeking work</i>	216	4%
<i>Study</i>	2	0%
Relationships	791	15%
<i>Relationship breakdown</i>	716	14%
<i>Death of relative/friend</i>	54	1%
<i>Move nearer family/friend</i>	21	0%
Financial problems	155	3%
End of stay in short or medium term accommodation	230	4%
Victim of violence, harassment or abuse	233	4%
End of stay in institution	186	4%
Other	643	12%
Total (excl. not recorded)	5,229	100%
Not recorded	2,302	

Source: Greater London Authority, [CHAIN annual report April 2020 – March 2021](#), Section 2.7

Work carried out by Homeless Link and St Mungo's on behalf of the Department of Health (2012) found more than 70% of homeless people discharged from hospital returned to the streets without addressing their

²⁵ [CHAIN Greater London Annual Report 2020/21, p33](#)

underlying health problems.²⁶ Since October 2018, emergency departments; urgent treatment centres; and hospitals have been subject to the duty to refer under the HRA 2017 (see page 8).

In [The homelessness monitor: England 2018](#) authorities surveyed in 2017 referred to welfare reform when accounting for a rise in rough sleeping in their areas.²⁷ Other issues more specific to rough sleeping were also mentioned:

...particularly reduced access to support and social care services. Unsurprisingly, given the widespread nature of this reported rise in rough sleeping, nearly two thirds (64%) of responding authorities felt that there was a need for additional resources and/or provision of accommodation/services in order to properly address rough sleeping in their locality. The kinds of expanded provision that respondents had in mind often involved additional emergency or night shelter accommodation. Others called for more supported housing suitable for people with complex needs or referenced the need for 'Housing First' provision. For a number of participants, the establishment of outreach services was considered a priority.²⁸

Homeless Link's report, [Young & Homeless 2020](#) (September 2020) highlighted similar issues contributing to homelessness amongst 16-to- 24-year-olds.

[The homeless monitor: England 2019](#) again referred to the impact of welfare reform:

The safety net once provided by Housing Benefit, whereby post housing incomes were protected from erosion below basic benefit levels, has now effectively ended for the bulk of private tenants in receipt of benefit across the country, with young people under 35 particularly badly affected by reduced Local Housing Allowance rates and the working age benefit freeze.

There is considerable concern amongst local authority respondents of the ongoing expected impact of welfare reform on homelessness in their area. The full roll out of UC is the subject of greatest concern with nearly two thirds of LAs anticipating a "significant" homelessness increase as a result. Aside from anxieties on UC, most LAs anticipated that homelessness would "significantly" increase due to then freeze in LHA rates (53%) and other working age benefits (51%), with almost as many LAs (47%) reporting likewise for the lowered benefit cap.²⁹

²⁶ [Improving hospital admission and discharge for people who are homeless. \(PDF\)](#) March 2012. Note that hospitals are now subject to the duty to refer subject to the person giving their consent – see section 1.

²⁷ 61% of authorities reported an increase in rough sleeping in their areas.

²⁸ Suzanne Fitzpatrick; Hal Pawson; Glen Bramley; Steve Wilcox; Beth Watts & Jenny Wood, [Homelessness monitor: England 2018](#), April 2018 (Executive summary) p11.

²⁹ Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wood, J., Watts, B., Stephens, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2019) [The Homelessness Monitor: England 2019](#). London: Crisis.

One of the Government's responses to the coronavirus pandemic was to increase LHA rates over 2020/21 – this was warmly welcomed by the sector, but concerns remain over policy in the longer term (see section 5.2).

On 14 January 2019, then-Minister at MHCLG, Heather Wheeler, responded to a PQ on whether the Department would commission research into the causes of homelessness:

Following a recommendation by the Public Accounts Committee the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government and the Department for Work and Pensions jointly commissioned a feasibility study into researching the wider causes of homelessness, including households' experience of the welfare system as well as other factors such as housing affordability or relationship breakdown.

The feasibility study was completed by an independent supplier, Alma and comprised of three strands:

- a rapid evidence assessment on the causes of homelessness in the UK
- a critique of existing models of homelessness and homelessness projections; and
- identification of options for developing a predictive, quantitative model or suite of models on homelessness.

The Communities Secretary and I are working with the ministerial teams across the DWP to decide how best to take this work forward. We will write to the Public Account Accounts Committee shortly setting out our plans for next steps.³⁰

On 5 February 2019, James Brokenshire, then-Secretary of State, said the research commissioned by the DWP and MHCLG into the causes of homelessness, including the impact of welfare reform, would assist the development of “a predictive model of homelessness and rough sleeping in the long term.”³¹

Alma's reports were published on 25 March 2019:

- [Causes of homelessness and rough sleeping: rapid evidence assessment \(PDF\)](#)
- [Causes of homelessness and rough sleeping: review of models of homelessness \(PDF\)](#)
- [Causes of homelessness and rough sleeping: feasibility study \(PDF\)](#)

Commenting on the findings, the DWP Minister, Will Quince, said:

The causes of homelessness are numerous, varied and complex. A joint study between the Department and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local

³⁰ [Written question – 206896, 14 January 2019](#)

³¹ [Written question – 212132, 5 February 2019](#)

Government, has shown that there is not a direct causal link between welfare and homelessness.

[...]

Attributing homelessness to a single Governmental policy would simplify the issue, and this approach would wrongly deny it the multi-faceted approach which we're committed to delivering.³²

On 30 August 2019, then-Director General of Housing and Building Safety at MHCLG, Jeremy Pocklington, [wrote](#) (PDF) to the chair of the Committee of Public Accounts, Meg Hillier, to update her on progress following the publication of Alma's research. Briefly, the DWP and MHCLG (now DLUHC) are working together on a programme of research and analysis which will lead to the development of a predictive model of homelessness trends and which will enable the appraisal of future policy changes on levels of homelessness.³³

On 11 March 2020, Budget 2020 announced the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR)³⁴ exemptions would be **extended** to cover:

- Rough sleepers aged 16-24;
- Care leavers up to age 25; and
- Victims of domestic abuse and human trafficking.³⁵

Reacting to the announcement that these exemptions would be implemented in June 2021 rather than October 2023, Homeless Link said:

The latest figures show that 9% of rough sleepers in London are under 25 years old and our [Young and Homeless](#) research highlighted how the SAR prevented young people moving on from homelessness. This announcement is a helpful step in the right direction.³⁶

MHCLG published [Understanding the Multiple Vulnerabilities, Support Needs and Experiences of People who Sleep Rough in England- Initial findings from the Rough Sleeping Questionnaire](#) in December 2020. The findings were based on interviews with 563 respondents, all of whom had slept rough within the previous year (pre-Covid-19 lockdown). Findings included:

...82% have a mental health vulnerability, 83% have a physical health need, and 60% have a substance misuse need. The vast majority (91%), in addition

³² [Written question – 241435](#), 10 April 2019

³³ [Letter from Jeremy Pocklington to Meg Hillier MP](#), 30 August 2019

³⁴ SAR limits the amount of assistance with rent payments a single claimant under age 35 living in the private rented sector can get to the cost of a room in a shared house or flat (subject to Local Housing Allowance rates).

³⁵ [HC 121, March 2020](#), para 1.190. The initial intention was to bring in the new exemptions in October 2023. The [March 2021 Budget](#) (para 2.28) announced that this would be brought forward to June 2021.

³⁶ Homeless Link, [Some short-term wins, but Budget fails to address root causes or offer meaningful route to ending homelessness](#), 5 March 2021

to having slept rough, had at least once stayed in a form of short-term homeless accommodation and 71% had previously sofa surfed.³⁷

The report estimated the annual fiscal costs associated with rough sleeping and use of public services at £12,260 per rough sleeper.³⁸

³⁷ MHCLG, [Understanding the Multiple Vulnerabilities, Support Needs and Experiences of People who Sleep Rough in England- Initial findings from the Rough Sleeping Questionnaire](#), December 2020

³⁸ As above.

3 The number of rough sleepers

3.1 The number of rough sleepers, 2010 – present

Trends in the number of rough sleepers

An estimated 2,440 people slept rough on a single night in autumn 2021.

A ‘snapshot’ of the number of people sleeping rough on a given night in autumn is published annually by DLUHC. [The most recent available data is for autumn 2021](#), with figures available back to autumn 2010.

Local authorities are asked to produce either a formal count or an estimate of the number of people sleeping rough in the area. Counts must be conducted between 1 October and 30 November each year. Estimates should relate to a date in the same period, and should be produced in consultation with agencies working with rough sleepers in the area.

The resulting statistics are intended to give an idea of the number of people sleeping rough on a given night in this period, rather than a complete picture of the number of people sleeping rough across the year.

In 2021, 59 local authorities carried out a count of rough sleepers and 250 produced an estimate. 148 of these estimates included a ‘spotlight count’, where a count is taken in some parts of the local authority and this data is combined with other evidence.

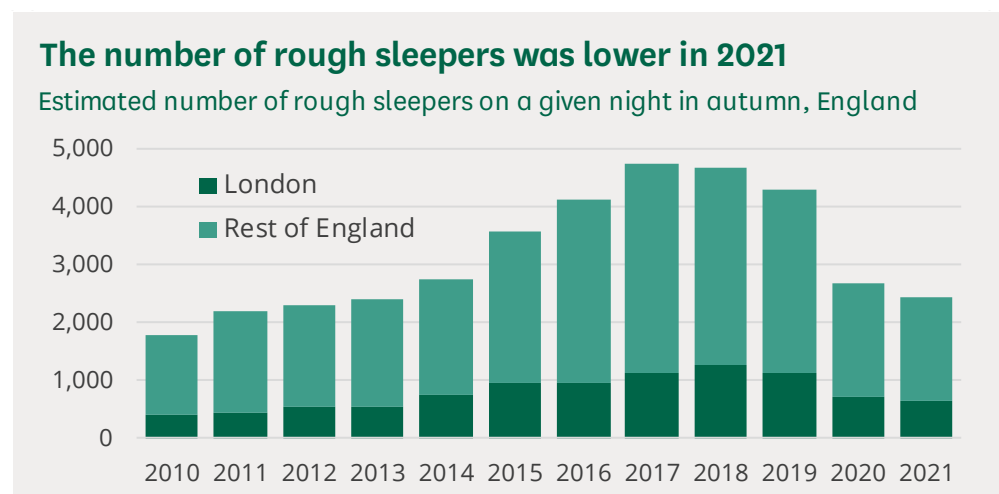
The charity Homeless Link verified the majority of responses, but 38 local authorities provided figures that were not verified by Homeless Link. This is because Homeless Link does not verify estimates that do not involve local agencies independent of the local authority.³⁹

An estimated 2,440 people slept rough on a single night in autumn 2021. As the chart overleaf shows, this is part of a downward trend in the number of people sleeping rough. The estimate for 2021 is 9% lower than the estimate for 2020, which was itself 37% lower than the estimate for 2019.

However, the number of rough sleepers in 2021 was still 38% higher than the number in 2010 (1,770 people). The estimated number of people sleeping rough on a given night increased each year between 2010 and 2017, when it reached a peak of 4,750.

³⁹ DLUHC, [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2021](#), 24 February 2022

The table below shows full figures for both England and London. Around a quarter of rough sleepers in 2021 were recorded in London.



Source: DLUHC, [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: Autumn 2021 – Tables](#), Table 1

Autumn rough sleeping estimates, 2010 - 2021

Estimated number of people sleeping rough on a given night

Year	England		London	
	Number	% change on prev. year	Number	% change on prev. year
2010	1,770		420	
2011	2,180	23%	450	7%
2012	2,310	6%	560	24%
2013	2,410	4%	540	-4%
2014	2,740	14%	740	37%
2015	3,570	30%	940	27%
2016	4,130	16%	960	2%
2017	4,750	15%	1,140	19%
2018	4,680	-1%	1,280	12%
2019	4,270	-9%	1,140	-11%
2020	2,690	-37%	710	-38%
2021	2,440	-9%	640	-10%

Source: DLUHC, [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: Autumn 2021 – Tables](#), Table 1

The effect of Covid-19 measures

It's likely that much of the fall in rough sleeping since 2020 is due to the Government's Covid-19 response, as well as subsequent efforts to retain low levels of rough sleeping.

The initial response has become known as the ‘Everyone In’ initiative. On 26 March 2020, local authorities were asked to provide accommodation to people who were either sleeping rough, at risk of sleeping rough, or living in homeless accommodation that would make it difficult to self-isolate (eg shelters and assessment centres). Local authorities worked to secure accommodation through hotel rooms, student accommodation, and other sources. Around 37,000 people were assisted through the programme.⁴⁰

The Library briefing [Coronavirus: support for rough sleepers \(England\)](#) has more detail on the Government’s response.

DLUHC has published statistics on the number of people in emergency or short-term accommodation (EST), and the number supported into longer-term accommodation, between May 2020 and December 2021. These figures are provided in an [annex to the main rough sleeping release](#), and are described as “not official statistics”. The figures are produced by DLUHC, but are based on local authorities’ management information which does not go through the same verification process as the main rough sleeping snapshot.⁴¹

EST is any temporary accommodation (eg hotels, local authority managed accommodation) used to accommodate people through Everyone In which would not normally be available to them. Longer-term accommodation, in this context, refers to either a tenancy in mainstream accommodation or a placement in a supported housing pathway.

The graphic overleaf shows the trends in the data. The number of people in EST was at its highest in May 2020 (the earliest available data), but also rose over the winter of 2020-21. The estimated number of people sleeping rough follows the opposite pattern, falling over the winter and rising again in 2021, but has remained below pre-pandemic levels throughout the period.

The number of people helped to move into longer-term accommodation or a supported housing pathway has risen steadily over the period, reaching around 40,240 people by the end of December 2021.

⁴⁰ [HL Deb 2 March 2021 c1085](#)

⁴¹ DLUHC, Rough sleeping snapshot in England, autumn 2021. [Annex A: Support for people sleeping rough in England, 2021](#), 24 February 2022

How has the Covid-19 response affected the number of people sleeping rough?

Estimates from local authority management data, England

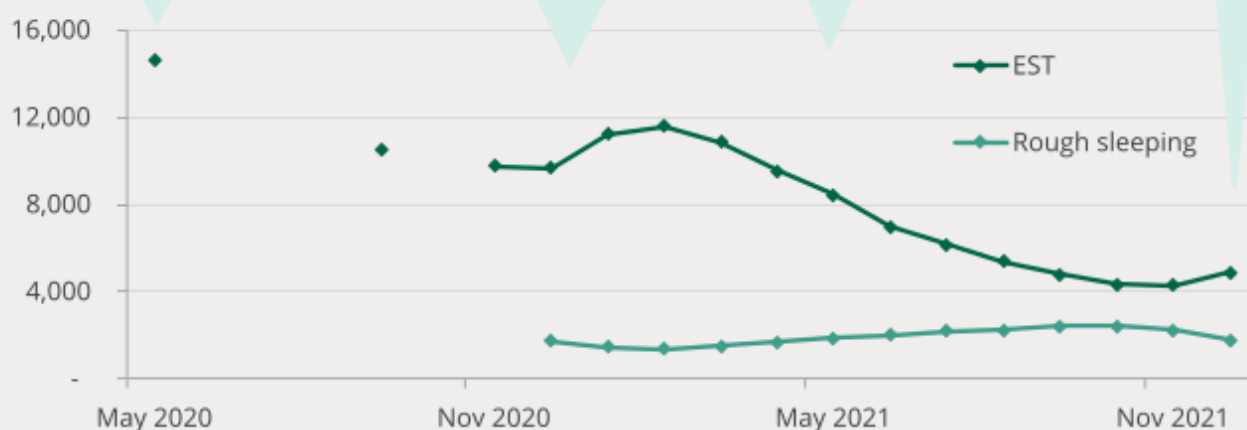
People in emergency or short-term accommodation (EST), and sleeping rough: monthly totals

Everyone In: in March 2020, local authorities were asked to accommodate those sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough. By May 2020, around 14,600 people were in EST.

The government announced support for more measures to accommodate rough sleepers during winter 2020-21, including the **Cold Weather Fund** and the **Protect Programme**. The number of people in EST rose, while the number sleeping rough fell.

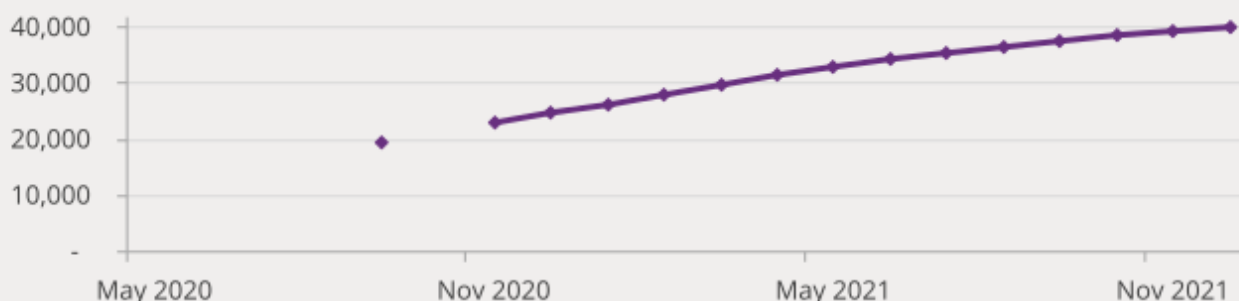
After these schemes came to a close, the number of people in EST began to fall. The numbers rough sleeping rose somewhat, but remained lower than pre-pandemic levels.

Numbers in EST rose, and numbers rough sleeping fell slightly, between the ends of November and December 2021. On 20 December 2021, the government announced funding for a **Protect and Vaccinate** programme, which included funding for accommodation.



People moved into settled accommodation or a supported housing pathway

Meanwhile, the total number of people who have moved on from EST into either settled accommodation or a supported housing pathway has increased steadily since 2020. The government made funding for this type of accommodation available through the **Next Steps Accommodation Programme**, first announced in the summer of 2020.



Source: DLUHC, Annex B: Support for people sleeping rough in England, 2021 - tables, 24 February 2022

Notes: These figures are based on management information from local authorities' activities, and should be treated with caution.

'Emergency and short term accommodation' refers to accommodation that has been used to accommodate people through Everyone In and which would not otherwise be available to them.

'Settled accommodation' is either a tenancy with a social housing provider, or a tenancy of at least 6 months in the private sector. 'Supported housing' is any scheme where housing and support services are provided as a package.

Where is rough sleeping most common?

The table below shows the rate of rough sleeping in each region in England in autumn 2021: the number of rough sleepers per 10,000 households living in the region. London had the highest rate of rough sleeping (1.8 rough sleepers per 10,000 households), followed by the South West (1.3) and the South East (1.2).

London has the highest rate of rough sleeping		
Rough sleepers per 10,000 households by region, 2021		
Region	Number of rough sleepers	Rate per 10,000 households
London	640	1.80
South West	330	1.34
South East	450	1.17
East of England	240	0.92
East Midlands	180	0.88
West Midlands	190	0.77
Yorks & the Humber	170	0.73
North West	200	0.63
North East	50	0.42
England	2,440	1.03

Source: DLUHC, [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: Autumn 2021 – Tables](#), Table 1; ONS, [2018-based household projections \(2021 figures\)](#)

The table below shows the local authorities with the highest rate of rough sleeping, within and outside London. The City of London has a high rate because its population is low. Westminster has a high rate because it has the highest number of rough sleepers by a considerable margin.

Which local authorities had the highest rate of rough sleeping?

Rough sleepers per 10,000 households: top five local authorities, 2021

Within London			Outside London		
Local authority	Number of rough sleepers	Rate per 10,000 households	Local authority	Number of rough sleepers	Rate per 10,000 households
City of London	20	46.7	Hastings	23	5.3
Westminster	187	15.2	Worcester	20	4.5
Camden	97	8.5	Oxford	24	4.5
Kingston upon Thames	28	3.0	Peterborough	36	4.5
Lambeth	29	2.1	Stevenage	14	3.8

Source: DLUHC, [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: Autumn 2021 – Tables](#), Table 1; ONS, [2018-based household projections \(2021 figures\)](#)

Demographics of rough sleepers

Local authorities also collect demographic information as part of the autumn ‘snapshot’. Demographic information isn’t recorded for all rough sleepers, so this data is subject to some uncertainty.

The table below summarises the data for 2021. The majority of rough sleepers were male (85%), while 14% were female. 86% were aged 26 and over and 5% were aged 18-25.

Nationality was also recorded. 67% of rough sleepers were UK nationals, 20% were EU nationals, and 5% were non-UK, non-EU nationals. In London, rough sleepers were more likely to be from overseas: 41% were nationals of EU countries and 8% were nationals of non-EU, non-UK countries.

Demographics of rough sleepers in England					
Estimated number of rough sleepers, 2021					
	England		London		
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	
Gender					
Male	2,080	85%	540	84%	
Female	320	13%	90	14%	
Not known	40	2%	20	3%	
Nationality					
UK	1,630	67%	230	36%	
EU	500	20%	260	41%	
Non-EU	110	5%	50	8%	
Not known	200	8%	100	16%	
Age					
18-25	110	5%	40	6%	
26 and over	2,110	86%	500	78%	
Not known	220	9%	100	16%	

Source: DLUHC, [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: Autumn 2021 – Tables](#), Tables 2a-c

Quality of official rough sleeping statistics

The rough sleeping statistics published by DLUHC are understood not to give a complete picture of the number of people who sleep rough during a given year, and do not capture data on other forms of homelessness.

DLUHC describes the autumn figures as a ‘snapshot’ of rough sleeping and notes that “accurately estimating the number of people sleeping rough within

a local authority is inherently difficult given the hidden nature of rough sleeping”.⁴²

The figures do not have National Statistics status, which means they do not meet the standards set out in the UK Statistics Authority’s (UKSA’s) Code of Practice for Statistics. UKSA published an assessment of the rough sleeping statistics in December 2015, concluding that there was “work to be done” before rough sleeping statistics could meet the standard of National Statistics.⁴³

The Government’s Rough Sleeping Strategy, published in August 2018, included a commitment to “improve the evidence base” around rough sleeping.⁴⁴

In July 2020, the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) completed a review of the compliance of the rough sleeping estimates with the Code of Practice for Statistics. A [letter from the OSR to the Head of Profession for Statistics at DLUHC](#) highlighted “positive features that demonstrate the quality and value of the statistics” as well as identifying areas for improvement.⁴⁵

These quality assessments only refer to the annual autumn ‘snapshot’ of people sleeping rough, and not the monthly data monitoring the impact of Covid-19 measures described on pages 22-23 of this briefing.

DLUHC explains these figures are based on management information from local authorities, and are not subject to the same quality assurance processes as the main snapshot figures.⁴⁶

3.2 Statistics from the London CHAIN database

The Greater London Authority (GLA) publishes data about rough sleepers in London collected from the Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) database.

CHAIN contains information about rough sleepers who have been in contact with outreach teams or who have accessed accommodation for rough sleepers in Greater London. It is used by people working with rough sleepers across a range of organisations, and is maintained by St Mungo’s, the homelessness charity. The data doesn’t include people from ‘hidden

⁴² DLUHC, [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2021](#), 24 February 2022

⁴³ UK Statistics Authority, [Statistics on homelessness and rough sleeping in England \(Department for Communities and Local Government\)](#), December 2015

⁴⁴ MHCLG, [The rough sleeping strategy](#), 13 August 2018, p20

⁴⁵ OSR, [Letter from Mark Pont to Sandra Tudor: Compliance Check of Rough sleeping snapshot in England](#), 3 July 2020

⁴⁶ DLUHC, [Annex A: Support for people sleeping rough in England, 2021](#), 24 February 2022

homeless' groups such as those sofa surfing, unless they have also been in contact with outreach workers.

The chart below shows the total number of people in contact with rough sleeping services and outreach workers in each financial year.



Source: Greater London Authority, [CHAIN annual report April 2020 – March 2021](#), Section 2.2

The number of people recorded sleeping rough rose in each year between 2010/11 and 2016/17. There were also substantial rises in 2018/19 (of 18%) and 2019/20 (of 21%), as well as a smaller rise (of 3%) in 2020/21.

The annual report notes these increases are likely to have at least partly been driven by increases in outreach capacity:

During 2018/19 and 2019/20, significant new funding saw a large increase in the number of outreach services and staff in London, together with the introduction of bimonthly street counts, as noted above. It is likely that these factors will have had some influence on the number of people being recorded on CHAIN.⁴⁷

Out of all rough sleepers recorded in 2020/21, 68% had not been seen rough sleeping before that year. 19% had been rough sleeping the year before as well, and 12% had been rough sleeping in previous years but not the year before.⁴⁸ 62% of all the people recorded had been seen rough sleeping just once during the year.

⁴⁷ Greater London Authority, [CHAIN annual report April 2020 – March 2021](#), p6

⁴⁸ Greater London Authority, [CHAIN annual report April 2020 – March 2021](#), p4

At least 15% of rough sleepers recorded in London in 2020/21 had contacted a local authority for help before sleeping rough.

1,147 people seen sleeping rough for the first time in 2020/21 were recorded as having approached their Local Authority Housing Options service for help in the prior 12 months. This represents 15% of all new rough sleepers that year, or 29% of all those for whom this information was recorded. 96% of this group had approached a Housing Options team in a London borough.⁴⁹

During 2020/21, 55% of all people seen sleeping rough during the year were booked into accommodation – a total of 6,055 people. Hubs, shelters and emergency accommodation were the most common types of accommodation booked, accounting for 62% of all bookings. 31% of all bookings were for temporary accommodation, and 8% for long-term accommodation. Note that a person may be booked into accommodation more than once during the year (and long-term accommodation, by nature, is likely to be booked less frequently).⁵⁰

Nationality of London rough sleepers

	2019/20	2020/21	% change
UK	4,683	5,139	+9.7%
Central & Eastern Europe	2,924	2,274	-22.2%
Other Europe	885	859	-2.9%
Rest of world	1,280	1,975	+54.3%
Not known	954	771	-19.2%

Source: Greater London Authority, [CHAIN annual report April 2020 – March 2021](#), Section 4.2

Data about the nationality of rough sleepers is also included in the CHAIN database. The table below shows the change in the number of rough sleepers in broad nationality categories over the last two years. Around 7-9% of rough sleepers were recorded without a nationality identified, so these figures should be treated as indicative only.

The number of rough sleepers from outside of Europe and the UK grew by around 54%, while the number of UK nationals grew by around 10%. The number of people from European countries fell. Overall, 47% of rough sleepers with a recorded nationality were from the UK; 21% were from Central or Eastern Europe; 8% were from elsewhere in Europe and 18% were from outside of Europe and the UK.

The table on the left shows the ten most commonly-recorded nationalities.

CHAIN reports for 2020/21 and previous years are published on [the GLA's London Datastore website](#). The reports include further breakdowns of the characteristics of people seen sleeping rough in each year.

Most common nationalities recorded, 2020/21

	Nation	Total
1	UK	5,139
2	Romania	1,133
3	Poland	647
4	Eritrea	358
5	India	273
6	Portugal	169
7	Lithuania	163
8	Somalia	134
9	Italy	130
10	Ireland	117

Source: GLA

⁴⁹ Greater London Authority, [CHAIN annual report April 2020 – March 2021](#), p13

⁵⁰ Greater London Authority, [CHAIN annual report April 2020 – March 2021](#), p35

3.3 Deaths of homeless people

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published [Experimental Statistics on the deaths of homeless people](#).⁵¹ The statistics mainly cover people who, at the time of their death, were sleeping rough or using emergency accommodation such as homeless shelters.

The figures are classed as [Experimental Statistics](#) because they are still in development. They are based on death registrations, which can take several months after death to complete. Local registrars are known to follow a variety of practises in recording the deaths of homeless people.

In 2020, there were an estimated 688 deaths of homeless people. Men accounted for the majority of deaths: according to the estimates 88% of the people who died were men, and 12% were women.

The average age of death identified was 45.9 years for men and 41.6 years for women. Note that these figures are not the same as life expectancy and should not be treated as such. Deaths of people aged 75 or over were not included in the calculation of these figures for methodological reasons.

Most deaths recorded were due to drug-related poisoning, suicide, and alcohol-specific causes. An estimated 39% of deaths (265 people) were related to drug poisoning, while 12% (83 people) were caused by suicide and 11% (74 people) were due to alcohol-specific causes.

There were an estimated 13 deaths of homeless people involving Covid-19 in 2020, representing just under 2% of all deaths. The ONS comments that the low number is likely to be due to government intervention:

In an earlier analysis, which included deaths where the registered address of the deceased was a hotel, 16 deaths of possible homeless people involving COVID-19 were registered up to 26 June 2020.

Whilst the two methods disagree on a precise number, both indicate that COVID-19 was not a leading cause of death among homeless people. The poor overall health of the homeless population put them at higher risk than people of equivalent age in the general population, with one modelling study suggesting that hundreds of homeless people could have died without the intervention of the Everyone In scheme.⁵²

3.4 Past approaches to counting rough sleepers

From 1996 local authorities were asked to provide annual estimates of rough sleeping in their statistical returns to the Department of the Environment,

⁵¹ ONS, [Deaths of homeless people in England and Wales: 2020 registrations](#), 1 December 2021

⁵² ONS, [Deaths of homeless people in England and Wales: 2020 registrations](#), 1 December 2021

Transport and the Regions (DETR) as part of the Housing Investment Programme process. Authorities were encouraged to work with voluntary sector agencies to conduct head counts of people sleeping rough in their areas where there was a known rough sleeping problem. Policy on how these counts were to be conducted is described below:

- at least two counts a year in areas with a substantial number of rough sleepers (20 or more on a single night);
- at least one count a year in areas with between 10 and 19 rough sleepers on a single night; and
- counts in a selection of areas estimating fewer than 10 rough sleepers on a single night to spot check the validity of those estimates.⁵³

The figures from the single night street counts in 1998 produced an estimate of 1,850 rough sleepers in England on any one night. The same count in 1999 produced an estimate of 1,633, of which 635 were in Greater London.⁵⁴ The 1998 figure was taken as the baseline figure for the Labour Government's target to reduce rough sleeping by two thirds by 2002.

In May 2000 Hilary Armstrong, Minister for Local Government and the Regions, reported that street counts in January 2000 showed a fall of around one third in the number of people sleeping rough in central London since June 1998.⁵⁵ The June 2000 street count found 546 rough sleepers in Greater London and 1,180 in England as a whole, indicating the downward trend was continuing.⁵⁶ The Rough Sleepers Unit predicted that if the fall in rough sleeping continued at that rate the unit would have met its target by August 2001.⁵⁷

On 3 December 2001 the Labour Government announced the RSU had achieved its target of reducing rough sleeping by at least two thirds by 2002. The November 2001 count found 532 people sleeping rough in England.⁵⁸

On 12 September 2005 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) reported that rough sleeping had fallen to its lowest level ever:

Annual rough sleeping figures for 2005 show a 75 per cent reduction in the number of people sleeping rough in England since 1998, from 1,850 to 459.

...National statistics also published today show the number of people becoming homeless was 17 per cent lower than in the same period the previous year.⁵⁹

⁵³ HC Deb 10 December 2001 c574W

⁵⁴ HC Deb 15 December 1999 c193-4W

⁵⁵ HC Deb 9 May 2000 c630

⁵⁶ HC Deb 15 November 2000 c655W

⁵⁷ 'Rough Sleepers Unit on schedule to achieve its goal', Housing Today, 24 August 2000

⁵⁸ RSU Press Release, Government meets target on reducing rough sleeping, 3 December 2001

⁵⁹ ODPM Press Release 2005/190, 12 September 2005

In 2008, when announcing a new strategy to end rough sleeping by 2012, the Minister, Iain Wright, referred to street count figures which indicated there were around 483 rough sleepers across the country on any given night.⁶⁰

On 15 July 2010, DCLG reported the numbers of rough sleepers in England had hit an 11-year low: 70 councils had conducted street counts and reported there were 440 rough sleepers in England on any given night. In comparison, in 2009, 76 councils conducted street counts and recorded 464 rough sleepers.⁶¹

Homelessness charities had long questioned whether street sleeping had been reduced by the extent claimed. Philip Burke of the Simon Community reportedly said the 2001 figures “do not reflect the full picture” because “the figures centre on some major cities and London Boroughs, and are only a sample reflecting one night of the year.”⁶² The final estimates were the sum of all counts conducted by local authorities, but each year the majority of local authorities did not conduct a count.

The Simon Community’s July 2002 newsletter claimed, prior to the November 2001 head count, the RSU had decanted rough sleepers into bed and breakfast accommodation and held all-night parties to draw the homeless off the streets in order to push down the count figures.⁶³ The RSU and Lord Falconer (Minister for Housing at that time) denied these allegations.⁶⁴ Questions on the methodology used were asked in the House.⁶⁵

In January 2007 Inside Housing reported the number of people sleeping rough could be “as much as four times higher than the official figure because of the way the statistics are collected.”⁶⁶ Authorities recording between zero and 10 rough sleepers during the June 2006 count had had their results rounded down to zero. DCLG conceded the counts did not represent a comprehensive picture of homelessness but said they “provide a useful snapshot of the number sleeping rough on a particular night.”⁶⁷ [Revised guidance on evaluating the extent of rough sleeping](#) (PDF) was published in March 2007.⁶⁸

In November 2008, the Labour Government said it would adopt a new approach to assessing the number of rough sleepers, as part of its strategy to end rough sleeping:

⁶⁰ DCLG Press Release, New Goal to end rough sleeping, 18 November 2008

⁶¹ DCLG Press Release, Rough sleeping hits an eleven year low, 15 July 2010; DCLG, [Rough sleeping in England: Total street count and estimates 2010](#), 23 July 2010

⁶² “Rough sleeping figures are ‘quick fix’ says charity chief”, Inside Housing, 8 September 2000 [login required]

⁶³ Simon Star, Issue 89, July 2002

⁶⁴ “Falconer defends rough sleeper count,” Housing Today, 24 January 2002

⁶⁵ HC Deb 5 March 2002 c186W

⁶⁶ “Number of homeless could be four times official figure”, Inside Housing, 12 January 2007 [login required]

⁶⁷ As above.

⁶⁸ DCLG, [Guidance on evaluating the extent of rough sleeping – 2007 revision](#) (PDF), March 2007

While we will keep the local counts as a useful measure, we know that they provide a limited snapshot. They should be the start of the process not the end. We want to use the counts and other sources of data to bring together a fuller picture of the different needs of people sleeping rough, the services offered and the outcomes achieved. We want to make sure that people are getting the help that they need.

This information needs to drive further action to tackle rough sleeping. So we will:

- launch a new approach to help local authorities monitor progress and track people sleeping rough, ensuring that counts are not just an opportunity to identify levels of need but more importantly to do something about it;
- launch “Street Needs Audits” to give us a much better understanding of the needs of people on the streets; and
- develop new ways of using data to understand and monitor outcomes for people who have slept rough.⁶⁹

Alongside the publication of the rough sleeper counts in July 2010, the new Housing Minister at that time, Grant Shapps, said he would “shortly consult” on an overhaul of the rough sleeping count methodology. He said:

Today's figures show that rough sleeping is at an 11-year low - but I am sceptical that these figures reflect the situation on the streets.

Only councils considered to have a rough sleeping problem have been required to conduct counts - so in some of our biggest cities, while local people would be acutely aware of the problem of rough sleeping, official street counts were not conducted.

That's why I will shortly publish plans for a complete overhaul of the way the problem of rough sleeping is assessed so councils and charities can be given a credible measure of the problem in their area.⁷⁰

A consultation document, [Proposed changes to guidance on evaluating the extent of rough sleeping: Consultation \(PDF\)](#), was published on 23 July 2010. On 14 September 2010 the Coalition Government issued new guidance for local authorities, [Evaluating the Extent of Rough Sleeping: A new approach \(PDF\)](#).

The new methodology has been applied by authorities since October 2010. The guidance is “aimed at getting a clearer picture of the scale of the problem in each area so more targeted support can be provided to some of the most vulnerable in society.”⁷¹ Section 3.1 of this briefing describes rough sleeping estimates calculated using this methodology in each year since 2010.

⁶⁹ DCLG, [No One Left Out: Communities ending rough sleeping](#), (PDF), 18 November 2008

⁷⁰ CLG Press Release, Rough sleeping hits an eleven year low, 15 July 2010

⁷¹ HC Deb 25 October 2010 c89W

4 Tackling rough sleeping (2010 onwards)

4.1 The Coalition Government

A DCLG press release of 15 July 2010 confirmed the new Minister for Housing at that time, Grant Shapps, would “do all he can to safeguard homelessness funding in the face of tough economic times.” The press release went on to say, despite in-year savings of £6.2 billion across Whitehall, and the emergency Budget which outlined further measures to cut the deficit, Government funding for tackling homelessness had “remained unchanged.”⁷²

A [Ministerial Working Group](#) was established to prevent and reduce homelessness. The working group’s initial focus was on a vision to end rough sleeping:

The Ministerial Working Group will focus on those living on the streets and those in temporary or insecure accommodation, such as hostels, shelters and squats, who are at significant risk of rough sleeping. People being assisted under the legislation may also be considered where there are specific - government issues to address.⁷³

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, had announced funding of £750,000 for the No Second Night Out (NSNO) project in December 2010. The scheme was eventually rolled-out to all 33 London boroughs on 1 June 2012. The aim was to help the Mayor reach his target of ending rough sleeping in the capital by the end of 2012.⁷⁴ The target was not achieved but the Mayor retained a target to end rough sleeping in the capital.

On 6 July 2011 Grant Shapps announced an additional £20 million for a Homelessness Transition Fund to be administered by the umbrella group Homeless Link. This funding enabled the countrywide roll-out of NSNO. Full details of the Coalition Government’s commitment to rough sleepers can be found in [Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out nationwide](#) (PDF, July 2011). The Fund was to run to March 2015.⁷⁵

As the name of the scheme suggests, NSNO aims to increase the proportion of new rough sleepers who are prevented from spending a second night sleeping rough. Teams of outreach workers bring rough sleepers to an assessment hub where they are assisted to exit rough sleeping by a variety of means,

⁷² DCLG Press Release, Rough sleeping hit eleven year low, 15 July 2010

⁷³ The [minutes of the Group’s meetings](#) can be accessed online.

⁷⁴ [Local Government Executive Press Release](#), 20 December 2010

⁷⁵ [An evaluation report and case studies of the Homeless Transition Fund](#) can be found on the Homeless Link website.

including reconnection with their home areas. A rough sleeping phone line and NSNO website were set up to encourage and enable the public to report rough sleepers when they see them.

An evaluation of the first six months of NSNO (April to September 2011) was published in December 2011. The researchers found the project had been “highly successful in meeting its aim of supporting more new rough sleepers to move off the streets more quickly” and that new rough sleepers were less likely to return to rough sleeping in London.⁷⁶

An assessment of No Second Night Out Across England was published in February 2014. The report recorded some successes. In particular, it showed that around seven in 10 (67%) rough sleepers across England were being helped off the streets the day they were found, and that nearly eight in 10 (78%) did not return after receiving help. Tackling rough sleeping quickly was found to yield benefits in terms of preventing the development of a long-term problem. The report also observed that although most local authorities had signed up to the principles of NSNO, “not every area had developed a specific new service response.”⁷⁷ The need for continued investment was stressed:

...the progress that has been made in the last two years can only be sustained through sufficient investment. 91% of NSNO services in the sample were funded by the Homelessness Transition Fund, but with this funding due to end in March 2015, there is a real risk that the good work will be undone through lack of funding.⁷⁸

The Department of Health (DOH) made £10 million available for projects to improve the identification of homeless people in hospital and to provide suitable accommodation on discharge (the Homeless Hospital Discharge Fund). In September 2013, the DOH announced 52 projects had been awarded a share of the £10 million.⁷⁹ An evaluation of the scheme’s operation was published in January 2015.⁸⁰

The Minister, Marcus Jones, was tasked with leading on homelessness for the Coalition and, initially, the 2015 and 2017 Governments. He summarised work undertaken by the Coalition Government to tackle rough sleeping during a speech at a Homeless Link conference on 8 December 2015:

Over the last Parliament, we have made great strides in ensuring that homeless people have the right support that they need to get back on their feet. Through the central investment that government has made to support local areas to tackle and prevent homelessness, we have delivered a lot together.

⁷⁶ Broadway, York University & Crunch Consulting, [No second night out: an evaluation of the first six months of the project \(PDF\)](#), December 2011

⁷⁷ Homeless Link, [No Second Night Out Across England](#), (PDF), 2014

⁷⁸ As above.

⁷⁹ [DOH Press Release](#), Ten million pound cash boost to improve the health of homeless people, 6 September 2013

⁸⁰ Homeless Link, [An evaluation of the Homeless Hospital Discharge Fund](#), (PDF), January 2015

Our £8 million [Help for Single Homeless Fund](#) has allowed 168 local authorities to partner up together to help some of the hardest to reach individuals. These projects are offering support to help people turn their lives around and find a long term solution that supports their needs.

Our [Access to the Private Rented Sector programme](#), which we have funded Crisis to run, has helped over 9,000 people access and sustain privately rented accommodation. This isn't just about putting a roof over someone's head, but ensuring that they get the support they need to rebuild their lives.

The pioneering [StreetLink](#) service, which we have funded, has led to nearly 15,500 rough sleepers being found and connected with local services. The service is making it easier for the public to help someone that's sleeping rough. Not with a cash handout, but with the valuable alternative of practical support.

We have pioneered 2 of the world's first Social Impact Bonds in homelessness – the [Fair Chance Fund](#) for young people, and the Social Impact Bond for the entrenched rough sleepers in London.

And I have seen first-hand the work of the [No Second Night Out](#) hubs in London, which have successfully helped over 4,000 people exit rough sleeping. More widely, the [Homelessness Transition Fund](#) has helped people find stable homes and jobs to get their lives back on track.⁸¹

The Minister noted some specific concerns raised by the sector, notably:

- a challenging funding environment;
- the need to draw in partners from health, the probation service, Job Centres and others; and
- missed opportunities to help individuals with complex needs.⁸²

4.2 The Conservative Governments 2015 and 2017

Marcus Jones confirmed the Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness had been reconvened, and set out the Government's approach to homelessness following the Spending Review 2015:

In the last Parliament, we made £109 million available to local areas on top of Homelessness Prevention Grant. This investment meant that we could roll out No Second Night Out nationally through the Homelessness Transition Fund. It also allowed us to invest in StreetLink; the Fair Chance Fund; Help for Single Homeless; and the Access to the Private Rented Sector Scheme.

So in this Spending Review, we have chosen to reaffirm our commitment to protecting the most vulnerable in society.

⁸¹ [DCLG Press Release](#), Stem the tide of homelessness, 8 December 2015

⁸² As above.

Whilst my department has reduced its overall resource budget by nearly 30%, we have taken the decision to increase the dedicated central funding that we provide to local areas to tackle homelessness.

Over the next 4 years, we will increase central funding by making £139 million available for innovative programmes to prevent and reduce homelessness. In addition:

- we make additional Discretionary Housing Payment funding available to local authorities; this will allow them to help some of the most vulnerable people, including those in supported accommodation
- we are putting local government in control of their own finances, allowing them to respond efficiently and flexibly to local need; by the end of this Parliament, local government will be spending the same in cash terms as it does today
- we have devolved additional responsibilities, meaning that the temporary accommodation management fee will no longer be paid through the benefits system; instead, councils will receive this money upfront; we are maintaining at current levels and providing an additional £10 million a year, so that they can give more freedom and flexibilities to local authorities
- and whilst I cannot say any more on Homelessness Prevention Grant until we publish the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement later this month, I want to assure you that I have listened very carefully to the representations that have been made by you on its importance.⁸³

Some of the initiatives listed above, eg funding for temporary accommodation, are not relevant to rough sleepers.

The sector had been concerned that Homelessness Prevention Grant funding would be reduced as part of the 2015 Spending Review. Crisis launched a campaign in support of its retention on the basis that preventing homelessness saves the Government between £3,000 and £18,000 for each individual helped.⁸⁴

Marcus Jones announced the protection of Homelessness Prevention Grant funding for local authorities on 17 December 2015 as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement.⁸⁵

Information on DOH funding under the Homelessness Change and Platform for Life programmes was provided on 22 December 2015:

Homelessness Change is designed to improve hostel accommodation and facilities so that better healthcare can be delivered in them, and help rough sleepers avoid unnecessary hospital stays. It also gives people extra support such as education and training.

⁸³ As above.

⁸⁴ Crisis, Preventing and tackling single homelessness, September 2015

⁸⁵ [DCLG Press Release](#), Radical package of measures announced to tackle homelessness, 17 December 2015

The Platform for Life scheme aims to provide shared rented accommodation for young people aged 18 to 24 who are at risk of homelessness. The money will fund time-limited tenancies that are linked with participation in work, further education, or to maintain employment and have a healthy and successful life.⁸⁶

Marcus Jones said:

Homelessness is not just about getting a roof over people's heads, it's also about ensuring people never become homeless again. Today's announcement demonstrates the cross-government commitment to tackling homelessness and providing support to some of the most vulnerable in our society.

This funding targets resources on initiatives to improve the life chances of homeless people through a combination of health, education and work support programmes. Ultimately these initiatives will work to prevent anyone facing a homelessness crisis again.⁸⁷

Budget 2016 made further provision for supporting rough sleepers off the streets:

To further support rough sleepers off the streets and to help those who are recovering from a homelessness crisis, Budget 2016:

- invests £100 million to deliver low-cost 'second stage' accommodation for rough sleepers leaving hostel accommodation and domestic abuse victims and their families moving on from refuges. This will provide at least 2,000 places to enable independent living for vulnerable households and individuals, freeing up hostels and refuges for those in most acute need
- invests £10 million over two years to support and scale up innovative ways to prevent and reduce rough sleeping, particularly in London, building on the success of the No Second Night Out initiative
- doubles the funding for the [Rough Sleeping Social Impact Bond](#) announced at the Autumn Statement 2015 from £5 million to £10 million, to drive innovative ways of tackling entrenched rough sleeping, including 'Housing First' approaches⁸⁸
- takes action to increase the number of rough sleeping EU migrants returning to their home countries. Building on the success of the Operation Adoze pilot, the government will roll out a new approach in which immigration officials work with Local Authorities and outreach workers to connect rough sleepers to services that can return them home.⁸⁹

Commenting on the Budget, the Chartered Institute of Housing welcomed additional funding to tackle rough sleeping as "good news" but went on:

⁸⁶ [DOH Press Release](#), Funding for homelessness projects, 22 December 2015

⁸⁷ [DOH Press Release](#), Funding for homelessness projects, 22 December 2015

⁸⁸ Information on the Housing First initiative can be found in Library briefing (CBP)8368) [Housing First: tackling homelessness for those with complex needs](#).

⁸⁹ HM Treasury, [Budget 2016](#) (PDF), HC 901, March 2016, para 1.129

It will go some way to responding to rising levels of rough sleeping and we hope it marks the start of more action to come to end homelessness in this country. Homelessness is increasing and we would like to see additional investment in services to prevent homelessness and in increasing the supply of affordable housing.

The measures also do not address some of the fundamental causes of homelessness and we remain concerned about the possible impact of further welfare cuts - in particular, the extension of LHA rates to the social sector.⁹⁰

Autumn Statement 2016 announced funding for the Rough Sleeping Fund would be doubled to £20 million:

Rough Sleeping Fund – The government is committing a further £10 million over two years to the Rough Sleeping Fund. This will double the size of the fund, which will support and scale up innovative approaches to preventing and reducing rough sleeping, particularly in London.⁹¹

The National Audit Office's (NAO) report on Homelessness (September 2017) noted:

The Department is not currently monitoring the social impact bond areas because these projects have not yet started. It provides funding for these projects after the areas have supplied evidence of outcomes, as opposed to the homelessness prevention trailblazers and rough sleeping grant, which are provided in advance.⁹²

Halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it by 2027

The Conservative Government was elected in 2017 with a manifesto commitment to halve rough sleeping over the course of the Parliament and eliminate it by 2027. The Autumn Budget 2017 set out the Government's first steps towards achieving this commitment:

Rough sleeping – The Budget sets out the government's first steps towards its commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022, and to eliminate it by 2027, including the launch of the Homelessness Reduction Taskforce, which will develop a cross-government strategy to work towards this commitment.

Housing First pilots⁹³ – The government will invest £28 million in three Housing First pilots in Manchester, Liverpool and the West Midlands, to support rough sleepers with the most complex needs to turn their lives around.

Private rented sector access schemes: support for households at risk of homelessness – The government will also provide £20 million of funding for

⁹⁰ CIH Member Briefing on the Budget 2016 (accessed on 6 April 2016)

⁹¹ HM Treasury, [Autumn Statement 2016 \(PDF\)](#), Cm 9362, para 5.12

⁹² NAO, [Homelessness](#), HC 308, 13 September 2017

⁹³ Information on the Housing First initiative can be found in Library briefing (CBP)8368) [Housing First: tackling homelessness for those with complex needs](#).

The 2017 Government announced LHA caps **would not** be applied to social housing tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit/UC as previously planned

schemes to support people at risk of homelessness to access and sustain tenancies in the private rented sector.⁹⁴

Following the publication of the rough sleeper statistics for 2017, the Government was questioned on action to reduce rough sleeping. Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth said:

My Lords, the Government are providing over £1 billion of funding to combat homelessness and rough sleeping, implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act and piloting a housing-first approach for rough sleepers with complex needs. We are committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it altogether by 2027. To achieve this, we have established a task force to drive forward a cross-government strategy. It will be supported by a panel of experts, who met for the first time this morning.⁹⁵

Membership of the Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel, the body tasked with developing a national strategy, was published on 30 November 2017.⁹⁶

The Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) March 2018

Heather Wheeler was appointed as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Housing and Homelessness) on 9 January 2018.

On 30 March 2018, then-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid, announced a [new initiative to reduce rough sleeping](#) which consisted of the following measures:

- a new Rough Sleeping Team made up of rough sleeping and homelessness experts, drawn from, and funded by government departments and agencies with specialist knowledge across a wide-range of areas from housing, mental health to addiction
- a £30 million fund for 2018 to 2019 with further funding agreed for 2019 to 2020 targeted at local authorities with high numbers of people sleeping rough; the Rough Sleeping Team will work with these areas to support them to develop tailored local interventions to reduce the number of people sleeping on the streets
- £100,000 funding to support frontline Rough Sleeping workers across the country to make sure they have the right skills and knowledge to work with vulnerable rough sleepers.
- The government is also working with the National Housing Federation to look at providing additional, coordinated move-on accommodation for rough sleepers across the country. This builds on the existing 3,750 'clearing house' places already provided in London.⁹⁷

He described how cross-government work would support these measures:

⁹⁴ HM Treasury, [Autumn Budget 2017 \(PDF\)](#), HC 587, 23 November 2017, paras 5.33-35

⁹⁵ [HL Deb 1 February 2018 c1707](#)

⁹⁶ MHCLG Press Release, [Government to lead national effort to end rough sleeping](#), 30 November 2017

⁹⁷ [MHCLG Press Release](#), New government initiative to reduce rough sleeping, 30 March 2018

- Department of Health and Social Care - which will make available experts in mental health and drug treatment services to help support the new outreach teams, including in hostels
- Ministry of Justice - which will focus on making sure prison and probation work with local authorities and outreach teams to identify prisoners and offenders serving community sentences who are at risk of sleeping rough
- Home Office - will encourage the policing sector to work in partnership with local authorities on rough sleeping, including enforcement where appropriate, and to identify and share best practice
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport - which will work in partnership with MHCLG to explore opportunities for new Social Impact Bonds that build on the success of existing programmes providing effective and innovative support to rough sleepers.⁹⁸

The Government's [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) was published in August 2018. The document was described as “the beginning of a nine year policy to ensure no one has to sleep rough again”. It included specific actions, but also an intention to test different approaches, learn from them and scale up and roll out new programmes. The strategy was backed-up by £100 million in funding for two years.⁹⁹ Speaking on BBC Radio 4's Today Programme, then-Communities Secretary, James Brokenshire, said some of the funding had been “reprioritised from existing budgets”.¹⁰⁰

The strategy's core pillars are prevention, intervention and recovery. The Executive Summary to the strategy (pp8-11) lists the key measures being taken forward, with reference to funding allocations as appropriate. The measures were summarised in a [Written Statement](#) on 4 September 2018:

We will prevent rough sleeping by providing timely support to those at risk by, for example:

- piloting suitable accommodation and tailored for those leaving prison so they do not end up on the streets;
- researching the nature and scale of LGBT homelessness to determine what measures need to be put in place to prevent this;
- ensuring that local authorities investigate rough sleeper deaths to understand and tackle the root causes; and
- implementing the duty to refer on certain public bodies as part of the Homelessness Reduction Act, to ensure that more people get the help they need faster.

⁹⁸ As above.

⁹⁹ MHCLG, CM 9685, [Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018](#), August 2018, Executive Summary

¹⁰⁰ The Independent, [“Government's £100 million' plan to eradicate rough sleeping is not new money. minister admits”](#), 13 August 2018

We will intervene to help people already on the street get swift, targeted support by, for example:

- rolling out a new initiative, Somewhere Safe to Stay, to help up to 6,000 people who are new to the streets or vulnerable to rough sleeping, offering support to rapidly identify issues that led them to sleeping rough;
- introducing ‘navigators’ – specialists who will act as trusted confidantes – who will help people sleeping rough access the appropriate services and accommodation;
- providing up to £30 million for health services for people sleeping rough, informed by the findings of a health provision audit to be carried out this year; and
- providing training for frontline staff on how to best help people under the influence of Spice, those who are victims of domestic abuse, modern slavery, as well as how best to support homeless LGBT people.

We will help people recover, find a new home quickly and rebuild their lives by, for example:

- providing affordable accommodation for those leaving hostels and domestic abuse refuges, and to support them in managing this accommodation;
- investing money from dormant bank accounts into housing for those on the streets or at risk of rough sleeping;
- launching a new fund to help up to 5,000 former rough sleepers and those at risk to sustain their tenancies by working with them to boost financial independence and access training and employment opportunities; and
- launching a £50 million fund for homes outside London for people ready to move on from hostels or refuges but need additional support.¹⁰¹

There was a commitment to “refresh the Strategy on an annual basis, setting out the progress we have made and ensuring that our interventions remain relevant and targeted.”¹⁰²

MHCLG published the [Rough Sleeping Strategy: delivery plan](#) (PDF) on 10 December 2018. This document provided an update on progress in implementing the strategy’s 61 commitments and information on next steps.

The first [Impact evaluation of the Rough Sleeping Initiative 2018](#) (PDF) was published in September 2019 – the evaluation recorded some successful outcomes:

The Rough Sleeping Initiative – a cornerstone of the government’s ambitious Rough Sleeping Strategy – has provided £76 million to 246 councils across the country to date, supporting rough sleepers in their area off the streets and into

¹⁰¹ [HCWS931, 4 September 2018](#)

¹⁰² As above.

secure accommodation where they can get the help they need to rebuild their lives.

The report published today (12 September 2019) shows that the Rough Sleeping Initiative has reduced the number of vulnerable people sleeping rough by 32%, compared to the number it would have been had the initiative not been in place.

The analysis estimates the impact of the initiative from its launch in March 2018 until autumn that year and takes account of a range of factors, including whether councils submitted estimates or counts in the official annual rough sleeping statistics, the weather on the night the data was collected, and local housing and labour market conditions, to zero in on the effects of the initiative.¹⁰³

4.3

Conservative Government 2019

Ending rough sleeping by the end of the Parliament

The [Conservative Manifesto December 2019](#) (PDF) committed to ending “the blight of rough sleeping by the end of the next Parliament”. This is a more ambitious target than that announced by the 2017 Conservative Government. The Rough Sleeping Strategy (2018) and the delivery plan remain relevant.¹⁰⁴

Increased funding for the third year of the Rough Sleeping Initiative (launched in March 2018) and the rapid rehousing pathway¹⁰⁵ was announced on 28 January 2020. Funding for these schemes was brought together in a consolidated pot for 2020/21.¹⁰⁶ The MHCLG press release noted:

- Councils to share £112 million Rough Sleeping Initiative funding to help get people off the streets and into accommodation
- Analysis shows numbers are 32% lower in funded areas than they would be without the Initiative
- Third year of the Rough Sleeping Initiative will fund up to 6,000 bed spaces and 2,500 support staff.¹⁰⁷

Commenting on the rough sleeping statistics published on 27 February 2020, then-Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick, welcomed the decrease in numbers of

¹⁰³ [MHCLG Press Release](#), New analysis shows one third fall in number of vulnerable people sleeping rough linked to government initiative, 12 September 2019

¹⁰⁴ [Sleeping rough: Written question – 3770](#), 24 January 2020

¹⁰⁵ The rapid rehousing pathway approach involves funding for Somewhere Safe to Stay hubs and support to people who are already, or at risk of, sleeping rough; specialist navigators, who act as a single point of contact to support people from the streets into settled accommodation; the establishment of local lettings agencies to source, identify, or provide homes and advice for rough sleepers or those at risk; and funding for supported lettings initiatives, which will provide flexible support to help individuals sustain their tenancies.

¹⁰⁶ [HCWS69, 28 January 2020](#)

¹⁰⁷ [MHCLG Press Release](#), Boost to successful government rough sleeping programme, 28 January 2020

rough sleepers saying, “the Government’s strategy is working”. He went on to announce that Dame (now Baroness) Louise Casey would lead a review of rough sleeping:

This work will consider the links between 24-hour street activity and rough sleeping, particularly physical and mental health issues, and provide advice to me and to the Prime Minister on how we can best use the levers of central and local government to support this group and continue to reduce rough sleeping across the country. I know that Dame Louise’s vast experience, rigour and candour, and the fact that she has worked across party for many years, mean that she is the right person to look at what is needed and help to get the job done. I want to support Dame Louise to move at a pace commensurate with the seriousness and urgency of the action we must take now.¹⁰⁸

Baroness Casey’s recommendations were to support MHCLG to develop their Comprehensive Spending Review bid in summer 2020.¹⁰⁹ See section 5.1 for comment on progress.

The Secretary of State went on to announce a series of other measures:

- £236 million of new money for ‘Housing First style’ move-on accommodation.¹¹⁰
- An extension of the cold weather fund arrangements whereby the most affected authorities were able to assist EEA nationals sleeping rough to 31 December 2020:

...when the transition period ends and the new immigration system will be in place. I will work closely with the Home Secretary on how we address those challenges at the end of the transition period.

- A commitment to build 250,000 new affordable homes by March 2022 through the affordable homes programme.
- A focus on work to provide specialist help and support for those suffering from mental ill health, “backed by £30 million of additional funding from NHS England.”
- Working to implement and test models of community-based provision across six projects “designed to enable access to health and support services for people who are sleeping rough with both mental ill health and substance dependency needs.”¹¹¹

On 11 March 2020, the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, announced additional funding to tackle rough sleeping as part of the 2020 Budget:

¹⁰⁸ [HC Deb 27 February 2020, cc501-2](#)

¹⁰⁹ [Rough Sleeping Review: Written question – HL1988](#), 10 March 2020

¹¹⁰ He said this was in addition to the £437 million already announced for homelessness and rough sleeping in 2020/21. The £437 **includes** the £112 million announced on 28 January 2020.

¹¹¹ [HC Deb 27 February 2020, cc501-4](#)

Rough sleeping – The Budget confirms the £237 million announced by the Prime Minister for accommodation for up to 6,000 rough sleepers and provides a further £144 million for associated support services and £262 million for substance misuse treatment services which, when fully deployed, is expected to help more than 11,000 people a year. This will enable people to move off the streets and support them to maintain a tenancy for the long term.¹¹²

The 2020 Budget included a 2% Stamp Duty Land Tax surcharge on non-UK residents buying residential property in England and Northern Ireland with effect from 1 April 2021. The money raised is used to address rough sleeping.¹¹³

As noted in section 2, Budget 2020 also announced an extension of the Shared Accommodation Rate exemptions.¹¹⁴

Funding in 2021/22

At [Spending Review 2020](#) (November 2020) the Chancellor announced an additional £254 million of resource funding to tackle rough sleeping and homelessness.¹¹⁵ This additional funding was to support frontline services through the Rough Sleeping Initiative and enable local authorities to fund their statutory duties to prevent homelessness.¹¹⁶ This funding is not solely focused on rough sleeping.

The Spending Review also confirmed the Government would commit £87 million of capital funding in 2021/22 primarily to support the delivery of long-term accommodation for rough sleepers.¹¹⁷

Following the Spending Review, the Government made two further funding announcements:

- an additional £52 million in 2021/22 to tackle the substance dependence treatment needs of rough sleepers.¹¹⁸
- a £310 million [Homelessness Prevention Grant](#).¹¹⁹ This took total resource funding for rough sleeping and homelessness in 2021/22 to over £750 million,¹²⁰ not all of which is targeted at rough sleeping.

Budget 2021 included the following:

¹¹² HM Treasury, [Budget 2020](#), (PDF), HC 121, March 2020, para 2.63, p75

¹¹³ As above, para 2.212

¹¹⁴ As above, para 1.190. These exemptions were implemented from June 2021.

¹¹⁵ The Spending Review 2020 notes that this includes the £103 million announced earlier in 2020 for accommodation and substance misuse, to support rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness during Covid-19. [See para 6.58]

¹¹⁶ HM Treasury, [Spending Review 2020](#), CP 330, 25 November 2020 para 6.58

¹¹⁷ As above.

¹¹⁸ MHCLG, [Extra help for rough sleepers with drug and alcohol dependency](#), 14 December 2020

¹¹⁹ The £310m Homelessness Prevention Grant combines and uplifts what was previously the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Grant.

¹²⁰ MHCLG, [Government pledges further £310 million to tackle homelessness](#), 21 December 2020

Rough sleepers support – The government provided an additional £221 million to support rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness through the pandemic in 2020-21 and a further £254 million in 2021-22, including £103 million announced last year for accommodation and substance misuse. This takes total resource funding for rough sleeping and homelessness in 2021-22 in England to £676 million.¹²¹

On 18 March 2021 MHCLG published the [Prospectus and guidance on the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2021-24](#). The funding is to support accommodation for 6,000 rough sleepers.

[Rough Sleeping Initiative funding allocations for 2021/22](#) for local authorities were published on 15 May 2021.

Other ongoing initiatives as part of the drive to end rough sleeping by 2024 include:

- £16 million for pilot projects to support people experiencing homelessness after being discharged from hospital. There are 17 pilots in operation.¹²² The NHS Long Term Plan includes £30 million extra over five years to meet the health needs of those on the streets or with no fixed place to live.¹²³
- The Respite Rooms Trial Programme under which 12 local areas are sharing £3.7 million (announced in Budget 2021) to fund safe housing pilot for vulnerable rough sleepers.¹²⁴

Funding up to 2024/25

The Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 announced £639 million resource funding by 2024-25 representing “a cash increase of 85% compared to 2019-20.”¹²⁵ The Budget and Spending Review paper set out how the funding would be applied:

- build on the investment and progress made since 2017 – where the number of people sleeping rough on a single night has been brought down from 4,751 to 2,688 in 2020
- continue funding the Rough Sleeping Initiative, which invests in locally-led, tailored interventions to move rough sleepers into secure accommodation, where they can get the help they need to rebuild their lives; provide drug and alcohol treatment for people sleeping rough who need it; and support for those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness through the Homelessness Prevention Grant

¹²¹ HM Treasury, [Budget 2021](#), (PDF) HC 1226, March 2021, para A.38

¹²² The money is part of a £200 million shared outcomes fund approved by the Treasury late in 2019 with the £16 million already provided to the pilot schemes.

¹²³ DHSC, [Fund to help end cycle of homelessness and hospital readmissions](#), 7 October 2021

¹²⁴ MHCLG, [Safe housing and support for rough sleepers experiencing violence and abuse](#), 26 July 2021

¹²⁵ HM Treasury, [Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021](#), HC 822, 27 October 2021, para 4.50

- complete delivery of 6,000 homes under the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme to create housing pathways to get people off the street into longer-term accommodation
- form part of a cross-government approach to address the drivers of rough sleeping, including funding for reoffending initiatives of £200 million a year by 2024-25 which includes delivery of transitional accommodation for prison leavers and treatment for substance misuse.¹²⁶

This funding was welcomed. A number of organisations questioned the omission of future funding for Housing First schemes:

It is vital that the UK government quickly clarifies the pilots' future and councils use the money announced today to most effectively prevent and end homelessness. We know that investing in Housing First gives people most entrenched in rough sleeping the best chance to leave the streets behind for good.¹²⁷

4.4

London

London accounts for the majority of rough sleepers. Sadiq Khan's 2021 manifesto contained a summary of action taken to tackle rough sleeping since 2016:

Supporting 11,000 rough sleepers through City Hall programmes since 2016 by increasing funding for rough sleeping services, with 80% of those helped no longer on the streets, helping double the number of full-time outreach workers and leading the national response to get rough sleepers off the streets in the face of coronavirus.¹²⁸

The manifesto committed to:

To build on the huge efforts made by City Hall under my mayoralty, in my next term I'll work to provide at least 1,000 new homes to allow rough sleepers to move on to more settled accommodation. I will lead efforts to substantially reduce numbers of rough sleepers discharged back to the streets from the NHS.¹²⁹

There was also a commitment to continue to lobby central government to “reverse austerity measures”, to “unpick their draconian benefit changes” and to argue for additional funding to tackle rough sleeping.¹³⁰

The Mayor's [London Housing Strategy](#) (PDF, May 2018) listed “tackling homelessness and helping rough sleepers” as one of its top five priorities.

¹²⁶ As above.

¹²⁷ Crisis, [Budget: successful homelessness scheme left unfunded](#), 27 October 2021

¹²⁸ [Sadiq's Manifesto for London](#), 2021, p18

¹²⁹ As above, p85

¹³⁰ As above, pp85-6

[Housing in London 2021](#) (PDF, October 2021), the evidence base for the London housing strategy, provides an overview of rough sleeping in the capital.

5 Comment

5.1 Views on the Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018

The publication of the [Rough Sleeping Strategy \(2018\)](#) was welcomed by the sector but there were calls for more action. The housing and homelessness organisations who make up the Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel issued a joint statement calling for “bold cross-departmental plans” to tackle the causes of rough sleeping and to prevent it happening:

This must include plans to build significantly more social housing, to foster greater security for renters, to ensure people have access to benefits and other support they need to help them keep their homes. We also need to see a reversal of policies that leave migrants homeless and destitute, and healthcare, mental health and substance misuse services that are available and truly accessible to those who need it.

To end rough sleeping by 2027, the government must build on today’s welcome announcement and set out plans to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place. The ambitious target that the government has set itself will only be achieved if it is equally bold on addressing the policies that cause rough sleeping.¹³¹

Rick Henderson, CEO of Homeless Link, a body also represented on the Panel, reportedly told Inside Housing that the strategy did not go far enough. He called for a national roll-out of Housing First and long-term strategy backed by long-term resources.¹³²

London Councils said:

London accounts for a huge percentage of the total number of homeless households in England and there are unique pressures facing the capital that must be addressed - principally the chronic shortage of affordable housing.

Reducing homelessness in London requires a massive increase in social housing provision, which is why the government must empower boroughs to build more council houses as a matter of priority. This would be a major boost to tackling homelessness in London.¹³³

¹³¹ [Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel Joint Statement](#), 13 August 2018

¹³² Inside Housing, “Rough sleeping strategy must address welfare and supply”, 15 August 2018

¹³³ [London Councils Response to Rough Sleeping Strategy](#), 13 August 2013

On publication of the 2019 rough sleeper counts in February 2020, Robert Jenrick announced additional funding and a review of rough sleeping to be conducted by Dame Louise (now Baroness) Casey.¹³⁴

The National Audit Office commented on progress (January 2021):

The Department's current strategy dates from the previous government, which had a target of ending rough sleeping by May 2027. The current government was elected in December 2019 with a manifesto commitment to bring forward this target to the end of the new Parliament, May 2024. In February 2020 the Department asked Dame Louise Casey to lead a review of its strategy, reappraising its measures in the light of the new target. Due to the prioritisation given to the pandemic from March onwards, this review did not commence work. As of November 2020, the Department did not have renewed plans for carrying out this review.¹³⁵

On 3 March 2022, the Minister, Eddie Hughes, wrote to local authorities on the annual count figures and the Government's vision for ending rough sleeping. The letter said: "To deliver our vision we will bring forward a bold, new strategy to end rough sleeping."¹³⁶

5.2 Welfare reform

Numerous reports referred to in this paper identify welfare reform, specifically restrictions in Housing Benefit/LHA entitlement, as a contributory factor in leading to street homelessness. A PQ tabled on 3 September 2018 probed whether restrictions would be removed to assist in meeting the then-Government's target to reduce rough sleeping:

Justin Tomlinson: The Government has set out its plans to eradicate rough sleeping by 2027 in the recently published Rough Sleeping Strategy.

A copy of the Rough Sleeping Strategy can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-rough-sleeping-strategy>¹³⁷

On 14 January 2019, Heather Wheeler, confirmed that a feasibility study on research into the wider causes of homelessness, including experiences of the welfare system, had been completed:

The Communities Secretary and I are working with the ministerial teams across the DWP to decide how best to take this work forward. We will write to the

¹³⁴ [PM Press Release](#), 27 February 2020

¹³⁵ National Audit Office, [Investigation into the housing of rough sleepers during the COVID-19 pandemic – Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General Session 2019–2021](#), HC 1075, January 2021, para 2.21

¹³⁶ [Letter from Eddie Hughes to local authorities](#), (PDF), 3 March 2022

¹³⁷ [Written question – 169032, 7 September 2018](#)

Public Account Accounts Committee shortly setting out our plans for next steps.¹³⁸

The Rough Sleeping Strategy (2018) included the following commitment:

In the longer term, government has begun work to look at affordability in the private rented sector, with a view to developing policy options for post-2020 when the current Local Housing Allowance freeze ends.

In order to inform this thinking we want to gather evidence from stakeholders, including the homelessness sector and local authorities, regarding the challenges in local areas and options to address.¹³⁹

Budget 2020's announcement of an extension of exemptions from Shared Accommodation Rates to cover more groups at risk of rough sleeping was welcomed, as was the end of the freeze on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates in place since April 2016. LHA rates were due to be uprated by 1.7% from April 2020 but, in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, they were increased to cover at least 30% of market rents in each Broad Rental Market Area over 2020/21.¹⁴⁰

The Housing, Communities and Local Government (HCLG) Select Committee published the interim report of its [inquiry to assess the impact of the coronavirus crisis on homelessness, rough sleeping and the private rented sector](#) on 22 May 2020. The Committee's recommendations included the following on LHA rates:

The Government must ensure that the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate is set at a level that reflects real market rents and ensures those in need are able to afford properties in their areas. We call on the Government to guarantee that the LHA rate will be maintained at the 30th percentile long-term. We also ask the Government to conduct work on what the impact on renters and the wider rental market would be of raising LHA rates further.¹⁴¹

Spending Review 2020 (November 2020) announced 2021/22 LHA rates would be frozen in cash terms.¹⁴² Rates have continued to be frozen in cash terms over 2022/23.

On 1 April 2022, the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) reported that 56% of private renters relying on Universal Credit have an average gap of £100 a month between the amount they receive in housing cost support and the rent due.¹⁴³ The Homeless monitor: England 2022 notes:

Local authorities identified the rebasing of the LHA to the 30th percentile of local market rents in April 2020 as an important measure in preventing and

¹³⁸ [Written question – 206896, 14 January 2019](#)

¹³⁹ MHCLG, , [Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018](#), (PDF), CM 9685, August 2018, para 106

¹⁴⁰ [HM Treasury Press Release](#), 20 March 2020

¹⁴¹ [HC 309, Protecting rough sleepers and renters: Interim Report, Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee First Report of Session 2019-21](#), 22 May 2020, para 31

¹⁴² [CP 330, November 2020](#), p13. For an analysis of the implications of this measure see Shelter, [First indication of Local Housing Allowance rates out last week](#), 18 December 2020

¹⁴³ NRLA, [Benefit freeze "absurd" warn landlords](#), 1 April 2022

minimising homelessness during the pandemic. The return to the freezing of LHA rates in cash terms from 2021/22 may very well have the reverse effect.¹⁴⁴

The Kerslake Commission on homelessness and rough sleeping (September 2021) identified a need to retain the more generous welfare arrangements introduced in response to the pandemic:

To prevent an increased flow of people onto the streets, the Government must retain the welfare changes that have kept people afloat during the pandemic, whereby Local Housing Allowance rates were raised to the 30th percentile of local rents and Universal Credit received an uplift of £20 per week. In addition, the Government should review the benefit cap and seek to increase it in areas with high affordability pressure, and provide a financial package of support for people in arrears due to the pandemic.¹⁴⁵

The Commission also called for access to benefits for non-UK nationals to “stop short of causing destitution.”¹⁴⁶

5.3 The funding context

The Rough Sleeping Strategy (2018) brought with it additional funding, although commentators said additional resources would be needed alongside long-term certainty over those resources (see section 5.1).

The HCLG Select Committee’s interim report (May 2020) made recommendations on the provision of a dedicated funding stream to tackle rough sleeping:

This is a golden opportunity to end rough sleeping in England once and for all. The Government’s taskforce must estimate the cost of a housing-led solution with appropriate wrap-around support, using the expertise of charitable organisations and local councils. We received evidence that this is likely to be £100 million a year at a minimum. The Government must provide this as a dedicated funding stream to councils to ensure these people are accommodated safely and securely. As part of this, the Government should publish the results of the Housing First pilots and accelerate delivery of Housing First across the country, to help increase the availability of wraparound support services alongside good-quality accommodation.¹⁴⁷

The National Audit Office (January 2021) recommended an alignment initiatives and funding streams:

It is clear that there is significant learning available from the experience of Everyone In for the Department and all partners involved. The Department

¹⁴⁴ Fitzpatrick, S., Watts, B., Bramley G., Pawson H., Young G., & McMordie L., (February 2022) [Homelessness Monitor: England 2022](#). London: Crisis, p26

¹⁴⁵ The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, [A new way of working: ending rough sleeping together](#), September 2021, p11

¹⁴⁶ As above.

¹⁴⁷ Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, [Protecting rough sleepers and renters: Interim Report](#), (PDF), 22 May 2020, HC 309 2019-21, para 9

should use this knowledge towards its goal of ending rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament, when it returns to its review of rough sleeping. Also, as the Department revisits its rough sleeping strategy, and to support its new objective for this, it should seek to align the initiatives and funding streams announced during COVID-19 into a cohesive plan.¹⁴⁸

Jeremy Pocklington, Permanent Secretary at MHCLG, was questioned by the Public Accounts Committee in January 2021 on the provision on long-term funding to tackle rough sleeping:

Jeremy Pocklington: I think the importance of longer-term funding and the ability to use that to build up capacity and capability in the sector throughout the country is well understood in the Department. We have been able to do that to an extent this year, through our rough sleeping accommodation programme, RSAP, which I am sure we will come on to discuss. We have clarity over our funding for next year, for the homelessness and rough sleeping agendas. We will have £750 million funded from the Department next year, which is higher than this year. Of course, there are aspects of the agenda that will need to wait for the spending review later this year, but in terms of where the Department is, we understand the importance of providing longer-term certainty, where that is possible.¹⁴⁹

The Kerslake Commission on homelessness and rough sleeping (September 2021) also focused on the need for a longer-term funding settlement:

Everyone In should continue to be financed through the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI), delivered through a minimum three-year funding settlement and with an annual spend of £335.5m. The RSI spend should focus on rough sleeping prevention, outreach, accommodation and support, and should pay for an increased supply of self-contained, good quality emergency accommodation, with tailored options for women and young people.¹⁵⁰

Additional funding was forthcoming as part of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 with a settlement up to March 2025 (see section 4.3). The three-year settlement was widely welcomed, St Mungo's commented:

Hopefully the multi-year settlement will give local authorities the confidence to invest in more of the longer term accommodation and wrap around support which we know from our clients is a key element of ending rough sleeping and supporting their recovery.¹⁵¹

The lack of any reference to continued funding for the Housing First pilots was identified as an area of concern. Eddie Hughes responded to a PQ on whether funding announced in the Spending Review would be allocated to these schemes in January 2022:

¹⁴⁸ National Audit Office, [Investigation into the housing of rough sleepers during the COVID-19 pandemic – Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General Session 2019–2021](#), HC 1075, January 2021, p10

¹⁴⁹ [Oral evidence: Covid-19: Housing rough sleepers](#), HC 934, 25 January 2021, Q5

¹⁵⁰ The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, [A new way of working: ending rough sleeping together](#), September 2021, p17

¹⁵¹ St Mungo's, [Spending Review- St Mungo's welcomes Government commitment to homelessness funding](#), undated

The Spending Review commits to over £2 billion of funding to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years. The detail of how this funding will be allocated will be determined in due course.¹⁵²

5.4 Learning lessons from the pandemic to end rough sleeping by 2024

A separate Library paper: [Coronavirus: Support for rough sleepers \(England\)](#) details the Government response to the pandemic in terms of support for rough sleepers.

In summary, on 26 March 2020 then-Minister for Local Government and Homelessness, Luke Hall [wrote to local authority leaders](#) asking them to “help make sure we get everyone in”, including those who would not normally be entitled to assistance under homelessness legislation. This is now referred to as the ‘Everyone In’ programme. On 2 March 2021, Lord Greenhalgh summarised the numbers assisted:

By January, Everyone In had successfully helped over 26,000 people who were either sleeping rough or in very precarious accommodation and at risk of sleeping rough to move into longer-term accommodation. Through the programme, we continue to support an additional 11,000 people in emergency accommodation while longer-term solutions are found. In total, at least 37,000 people are in safe and secure accommodation today as a result of this exceptional effort.¹⁵³

An immediate observation concerned disparity between the numbers assisted compared to those recorded in the annual rough sleeping snapshots. Jeremy Pocklington, Permanent Secretary at DLUHC, was questioned by the Public Accounts Committee on which measure of rough sleeping the Government would use to assess its aim of ending rough sleeping by May 2024:

Jeremy Pocklington: I completely understand the question. Of course, it is just not possible to say that there will never be a circumstance where no one spends a night out on the streets. The nature of the challenge that we have, and the role of health issues and relationship breakdown, means that, tragically, that outcome is probably never achievable. Thinking exactly how we will approach that definitional question is something that we will need to consider as we update the rough sleeping strategy. I think we all know the direction of travel that we need to take. We have plenty to be focused on in the Department, but we will need to return to the question that you raise.¹⁵⁴

Jon Sparkes, CEO of Crisis, described Everyone In as “a landmark moment”, he referred to the commitment to end rough sleeping by 2024 and said “this proves it can be done in 2020 if we make it the priority it deserves to be.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² [PQ 106840 \[Housing First: Finance\], 21 January 2022](#)

¹⁵³ [HL Deb 2 March 2021 c1085](#)

¹⁵⁴ [Oral evidence: Covid-19: Housing rough sleepers, HC 934](#), 25 January 2021, Q70

¹⁵⁵ [Crisis Press Release](#), Government aims to house all rough sleepers by the weekend, 27 March 2020

The mobilisation of efforts to remove rough sleepers from the streets was hailed as one of the most effective of the Government's responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. The need to build on the collective effort and achievements has been stressed in several subsequent reports.

The [interim report](#) of the HCLG Committee's inquiry into the Impact of Covid-19 on homelessness and the private rented sector (22 May 2020), urged the Government to use the crisis to end rough sleeping in England. One of the clear messages was the scale of the issue. Specific recommendations included:

- Developing estimates for a housing-led solution with wrap-around support. The Committee estimated the cost to be at least £100 million a year which should be provided to authorities as a dedicated funding stream.
- Improved support for people with no recourse to public funds, including guaranteed compensation for local authorities assisting people in this situation.
- An immediate boost to the supply of supported housing through grant funding and flexibility over Right to Buy receipts.¹⁵⁶

[The Government's response](#) was published on 25 June 2020.¹⁵⁷ HCLG Committee issued a [further call for evidence](#). The subsequent report acknowledged the programme's "enormous success" in the early stages but highlighted issues over the position of people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF):

We recommend that the Government creates a cross-Government task force to resolve the conflict between the commitment to end rough sleeping and the current policy on the no recourse to public funds condition. This will require collecting data on the number of people affected and their specific circumstances.¹⁵⁸

The Government response said "it is not possible to provide an accurate figure of the number of people in the UK who are subject to NRPF at any given time." The Government also rejected a recommendation to provide guidance for local authorities on their duties towards those with NRPF, saying: "It is not for the Department to advise local authorities on how they should use their wider social welfare powers, as it is for them to make an assessment of the applicable law based on individual circumstances."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Housing Communities and Local Government Committee, [Protecting rough sleepers and renters: Interim Report](#), 22 May 2020, HC 309 2019–21, Summary, p3

¹⁵⁷ [Government Response to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee Report on Protecting Rough Sleepers and Renters](#), CP 248, 25 June 2020

¹⁵⁸ Housing Communities and Local Government Committee, [Impact of COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) on homelessness and the private rented sector](#), (PDF), 22 March 2021, HC 1329 2019–21, Summary, p3

¹⁵⁹ [Government Response to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee report on protecting the homeless and the private rented sector](#), (PDF), CP 439, May 2021

The need to develop a solution for those with NRPF was also mentioned in the National Audit Office (NAO) report on its [investigation into the housing of rough sleepers during the Covid-19 pandemic](#) (January 2021). It was one of several actions the NAO said the Government would need to address to achieve the goal of ending rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament. Other actions included:

- Building on knowledge of the scale of the problem to “understand fully the size and needs of this population and communicate this to local authorities.”
- Using knowledge gained when revisiting the review of the Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- A need to align initiatives and funding aimed at tackling rough sleeping.¹⁶⁰

The Homeless monitor: England 2022 notes:

...meeting the 2024 target was seen to depend on addressing the profound tension between current immigration policy and the Government ambitions to ‘end rough sleeping’¹⁶¹

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) published [COVID-19: Housing people sleeping rough](#) on 17 March 2021. The report recorded MHCLG’s considerable achievements in removing people from the streets and protecting public health, but said there was no plan for ending rough sleeping by 2024:

Not only does the Department not have a plan for ending rough sleeping by 2024, it also has not worked out how to define what ‘ending’ rough sleeping means or how it will measure and report on progress in a meaningful way. To end rough sleeping will certainly involve addressing the wider lack of availability of supported housing and affordable housing. The Department’s evidence shows that 80% of rough sleepers have mental health needs and a significant majority have substance abuse which underlines the importance of providing appropriate wraparound care to provide a sustainable pathway out of rough-sleeping. In 2017 this Committee recommended that the Department launch a cross-government strategy for addressing homelessness in the round, which could have helped it to address this issue, but it has so far failed to do so.¹⁶²

The Government disagreed with the PAC’s call for a draft strategy to be published before the 2021 summer recess setting out how the goal of ending rough sleeping by 2024 would be achieved:

¹⁶⁰ National Audit Office, [Investigation into the housing of rough sleepers during the COVID-19 pandemic – Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General Session 2019–2021](#), HC 1075, Executive Summary, para 20

¹⁶¹ Fitzpatrick, S., Watts, B., Bramley G., Pawson H., Young G., & McMordie L., (February 2022) [Homelessness Monitor: England 2022](#). London: Crisis, p52

¹⁶² PAC, [COVID-19: Housing people sleeping rough](#), (PDF), HC 934, 17 March 2021, para 2

The government disagrees with the Committee's recommendation, although it will be important to ensure sufficient time for the development of the new strategy and to align with the forthcoming 2021 Spending Review.¹⁶³

There was a commitment to consider cross-government action: "The department will consider the role of health, policing, prisons, immigration, welfare, and employment, alongside housing and how the department will build on the already significant success of Everyone In."¹⁶⁴ The Government agreed with a recommendation to review its strategy and reassess the funding required to meet its target.¹⁶⁵

[Shelter's submission](#) to the PAC inquiry into housebuilding and homelessness (December 2021) provided information obtained through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to local authorities on what was happening to people assisted through Everyone In:

- More than three-quarters (77%) of those initially accommodated had not moved into settled accommodation, equating to an estimated 29,000 people.
- 23% of the total - and almost 1 in 3 (30%) of those not moved into settled accommodation - were no longer accommodated. This equates to an estimated 8,800 people.¹⁶⁶

Shelter called for "more robust and detailed statistics on the outcomes of those helped under 'Everyone In' so that the effectiveness of the emergency funding can be properly assessed."¹⁶⁷ Other measures identified as necessary to meet the 2024 target included:

- Continuing to fund the Housing First pilots and committing to a national roll-out with capital funding.
- Investment in "a new generation of social housing aimed at preventing homelessness." Planning system reforms which ensure an increase in the supply of social homes.
- A strategy that sets out a roadmap for ending rough sleeping by 2024. "The strategy needs to learn lessons from Everyone In, and set out how it will build suitable, settled homes."¹⁶⁸

The Kerslake Commission on homelessness and rough sleeping determined that "rough sleeping and homelessness must be seen as both a housing and a

¹⁶³ Treasury minutes: [Government response to the Committee of Public Accounts on the Forty-ninth report from Session 2019-21](#), (PDF), 31 August 2021, para 2.2

¹⁶⁴ As above, para 2.4

¹⁶⁵ As above, para 4.1

¹⁶⁶ Shelter, [Submission: Public Accounts Committee inquiry into housebuilding and homelessness](#), December 2021

¹⁶⁷ As above.

¹⁶⁸ As above.

health issue.”¹⁶⁹ The Commission was established to consider lessons from Everyone In. The final report (September 2021) contains a list of 66 recommendations aimed at translating the emergency response to “the new normal, with prevention, alleviation and recovery at the core of it.”¹⁷⁰

Some of the recommendations have already been referred to in previous sections of this paper. They also echo recommendations from other bodies, such as the need for a long-term strategy and annual reviews; grant funding to deliver 90,000 social rented homes a year; a minimum three-year funding settlement with an annual spend of £335.5 million; a reversal of certain welfare reforms; and a reversal of “disinvestment in drug treatment and wider recovery services.”¹⁷¹

The overall vision is for a person-centred approach with integrated systems:

It requires a whole systems approach, with all agencies and bodies working together in a fully integrated way. The core service offer must be trauma informed and psychologically informed, with a workforce which is trained to respond to the needs of the individual. When people do reach crisis point, there needs to be help for them to recover quickly and be equipped with the tools to maintain their recovery. This requires appropriate accommodation, which is good quality and gives the person dignity, alongside the right level of support. There must be an increase in tailored provision for people who face additional distinct barriers. There will be additional costs involved, but preventing rough sleeping and homelessness, and responding to it quickly and effectively when it does occur, is a moral imperative and will bring with it substantial savings in the future.¹⁷²

As previously noted, Spending Review 2021 committed to a three-year funding settlement up to 2024/25. A “bold new, strategy to end rough sleeping” is awaited.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, [A new way of working: ending rough sleeping together](#), September 2021, foreword

¹⁷⁰ As above, p65

¹⁷¹ As above, pp66-74

¹⁷² As above, pp7-8

¹⁷³ [Letter from Eddie Hughes to local authorities](#), (PDF), 3 March 2022

The House of Commons Library is a research and information service based in the UK Parliament. Our impartial analysis, statistical research and resources help MPs and their staff scrutinise legislation, develop policy, and support constituents.

Our published material is available to everyone on commonslibrary.parliament.uk.

Get our latest research delivered straight to your inbox. Subscribe at commonslibrary.parliament.uk/subscribe or scan the code below:



 commonslibrary.parliament.uk

 [@commonslibrary](https://twitter.com/commonslibrary)