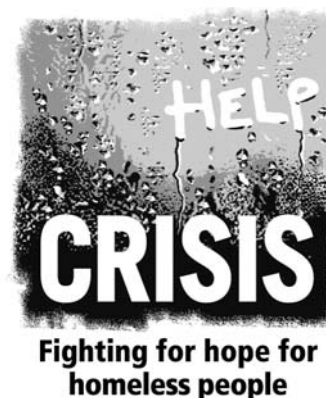


# STATISTICS ABOUT HOMELESSNESS

March 2006



## Numbers

### Rough sleepers

- Government street counts estimate there are about 459 people sleeping outside around England *on any one night*, compared with nearly 2,000 (1,850) in 1998. Representing a fall of 75%. 221 of these are in Greater London (against 508 and 265 respectively in June 2004) (ODPM, July 2005)
- Outside London, the largest concentrations of rough sleepers in England are found in Reading (11), Sheffield (10), Brighton and Hove (9), Exeter (8), Liverpool (8) and Northampton (8) (ODPM, July 2005)
- However at Crisis Open Christmas 2005 in London of 1353 people accessing services 547 [40%] said they were sleeping rough

### Statutory Homeless households in England

- In 2005, Local Authorities accepted 100,170 households (not individuals) as unintentionally homeless and in priority need (compared to just over 100,000 1997), and were therefore owed the main duty to be housed by the Local Authority. This number was down from the 127,760 households accepted in 2004.
- However a much larger number of households, 162,990 were actually found to be homeless by local authorities in 2005.
- In 2005 only 47,800 single homeless households were categorised as in priority need and therefore found some form of accommodation by the local authority compared to 48,990 not in priority need. Therefore Single homeless households that do apply for support are more likely to be categorised as 'homeless and not in priority need' and therefore not be owed a duty by the local authority to be found some form of accommodation.
- In addition 13,830 households were considered Intentionally Homeless and in priority need. This is a higher number than every year since 1997 when 4,960 households were found to be intentionally homeless and a higher percentage of all applications made at 6%.
- In London 22,700 households were accepted in 2005 by their local authorities as being homeless and in priority need, and 35,050 households were registered as homeless.

### Statutory Homeless Households in Scotland

- In the period 2004/2005, local authorities accepted 29,546 households as homeless and priority need. This was 74% of the households who were assessed as homeless [39,681].
- 17,278 of priority need households were single homeless households without children [single people without children or couples without children] compared to 9,950 non-priority single homeless households.
- The last fourteen years have seen a rise in homeless applications from 29,068 in 1989-90 to 54,829 in 2003-04.
- Results from the 2001-2002 Scottish Household survey suggest that one in every five homeless households do not apply to their local authority.

### Hidden homeless people

- There are around 380,000 single homeless people in Great Britain. This includes those staying in hostels, B&Bs, squats, on friends' floors and in overcrowded accommodation (Crisis, *How Many, How Much?*, 2003)

### Placed in Temporary Accommodation

- In the period July to September 2004 the numbers of households housed in temporary accommodation by local authorities first exceeded 100,000. Since then the numbers have remained excess of 100,000 until the final quarter of 2005 when the numbers in temporary accommodation reduced to 98,730 (ODPM, *Homelessness Statistics*, 2005).
- Over recent years the percentage of households who spend 2 or more years in temporary accommodation or recorded as homeless at home has been increasing. In the fourth quarter of 2005, 33% of households in London had previously spent 2 or more years in temporary accommodation or homeless at home, four times as high as the same period in 2000 and 6% higher than first quarter of 2005 (ODPM, *Homelessness Statistics*, 2005).
- Overall there has been a steady decrease in the numbers of households being housed in B&Bs from a high of 13,950 in the third quarter of 2002, to 4,950 in December 2005 (ODPM, *Homelessness Statistics*, 2005).
- London had the highest number of households in temporary accommodation on 31 December, accounting for 65 per cent of the England total. It was also the only region to show an increase in the numbers in temporary accommodation by 1% to 63,800 households
- In Scotland as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 there were 7,539 households in temporary accommodation arranged by local authorities. This has risen steadily from 4,420 on 30 June 2002. 2,373 households were with dependent children

### Becoming homeless

- The average time between the triggers that lead to homelessness and when homelessness finally occurs is nine years (Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion, *Routes into Homelessness*, 2000)
- The four-week rule is the process by which newly homeless people become acclimatised to life on the street. After that they become entrenched and it becomes more difficult for them to move back into mainstream society (Crisis, *Homelessness Factfile*, 1998).

### Profile and background

#### Age

- Around 25 per cent of rough sleepers are aged between 18 and 25, and six per cent are over 60 (SEU, July 1998)
- An age breakdown of those accepted as statutorily homeless is not available from English Local Authority statistics but in Scotland the majority (60%) of the homeless households without dependent children were aged 25 or over and it is this age group where most of increases in homelessness have been happening (Scottish Executive, *Statistical Bulletin*)

#### Gender

- Around 80 to 90 per cent of rough sleepers are male (SEU, July 1998; Scottish Executive *Rough Sleepers Initiative 2004*; Crisis, *Homelessness Factfile 2003*)
- Numbers of single homeless women has risen significantly in recent years (Fitzpatrick 2000)
- There are also a growing number of homeless women on the streets and in emergency night shelters and hostels across Britain (May, Cloke and Johnsen 2004)

#### Ethnic origin

- BME groups are more likely to sleep on friends and family's floors (Crisis, *Homelessness Factfile*, 2003)
- Only a quarter of young black Africans and a third of young Afro-Caribbean's reported sleeping rough in 1997/8 – compared to over half of young white people (Centrepoint, *Hidden Statistics*, 2000)

- Black and minority ethnic households represent 21 per cent of those accepted by local authorities as homelessness in England, but only eight per cent of the general population of England (ODPM, 2005)
- In 2005 100,170 households were accepted as homeless and in priority need in England. Their ethnic origin was as follows;
  - 74,460 White [74.3%]
  - 10,330 African Caribbean [10.3%]
  - 5,290 Pakistani/Bangladeshi [5.3%]
  - 5,110 other ethnic origin [5.1%]
  - 4,970 ethnic origin not known [5%]

### **Local Authority care**

- Between a 18% to 32% of rough sleepers were once in Local Authority Care as children (Randall and Brown 2001, CHAIN London 2001/02). This compares to national figures which show that only one per cent of all those under 18 have been in care (SEU, July 1998)

### **Young people**

- Between 36,000 to 52,000 young people are estimated to have been 'found homeless' by local authorities in England in 2003 (Centrepont Youth Homelessness Index, 2004)
- It can be estimated that 1 in 8 of those homeless young people (up to 6,700) may have recent experience of rough sleeping (Centrepont)
- In 2004 9% (10,930) of those accepted as statutory homeless and in priority need by Local Authorities in England was due to them being a 'Young Person' (ODPM 2005)
- It is likely that several thousand young people experience homelessness without having any contact with local authorities in England each year (Centrepont)
- Family conflict is the main immediate cause of homelessness amongst at least two thirds of homeless young people (*Crisis, Trouble at Home*, 2001)
- 86 per cent of young homeless people are forced to leave home rather than choose to (SEU, July 1998)
- Two-thirds of young homeless people leave school with no qualifications (Mental Health Foundation, *Off to a Bad Start*, 1996)
- Young people who become homeless are more likely to have lived with stepparents, foster parents or relatives by the age of 12 than those who do not become homeless (Safe in the City, *Taking Risks*, 1999)
- 45 per cent of young homeless people have experienced violence in the family home on more than one occasion (Safe in the City, *Taking Risks*, 1999)
- One third of young homeless people have attempted suicide – a fifth within the past year (Craig T. et al, *Off to a Bad Start*, 1996)

### **Prison**

- Around half of rough sleepers have been in prison or a remand centre at some time (SEU, July 1998)
- Around one third of prisoners who are about to be released report having nowhere to stay. Around 28,500 people are homeless on leaving prison each year (SEU, 2002)

### **Women**

- Around 10 to 25% of single homeless people on the streets and in hostels are women. The proportion of women among young single homeless people is however higher - 20 to 40% (*Crisis Homelessness Factfile Online*, 2003)
- 63 per cent of women aged 30-49 cite domestic violence as the key reason for their homelessness (*Crisis, Out of Sight, Out of Mind? – The Experience of Homeless Women*, 1999)
- In 2004 5% (6,160) of those accepted as statutory homeless and in priority need by Local Authorities in England was due to domestic violence (ODPM, 2005)
- 1 in 4 women experience domestic violence over their lifetimes and between 6-10% of women suffer domestic violence in a given year (Council of Europe, 2002).
- 40 per cent of young women who become homeless have experienced sexual abuse in childhood or adolescence (SEU, 1998)
- Homeless women are twice as likely as men to have lived with foster parents (Anderson, Kemp and Quilgars, *Single Homeless People*, 1993)

- One in four young female hostel residents are pregnant in any given year (Crisis, *Homeless Young Women and Pregnancy*, 2000)
- The low profile of women in homelessness statistics can probably be accounted for by the fact that women – and people from ethnic minorities – make better use of their social networks than white males to find alternative solutions to their housing problems (such as staying with family or friends) (Crisis, *Out of Sight, Out of Mind?* 1999)

### Relationship breakdown

- In England in 2004 38% households are homeless because relatives or friends are no longer willing to provide accommodation – the percentage has been slowly increasing over the years (ODPM, 2005)
- Another 20% of households are homeless due to the breakdown of the relationship (13% is due to domestic violence) (ODPM, 2005)
- Around one in four hostel residents left their last permanent home because of family or relationship breakdown (Crisis, *Trouble at Home*, 2001)
- Surveys routinely show that around half of homeless people ascribe their homelessness to relationship breakdown (Crisis, *A Future Foretold*, 1999)

### Education & employment

- A recent St Mungo's survey identified that 5% of London's homeless are currently in some form of employment but that this proportion has decreased from 86% in 1986 (St Mungo's, 2005)
- Of the Big Issue vendors in northern England, 79% had been employed (The Big Issue in the North, 2000)
- A Crisis survey of 150 homeless people across the UK found that 47% possess qualifications; of those 48% have GCSEs, 16% have A levels, 15% have a degree and 13% have professional qualifications (Crisis, 2002)

## Problems facing homeless people

### Health

- Homeless people are 40 times more likely not to be registered with a GP than the general public – based on interviews with 100 hidden homeless people in London, (Crisis, *Critical Condition*, 2002)
- 55 per cent had no contact with a GP in the previous year (Crisis, *Critical Condition*, 2002)
- Compared to the general population, people in hostels and B&Bs are twice and rough sleepers three times, as likely to have chronic chest and breathing problems (Crisis, *Homelessness Factfile*, 2003)

### Addictions

- 81% of homeless people are addicted to either drugs or drink. Heroin comes top of the league, followed by alcohol (Crisis, *Home and Dry?*, 2002)
- 2/3 of homeless people cite drug or alcohol use as a reason for first becoming homeless. (Crisis, *Home and Dry?* 2002)
- Four in five have started using at least one new drug while homeless (Crisis, *Home and Dry?* 2002)
- People who are dependent on drugs or alcohol are almost twice as likely as non-dependent users to be banned from homelessness services (Crisis, *Home and Dry?* 2002).

### Mental health

- Women have a higher percentage of mental health problems than men (Crisis, *Homelessness Factfile*, 2003)
- Mental health problems are up to eight times more common in the homeless population. (*The Health of Single Homeless People*, Centre for Housing Policy University of York, 1994)
- 9% of households accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need by local authorities in 2004 are in priority need due to mental illness (ODPM, 2005).

- Mental health problems are nearly four times as common among hostel residents as in the general population. At least one in five homeless people have severe mental health problems; these problems are likely to have played a significant part in the circumstances which have caused that person to become homeless. (*Crisis, Pressure Points*, 1999)
- 30-50% of rough sleepers had mental problems (*Addressing the health needs of rough sleepers* 2002).

### **Victimisation and crime**

- Compared to the general public homeless people are 13 times more likely to have experienced violence and 47 times more likely to be victims of theft (*Crisis Living in Fear*, 2005)
- The general public are responsible for 32% of violent acts, 33% of threats, 24% of the incidents of theft, and 3% of sexual assaults against people who are homeless.

### **Mortality**

- People who sleep rough are 35 times more likely to commit suicide than the general population (*Crisis, Still Dying for a Home*, 1996)
- Rough sleepers have an average life expectancy of 42 years, compared with the national average of 74 for men and 79 for women (*Crisis, Still Dying for a Home*, 1996).

### **Loneliness**

- One in four ex-homeless people find themselves unable to sustain a tenancy. Loneliness and isolation are the main causes of this (*Crisis, Homelessness and Loneliness*, 2000)
- Among 150 people interviewed in 2002 in locations across the country, only 30% said that they spent their day with people who were not homeless and 38% spent their day alone (*Crisis, Homelessness Factfile*, 2003)

### **Begging**

- Over two in five beggars say they started begging to get money for drink or drugs (*Crisis, Walk on By*, 2000)
- 45 per cent of beggars and street drinkers say they have a dependency problem (*Crisis, Walk on By*, 2000)

### **Staying in hostels**

- Hostel residents who were interviewed have been homeless for an average of nearly 7.5 years so far. Out of that time, 24 months have been spent in hostels, 22 months on the streets and another 22 months in squats; the rest has been spent on friends' floors (17 months) or night shelters (4 months) (*Crisis, Hidden but not Forgotten*, 2001).
- Two in five (37%) of those interviewed had gone straight to the streets after leaving a hostel in their homelessness career (*Crisis, Hidden but not Forgotten*, 2001).
- One in five of those hostel residents interviewed had first set foot in a hostel over a decade ago (*Crisis, Hidden but not Forgotten*, 2001).

### **Housing in London**

- In 2005 22,700 households were accepted as homeless and in priority need by local authorities in London (ODPM, *Homelessness Statistics*, 2005)
  - As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005 63,800 homeless households were in temporary accommodation arranged by local authority housing departments in London [up 1% from the previous quarter], as follows:
    - 2,450 in bed and breakfast hostels
    - 4,260 in hostels
    - 9,480 Local Authority /Housing Association Stock
    - 40,880 in private sector leasing schemes
    - 6,740 in other forms of temporary accommodation
- A further 3,250 households were registered as being 'homeless at home' (ODPM, *Homelessness Statistics*, 2005).



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