THE SCALE, CAUSES AND IMPACTS OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG EEA CITIZENS

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Introduction and background

Over the past decade, the scale of homelessness and housing difficulties among EEA citizens across the UK has become a growing concern. These concerns have been exacerbated by the twin challenges of Covid-19 and the end of EU free movement rules. At the same time, there are signs that EEA citizens have been especially hard-hit by the coronavirus pandemic. In spite of these challenges, there has been a paucity of reliable data and evidence on the scale, causes and impacts of homelessness among EEA citizens.

This report presents new research on homelessness among EEA nationals in the UK, commissioned by Crisis, the national charity for people facing homelessness, and carried out by the Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research (I-SPHERE) at Heriot-Watt University and the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). The research has sought to establish an estimate of the current scale of homelessness across Great Britain affecting EEA nationals, as well as the factors behind their housing circumstances and support needs.

The research has involved reviewing past research evidence, extensive analysis of secondary data sources, specific new surveys and qualitative interviews targeted on EEA citizens experiencing housing difficulties. Some innovative survey methods have been employed, with further adaptation and improvisation to undertake the research during the Covid pandemic.

Research methodology

To provide background and context to the research a substantial and diverse range of literature from the last 20 years was reviewed (see Chapter 3), covering UK migration policy and its relation to labour and housing markets and the evolving relationship with the EU.

The study has a particular focus on 'core homelessness', the most immediate and severe forms of homelessness, a concept which the researchers have developed with Crisis since 2017 and now report on regularly in the *Homelessness Monitor* series, as a complement to routine official statistics on 'statutory homelessness'[1]. Key elements within core homelessness include rough sleeping, unconventional accommodation, hostels/refuges/shelters, unsuitable temporary accommodation and 'sofa surfing'.

The research has developed a data model drawing on multiple secondary sources (and some new primary sources) to estimate in a robust fashion the number of core homeless households and people overall across Great Britain, and the number who are EEA nationals. We also attempt to estimate the impact of Covid and policy/service responses to the pandemic on these numbers.

New primary data collection focused on two questionnaire surveys, one targeted on EEA nationals experiencing housing difficulties and using a range of support services in seven localities across the country, and the other using an innovative network sampling approach ('RDS') to target two specific national/language groups in one locality. As a follow up to the former survey, in-depth qualitative interviews were held with 28 EEA citizens, to explore in more depth their background and current circumstances, nature of housing difficulties experienced and the factors contributing to these, including problems in relation to work, income, health, relationships, citizenship and support.

This research was conducted during a period of significant change, including the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuing lockdowns, as well as the end of the Brexit transition period and the introduction of the new immigration system for EEA citizens. Difficulties posed by Covid significantly delayed the research, but in the end the results present a richer picture of the problems experienced by EEA nationals and the immediate challenges entailed in providing effective support to this group.

Policy background

The population of EEA citizens in the UK the has grown considerably over the past two decades, following the accession of 'A8' countries to the EU under the 'free movement' regime. However, since the Brexit referendum in 2016, and particularly during the Covid pandemic, levels of net migration from the EU have significantly fallen.

Before the completion of the Brexit transition period at the end of December 2020, EEA citizens had the right to live, work and study in the UK under the EU's freedom of movement rules. At the same time, under successive policy changes by the UK government in the 2013-15 period the rules governing EEA citizens' eligibility for welfare benefits were significantly tightened.

Following the end of the Brexit transition period, new rules for EEA citizens have come into force. EEA citizens who were resident in the UK before January 2021 are able to apply to retain their rights under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), which was officially open from March 2019 to June 2021 (though late applications are still being accepted). Those with continuous residence for at least five years are eligible for 'settled status' (i.e. indefinite leave to remain); those continuously resident for a shorter period can instead claim 'pre-settled status' (i.e. five years' limited leave to remain).

EEA citizens who have not yet applied to the EUSS and who have no other form of leave to remain are in a particularly vulnerable position, as a consequence of the so-called 'hostile environment'. The Home Office has, however, put in place measures to allow for late applications.

There is significant uncertainty about the true numbers of EU citizens in UK, which has been highlighted by the discrepancies between applications to the EUSS and estimates from household surveys. However, it is clearly a population predominantly of working age, with high rates of employment, although often working in lower skilled jobs with lower pay and poorer conditions. Although concentrated in certain sectors (e.g. food, hospitality, logistics) they have a wider geographical dispersal than other migrant groups.

The housing profile of EEA citizens in the UK tends to involve a concentration in the private rented sector (PRS), often experiencing poor housing conditions and overcrowding, with the latter especially apparent in London. Data on homelessness affecting this group is limited, and official data is likely to be an underestimate in view of limited legal entitlement and familiarity with the homelessness system. Rough sleeping in London is shown to have a high

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1   See in particular Fitzpatrick, S. et al (2021) *The Homeless Monitor: England 2021*. London: Crisis. www.crisis.org.uk Chapter 5.

concentration of people from Central and Eastern Europe.

There is limited specific evidence on the causes of homelessness for EEA citizens, but they may be expected to be affected by the more general known causes of *homelessness in* the UK population, notably poverty, lack of adequate income-related housing benefits or social housing, and high pressure housing markets. In addition, demographics, labour markets, health, relationship and life events can all play a part, as can ethnicity. Some studies suggest EEA and other migrants may be less likely to experience complex needs (e.g. addictions, offending, violence, mental ill-health) alongside homelessness, than UK single homeless people. A number of studies highlight difficulties accessing benefits or housing support due to combinations of language difficulties and unfamiliarity with rights.

The most effective approaches to support people out of street homelessness are housing-led and person-centred, and support in gaining employment can be helpful. The legal framework for statutory homelessness services has been changing in England with more duties to prevent and relieve homelessness but not all EEA citizens have appropriate residency status to be eligible.

Some policy responses to homelessness among EEA citizens have increasingly focused on getting individuals to leave the UK, either through forced or voluntary means. In recent months, a number of charities and local authorities have said they will refuse to cooperate with the latest Home Office policy on removing rough sleepers.

The coronavirus pandemic has posed particular risks to EEA citizens, given their concentration in some sectors with high exposure to the virus, such as food manufacturing and agriculture. They are also concentrated in sectors most affected by lockdowns, while in

many cases not being eligible for state benefits such as UC.

Many EEA citizens at risk of rough sleeping were helped by the government's 'Everyone In' scheme, though mixed messaging by government tended to lead to inconsistent and patchy provision.

Going forward, newly arriving EEA citizens no longer have free movement rights and are subject to the same rules as non-EEA citizens. Many who apply under the new system will have the 'no recourse to public funds' condition attached to their status.

The Scale and Profile of Homelessness among EEA Citizens

Around 22,000 EEA national households were experiencing core homelessness in Great Britain at a point in time in the period preceding the Covid pandemic. This was about 9.3% of the national total of core homelessness and indicates that the risk of an EEA household experiencing core homelessness was 1.7 times that for all households in Britain. In the case of rough sleeping the risk for EEA citizens was 2.7 times that for British people, but the largest numbers were 'sofa surfing' (nearly 13,000).

Indicative modelling over the pandemic period shows a slight decrease *in the scale of core homelessness among* EU citizens to an estimated 20,500 households following the trends of core homelessness overall.

These are still conservative estimates, owing to limitations in key data sources relating to survey responses, language and eligibility for public support, with only a minority of EEA homeless households currently applying to local authorities for assistance.

While core homelessness in general was quite concentrated in London, this was even more the case for EEA citizens in London, who had 1.7 times

the overall London rate and 3.5 times the national rate of core homelessness. EEA rates of core homelessness were also relatively high in the East Midlands and East of England, while being relatively low in the northern regions of England and in Scotland.

Men from EEA countries were more likely to experience core homelessness, particularly rough sleeping. Homeless experiences were spread fairly widely across the age ranges up to but not beyond retirement age. Households with recent experience of core homelessness included a high proportion of single persons, of multi-adult groups, and lone parents, with relatively few couples and couple families.

For those EEA households experiencing core homelessness within the last two years, a majority did not did not have their own self-contained home, and were in a range of ongoing homeless or other sharing or temporary accommodation situations. This group had generally had relatively low employment rates pre-Covid, and suffered disproportionately from job loss through the pandemic, with a majority unemployed at the time of our special surveys.

These EEA homeless households typically had exceptionally low or zero incomes, with zero incomes particularly common for rough sleepers. Around half of recent rough sleepers and core homeless households with clearly inadequate incomes were receiving no state benefits.

EEA citizens tended in normal circumstances to have high economic activity rates but to be working in relatively menial occupations, even though they often had quite high levels of education and qualification. They also tended to report relatively adverse contractual and workplace conditions.

The EEA citizens in our surveys, especially those with housing difficulties, reported a range of adverse events over the previous year, notably job loss, financial difficulty and health problems, with relationship/family breakdown and eviction also quite common. They were only slightly more likely to have arrived in the UK since 2016. Most came for work reasons, and a high proportion came alone, or just with a partner.

At a point 3-6 months before the deadline for registering under the EU Settlement Scheme, less than half of those surveyed who had experienced rough sleeping or core homelessness had obtained Settled or Pre-Settled status, and this was also true for the wider sample in one of our two surveys. The overwhelming majority wanted to stay in UK but some expressed uncertainty about whether this would prove to be possible.

Models used to project core homelessness across England indicate that, with a continuance of current policies, such homelessness is likely to increase. However, they also show that a range of policies could see significant reductions, including greater supply of social housing, rehousing quotas, 'Housing First', improved Local Housing Allowance levels and welfare changes, and regional development. However, some EEA citizens may not qualify under current rules to benefit from some of these measures.

Statistical models find evidence of significant relationships between EU status or other related measures, including English language proficiency, and risks of core homelessness. Within the EEA groups surveyed for this study, higher homelessness risk was associated with insecurities in work or housing, family relationships, and health as well as complex needs, lower skills/qualifications, and lack of benefit income.

Homelessness Experiences and Backgrounds of EEA Citizens

An in-depth picture of the experiences and backgrounds of 28 EEA citizens in housing difficulty was obtained from interviews conducted across seven case study areas, but with a particular emphasis on London.

All those interviewed came from Central and Eastern Europe. Just over half were men and most were between 35 and 54 years of age. A large majority were unemployed or unable to work and, of those who were employed, most were doing casual work. A minority were in a critical situation, such as living in a friend's car or in a tent, while more than half were in a period of transition with ongoing issues, such as in temporary accommodation or living with friends and family. A number were living in hostels or hotels, generally emergency accommodation arranged due to the pandemic. A minority were now in stable accommodation but had experience of housing difficulties.

The interviews revealed that the drivers of homelessness were often complex, with no single cause but several contributing factors. Employment was a key factor which often meant that participants could not afford stable accommodation. Many experienced insecure or exploitative work, including long hours and very low pay. Some cited difficulties finding work at all, especially outside the informal economy, and some struggled to earn enough through casual work to afford stable housing.

The experiences of our interview participants highlighted that Covid-19 had made sustaining jobs and accessing housing and services harder. For some in sectors such as construction, their businesses shut down and they were unable to work, while only a very small number of participants were able to access the furlough scheme.

Interpersonal and relational factors, such as family conflict, relationship breakdown, bereavement and domestic abuse, often contributed to homelessness. Many participants also cited poor physical health as contributing to their inability to work and their housing situation, while some also mentioned mental health problems and substance misuse, primarily in relation to alcohol, as contributors.

Barriers to accessing sufficient support frequently exacerbated experience of homelessness. While some support issues were experienced in common with the wider population, issues specific to EEA citizens, such as the habitual residence test, as well as language barriers and a lack of awareness of the welfare system all featured significantly.

Most participants were aware of the EU Settlement Scheme and had made an application. However, a third had pre-settled status and were therefore not necessarily entitled to certain benefits, and some participants' applications for benefits were rejected as a result. Others said they were unable to claim benefits because they were still waiting for an outcome to their EUSS application.

The impacts of homelessness were wide-ranging and often related to the initial causes. In a number of cases, homelessness led to a deterioration of physical or mental health and these problems were difficult to cope with while homeless, some resorting to alcohol to cope with their situation. While employment struggles were a key cause of homelessness, being homeless often exacerbated the difficulty in finding employment as well. Lack of money meant some went into debt or had to sell possessions.

In recounting experiences of support, participants overwhelmingly emphasised the intervention of one key individual allowing them to make progress, such as a specific

family nurse or council worker. Some participants also recounted system failures resulting in insufficient support or advice, such as delays in accessing homelessness assistance, discrimination from a healthcare provider, and insufficient help from the police and helpline services when experiencing domestic abuse. Language barriers were also a key issue preventing participants from accessing support, because they could not convey their circumstances sufficiently or were unable to understand their rights.

Many relied on the voluntary sector, rather than mainstream support services, while some interviewees also received help from family and friends. However, for some participants, moving to the UK and becoming homeless had made it harder to rely on informal support networks.

Concerning participants' hopes for the future, most hoped to remain in the UK and wished to find work and recover from their hardships. When asked what could be done to help them, some suggestions included: better access to language support and assistance with learning English; help with finding work; greater legal or practical support to navigate bureaucratic systems; more affordable housing and better access to temporary accommodation; and improved mechanisms to prevent exploitation by landlords.

Concluding Implications

It is clear from our study that, for EEA citizens, structural factors related to employment and housing played a critical role in contributing to homelessness, with EEA citizens frequently subject to some of the worst conditions in the labour and housing market, including low pay, long hours, high rents, overcrowding, and various forms of exploitation. Addressing these issues may involve more effective regulation of both the private rental sector and industries which heavily employ EEA workers,

such as construction, cleaning, and hospitality.

Our analysis highlights long-standing weaknesses with the UK's system for providing welfare and accommodation support, some of which apply to the system in general while others relate specifically to the situation for EEA citizens. Some EEA citizens with pre-settled status were being refused benefits because they were not in work, probably due to the operation of the habitual residence test, while other EEA citizens said they had faced difficulties securing benefits because of delays in processing their application to the EU Settlement Scheme.

The study makes clear the need for tailored support for EEA citizens to resolve their housing difficulties. Many EEA citizens can struggle to access support due to language barriers and confusion over rights. This highlights the need for high-quality interpretation and translation, more effective communication of EEA citizens' legal entitlements, as well as English language provision, immigration and welfare advice, and mental health support. Support with finding secure, decently paid formal employment– including education and training relevant to key sectors – could be particularly valuable for supporting people on a sustainable route out of homelessness.

Finally, the policy context for EEA citizens experiencing homelessness is fast-moving. The Covid-19 pandemic and the UK's withdrawal from EU free movement rules have had a significant impact on EEA migration flows. Combined with new rules on rights and entitlements and the introduction of temporary visa routes to relieve labour shortages, these shifting migration patterns are likely to change the profile and experiences of EEA citizens in Great Britain in future. The circumstances of EEA citizens facing housing difficulties will therefore continue to need close monitoring in the period to come.

Chapter 1:
Introduction and background

Over the past decade, the scale of homelessness and housing difficulties among EEA citizens across the UK has become a growing concern. Charities and frontline organisations have highlighted large numbers of destitute EEA citizens using their services, in many cases because they are unable to access government support due to rules governing benefit entitlements. Evidence from official sources now suggest that significant shares of people experiencing homelessness originate from countries within the EEA, particularly in London.

These concerns have been exacerbated by the twin challenges of Covid-19 and the end of EU free movement rules. The introduction of the new points-based immigration system represents a major shake-up of the rights and entitlements of EEA citizens. While those living in the UK before the end of the Brexit transition period are in principle protected from the new changes if they have secured status under the EU Settlement Scheme, there is a high risk that those who have not yet applied (and who have no other form of leave to remain) now face barriers to accessing work, housing, and welfare.

At the same time, there are signs that EEA citizens have been especially hard-hit by the coronavirus pandemic. EEA

workers are concentrated in sectors such as hospitality and cleaning, which have been particularly affected by Covid-19. They are also more likely to be self-employed, placing them at greater risk of exclusion from the government's worker support schemes. Media reports have highlighted how EEA citizens working in London's hospitality sector became newly homeless as a result of the pandemic (Gentleman 2020).

In spite of these challenges, there has been a paucity of reliable data and evidence on the scale, causes and impacts of homelessness among EEA citizens. Up until now, there has been no comprehensive effort to estimate the number of EEA citizens experiencing different forms of

homelessness and housing difficulties in Great Britain. Information on the reasons behind homelessness among EEA citizens is limited and there is a very narrow understanding of their day-to-day experiences. This lack of evidence has made it hard to appreciate the scale of the challenge and inhibited a meaningful policy response.

This report presents new research on homelessness among EEA citizens in the UK, commissioned by the national charity Crisis and carried out by the Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research (I-SPHERE) at Heriot-Watt University and the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). The research was commissioned in 2019 as part of a broader programme of work which also involved a scoping study[2] of homelessness amongst non-UK nationals more generally and the development of policy ideas and services. This report highlighted the scale of homelessness problems in Britain, particularly the worst forms of 'core homelessness'[3] and continuing growth in numbers, including perceptions that non-UK nationals were increasingly affected, but acknowledged that hard evidence on the exact scale and nature of the problem was lacking.

While the non-UK population in Great Britain are affected by the same socio-economic context as the general population, including low wage and insecure work and a lack of affordable housing, they face additional challenges in navigating multiple systems in times of crisis, which can be compounded by their immigration status and limited entitlements. The scoping study found indications that numbers were increasing and

impacting on services, with EEA citizens an increasing focus of concern given the Brexit process, alongside major gaps in relevant services (e.g. legal advice) and growing levels of support needs.

As part of this broader programme of work, Crisis has sought to establish an estimate of the current scale of homelessness across Great Britain affecting EEA citizens, as well as the factors behind their housing circumstances. The uncertain policy environment created by Brexit in relation to this population specifically made it important to understand the characteristics and support needs of EEA citizens experiencing homelessness, in order to better appreciate the potential impacts of new changes to their entitlements.

1.1 Aims of the project
The project was originally specified in two parts, the first of which aimed to develop a model to provide an estimate of the current scale of homelessness among EEA citizens across all three GB countries and broken down by Crisis' core homelessness definition.[4] This definition includes rough sleeping, unconventional accommodation, hostels refuges and shelters; unsuitable temporary accommodation, and sofa surfing. This research was intended to form the foundation of Crisis' work with EEA citizens going forward and would feed into understanding the impact of different policy decisions related to EEA citizens.

This project aimed to answer the following questions:

1.　What is the point in time figure of the number of EEA citizens who are

2　Boobis, S., Jacob, R. & Sanders, B. (2019) *A Home for All: Understanding migrant homelessness in Great Britain.*. Scoping Report. November 2019 ISBN 978-1-78519-066-7.　www.crisis.org.uk
3　Core homelessness is a definition developed by Crisis and Heriot-Watt University and concept derives from a quest for a robust measurement framework that overcomes limitations in traditional approaches to homelessness calibration used in the UK. See Chapter 2 for more details
4　See Bramley (2017) *Homelessness projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain*, London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237582/crisis_homelessness_projections_2017.pdf and Fitzpatrick et al (2021), *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2021*, ch.5　www.crisis.org.uk

currently homeless across Great Britain?

2. What is the estimated flow of EEA citizens in to and out of homelessness across Great Britain?

3. What is the breakdown of this cohort by different homelessness types (using Crisis' core homelessness definition)?

4. What are the characteristics of this cohort, including demographics and support needs?

The second strand of this work required a mainly qualitative exploration of the causes and impacts of EEA homelessness, in order to understand those factors that are unique to or more prevalent within this population. Key questions in this second strand were:

5. What are the individual and structural causes of homelessness for EEA citizens, specifically exploring causes that are unique to or particularly prevalent within this population?

6. What are the experiences and impacts of homelessness for EEA citizens, again drawing out those that are particularly prevalent within this population?

This part of the work would involve:

• Primary research in the form of fieldwork to undertake surveys in agreed case-study areas across Great Britain

• In-depth interviews with a sample of survey participants to draw out detailed experiential data and case study examples

While the brief did draw a clear distinction in terms of the main aims and deliverables of the two parts of the research, the research team believed

that there was significant overlap, particularly in parts of the new survey work which we proposed to undertake, which would serve both sets of objectives and link the two parts of the research. We also saw further links, in terms of the literature review, engagement with agencies with specific knowledge and connections, and selection of case study areas, and also in the latter stages in synthesising conclusions and recommendations for policy and practice. Therefore, the full proposal was prepared by the research partners as an integrated one to address both parts of the brief.

1.2 The research partners

I-SPHERE has had a sustained research relationship with Crisis over nearly a decade, through the Homelessness Monitor programme, while two recent research projects on 'Homeless projections' (2017) and 'Housing requirements' (2018) prefigured this research brief in quite specific ways. Ongoing work following up on these projects was expected to deliver a majority of the data inputs and analysis required to fulfil the first part of the brief. That in turn enabled more resources to be devoted to further targeted survey work to get better coverage of certain groups of EEA citizens in or at risk of housing difficulty, which would both strengthen the quantitative estimate while also providing a launch pad for the qualitative work on experiences and impacts.

IPPR's involvement in qualitative and quantitative research focused on migrant groups in different regional settings across UK, including work on labour market experiences, as well as ongoing research on the impacts of the government's 'hostile environment' immigration policies, provided complementary expertise and experience They have taken the lead role in undertaking targeted survey work with qualitative follow-up interviews in selected case study

areas. The research has also benefited from some specific inputs from public health specialists at University College London (UCL).

1.3 Research Innovation

The brief encouraged the researchers to consider innovation, particularly around different ways of surveying hard-to-reach populations like some homeless non-UK nationals. In addition to innovation in the combining of estimates of numbers from different, overlapping data sources, the team engaged with innovative approaches in primary survey work. One of the special surveys commissioned used a technique called 'Respondent Driven Sampling' (RDS) to survey Polish and Romanian populations in one large town (Luton), one of the first such applications of a promising technique in the UK. Because of Covid-related problems with conventional methods of conducting targeted surveys, the team also innovated in the use of multiple modes, including on-line and mobile phone based questionnaires.

1.4 Covid-19

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions led rapidly to the postponement and then partial redesign of the main primary data collection exercises, with a resumption of fieldwork 6-9 months later than originally planned. As a consequence, the overall duration of this project has extended from one to two years. This delay has also in turn meant finishing the research just after the expiry of the deadline for EEA citizens to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme on 30 June 2021.

1.5 Guide to the report

Following this introduction and overview, Chapter Two provides more detail on the methodology employed in different parts of the research. Chapter Three builds on a review of published and grey literature to bring to bear past as well as contemporary

research and policy commentary on the position of EEA citizen populations in the UK and their experiences of housing difficulties and homelessness. Chapter Four presents the main quantitative findings on the relative and absolute scale of homelessness among the EEA national population in Britain, its geographical and socio-demographic profile, also drawing out evidence on drivers and risk factors. Chapter Five draws mainly on the qualitative interview evidence to review the experiences of EEA citizens who have faced housing difficulties and homelessness. Finally, Chapter Six concludes the report with a discussion of the findings and some of the policy implications of the research.

Chapter 2:
Research methodology

In this chapter we provide further details on the research sources and methods used. This includes a literature review, construction of a data model from multiple secondary sources to estimate numbers of EEA citizens experiencing different forms of homelessness, two specific structured questionnaire surveys, and a set of qualitative follow-up interviews following a semi-structured agenda.

2.1 Literature Review

Chapter Three presents a concise review of a substantial and diverse range of literature from the last 20 years, providing key background to the emerging challenges with homelessness facing EEA citizens in Great Britain in the years preceding, up to, and after Brexit. The literature review puts the experiences of EEA citizens in a wider context of UK migration policy and related issues, particularly in the labour and housing markets. The scope of the material reviewed includes the key historical steps including the accession of new EU member states in 2004 and after, an overview of the rights and entitlements of EEA citizens, and the EU Settlement Scheme devised following the EU referendum.

This review also provides some background on the demographic and geographic profile of EEA populations and evidence on their experience of economic and/or social disadvantages, with a particular focus on their housing situations. The chapter further reviews key evidence on the causes and risk factors behind homelessness, before looking at studies more specifically focusing on the situation of EEA citizens and concluding with a brief reference to the impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit.

A number of current and former staff of I-SPHERE as well as IPPR have contributed to this review, including our colleague Dr Gina Netto, who has a long track record of research and publication in the fields of migration and ethnicity.

Table 2.1: Definition of Core Homelessness by Category

Category	Description
Rough Sleeping	Sleeping in the open e.g. in streets, parks, carparks, doorways
Unconventional Accommodation	Sleeping in places/spaces not intended as normal residential accommodation, e.g. cars, vans, lorries, caravans/motor home, tents, boats, sheds, garages, industrial/commercial premises
Hostels etc.	Communal emergency and Temporary Accommodation primarily targeted at people experiencing homelessness including hostels, refuges and shelters. In 2020 data this category includes emergency Covid provision
Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation	Homeless households placed in Temporary Accommodation of certain types, viz Bed and Breakfast, Private Non-self-contained Licensed/Nightly Let, and Out of Area Placements (half in London, all elsewhere)
Sofa Surfing	Individuals or family groups staying temporarily (expecting or wanting to move) with another household, excluding nondependent children of host household and students, who are also overcrowded on the bedroom standard

2.2 Data Model and Quantitative Estimates
Core homelessness definition and rationale

Crisis specified in the brief for this research that the primary focus for the study should be on 'core homelessness'. The core homelessness concept was introduced in research undertaken with Crisis in 2017 and updated in 2018[5], with the *Homelessness Monitor: England 2021*[6] representing a further major update. Its components and their definitions as applied in this study are shown in Table 2.1 above.

The development of the core homelessness concept derives from a quest for a robust measurement framework that overcomes limitations in traditional approaches to homelessness calibration used in the UK. We refer here to the customary reliance on administratively generated statistics on people seeking LA housing assistance due to (actual or potential) homelessness, and to the periodically undertaken counts or estimates of rough sleeping. While both of these approaches are informative and important, they are also subject to shortcomings that limit their value for analytical purposes – including cross-country comparison (even within the UK), under-estimating certain types of homelessness, trend over time analysis and serving as a basis for projections on the possible future scale of homelessness.[7] Fuller arguments and evidence regarding these shortcomings are presented in the 2021 Homelessness Monitor for England (Chapter Five) and its accompanying Technical Report[8].

5   Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness Projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain. Summary Report.* London: Crisis https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237582/crisis_homelessness_projections_2017.pdf and Bramley, G. (2019) *Housing Supply Requirements across Great Britain for low-income households and homeless people.* Main Technical Report of Research for Crisis and the National Housing Federation.
6   Fitzpatrick, S. et al (2021) *The Homeless Monitor: England 2021.* London: Crisis. www.crisis.org.uk Chapter 5.
7   Such issues are officially recognised. Efforts to address them are proceeding in the guise of the ONS/GSS data harmonisation project, as launched in 2019 https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/government-statistical-service-gss-harmonisation-strategy/
8   See Fitzpatrick et al (2021), Chapter 5 (footnote 4) and Bramley, G. (2021) Research on *Core Homelessness and Homeless Projections: Technical Report on New Baseline Estimates and Scenario Projections.* Edinburgh: Heriot-Wat University. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244632/core_homelessness_projections_2020_technical_report.pdf

As well as enabling us to overcome certain shortcomings of familiar enumeration methods, including statutory homelessness returns and rough sleeping street counts, we would argue that core homelessness is also more consistent than statutory homelessness with international approaches to defining homelessness.[9] More practically, it also avoids significant technical problems of double-counting and conceptual problems of mixing 'stock' (e.g. traditional rough sleeper counts) and 'flow' (e.g. statutory homelessness applications) measures, as discussed further below.

The original core homelessness and projections work was partly motivated by a dissatisfaction with the conventional published statistics on homelessness, which was also reflected in interventions from the UK Statistics Authority, National Audit Office (NAO) and parliamentary committees over recent years, some of which had been stimulated by Government responses to the *Homelessness Monitor* series. The most recent example is the NAO report of 14 January 2021;[10] introducing this report in the press release the head of the NAO said "For the first time, the scale of the rough sleeping population in England has been made clear, and it far exceeds the government's previous estimates".

Core and wider homeless measures
Core homelessness is a subset of the broader phenomenon of 'homelessness', which clearly includes those people who are legally defined as homeless in the UK, which effectively includes people who are threatened with becoming homeless (having no accommodation which

they have a right to occupy within 56 days). Across GB, local authorities to differing extents have responsibility to seek to prevent, or failing that to relieve homelessness among all such households, while also having a 'main duty' to secure suitable permanent accommodation (typically social rented housing) for families and other vulnerable groups who are found to be eligible and unintentionally homeless.[11] A substantial proportion of households who are 'homeless' in terms of this legal/policy definition are not 'core homeless' on our definition, because they have not yet left their previous accommodation (sometimes termed 'homeless at home') or because they have been placed in temporary accommodation which is 'suitable', typically an existing self-contained social rented or private rental dwelling let on license.

In parts of this report we present estimates of 'other statutory homeless' alongside estimates of core homelessness, to provide this fuller picture of the homelessness spectrum. In the same spirit, we also present estimates of the number of households who, while not falling into these tightly defined categories, can reasonably be argued to be at significant risk of falling into them in the relatively near future, if they were not to receive some support or experience a change in circumstances. Examples of wider homeless risk groups would include: private renters facing potential eviction, concealed or sharing households whose existing conditions are not satisfactory and who wish to move but lack the financial capacity to easily obtain accommodation in the market; people living in shared, non-self-contained

accommodation under licence; and people expecting to leave institutional accommodation.

Combining multiple sources
The approach to estimating core homelessness numbers in the base period (2018-2019) is closely similar to that used in the most recent national estimates of core homelessness for England as published and discussed in the *Homelessness Monitor: England 2021*. The estimates are based on a combination of eight main secondary sources, as identified and described in Table 2.2.

The data sources identified here for the EEA analysis are largely the same as those for the national English estimates of core homelessness, the only differences being the omission of two sources on hostel, etc. accommodation (DWP-FOI and Homeless Link), which did not have variables to identify EEA citizens, and the inclusion of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the RDS survey (discussed below). For each separate category of core homelessness (e.g. Rough sleeping, unconventional accommodation, etc.) the snapshot stock number is estimated as *the weighted sum of separate estimates from each of up to six relevant sources*, where the weights reflect a considered judgement of coverage and reliability for that source in relation to that category, with the weights summing to 1.0.

This combination of secondary sources is primarily used to estimate the numbers of core homeless by category. It is possible to make use of several of these sources also to generate socio-demographic profile information, which may be compared with that derived from our primary survey sources. However, in this report we prioritise reporting (in Chapter Four) the new primary data source

results [although we could highlight cases where the secondary sources suggest some differences in profile].

Stocks and flows
It is important to underline that core homelessness measures are generally presented as a 'snapshot' or stock number experiencing specific forms of homelessness at a point in time. However, other statistical measures of homelessness are often defined and measured in a different way, either measuring the 'flow' of cases passing through a particular status (e.g. applying to local authority as homeless over a year) or having experienced a form of homelessness over varying periods of time (ranging from a month to a year or two years, up to 'ever'). Measures of the latter kind overlap with flow measures or stock measures. For example, people experiencing homelessness over the last year include both those who are experiencing it now (the snapshot stock) and the flow of those passing into (or out of) that homeless status during the year. We may refer to such measures as 'stock-and-flow' measures.

These different ways of counting homelessness arise naturally from different ways of collecting data, and also have different uses for informing policy and practice. The snapshot (sometimes called 'point in time') measures as exemplified by core homelessness have the value of consistency, and the significant advantage of avoiding double counting. This is because it is a snapshot measure of the situation on a particular day/night, and people cannot be in more than one place at a time.[12] The latter point is important given the evidence that many people experiencing homelessness actually experience several different forms (e.g. hostels and rough sleeping and sofa surfing) over a period of time,

9   See in particular Busch-Geertsema, V., Culhane, D. &Fitzpatrick, S. (2016) 'Developing a global framework for conceptualising and measuring homelessness', *Habitat International*, 55, 124-132. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0197397515300023?via=ihub

10   National Audit Office (2021) *Investigation into the housing of rough sleepers during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Report on Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Session 2019-20. 14 January 2020. HC1075.

11   In Scotland, since 2012, this duty has extended to all household types. There have also been detailed differences in the timing and manner in which prevention has been applied in Scotland, subject to current review.

12   However, some data sources cover flows or experiences over periods of time, and when using these we have to apply assumptions about the durations of homelessness experiences to get to a snapshot stock figure.

Table 2.2: Data sources used in the estimation of core homelessness numbers among EEA migrant populations and overall.

Name of Source	Description of Source	Core/wider Homeless Groups relevant to
Destitution	A special survey of users (N=3858, 63% response) of a range of advice, emergency, and support services comprising 113 services in 18 local authority areas across UK (JRF 'Destitution in the UK 2020', carried out in autumn 2019); this identifies current living circumstances, including categories of core homelessness, as well as a range of recent experiences (over 1 year), current living standards/deprivations, and basic demographics; survey available in 26 relevant foreign languages. Survey can be grossed to national totals on spot/weekly or annual basis.	Rough sleeping, unconventional, hostels, etc., unsuitable TA; also 'other statutory'.
Public Voice	A representative panel survey of c.3000 adults in the private household population ('Public Voice', PV) conducted for I-SPHERE & Crisis by Kantar Public in March/July-August 2020, within which a suite of essentially retrospective questions about experiences of homelessness/housing difficulties over last 2 years/ever (the same questions used in our Targeted and RDS surveys) were included, alongside some standard socio-demographics. This is the only source with significant detail on people staying in 'Unconventional accommodation'.	All categories; includes good evidence on durations of episodes as well as incidence
ONS _ Survey of Living Conditons (SLC)	This survey was conducted in 2018 as the UK part of the EU-Survey of Incomes and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). This included a new suite of questions on 'Housing Difficulties' which effectively equate to retrospective questions on core homelessness experiences with a national sample of adults (n=18,300). Results were published in an article by Hamilton, M. & Hayes, B. (2020) ('Past experiences of housing difficulties in the UK: 2018.' Office for National Statistics. 22 October 2018). In addition to peer reviewing this analysis, Glen Bramley was able to request some specific tabulations on durations by type of homelessness/difficulty, and on EEA /other migrant status	All categories, subject to assumptions about attrition/response and duration of episodes
H-CLIC /HL1 / Stats Wales	The new individual-level administrative record system H-CLIC (in England) or its equivalent in Scotland (HL1) and Wales (StatsWales website), which tracks homeless applicants through initial assessment, prevention, relief and outcomes where known, with associated demographics and housing circumstances immediately preceding as well as on 'last settled' basis. EEA citizens are flagged (in England only), but of course some homeless EEA citizens would not have access to state benefits or to Local Authority assistance under the homelessness legislation.	All categories except sofa surfing, subject to assumptions about % applying to LA and average duration of episodes
English Housing Survey	English Housing Survey (EHS) is probably the best household survey source for estimating current and recent sofa surfing, particularly given enhancements to the questionnaire in 2017-18, which also included a wider range of homelessness indicators relating to currently or previously being in temporary accommodation, concealed households, and applications as homeless to the local authority.	Sofa surfing; also other statutory homeless and wider risks
Understanding Society (UKHLS)	UK Household Longitudinal Survey (UKHLS, also known as 'Understanding Society') is also mainly relevant to sofa surfing, while also covering wider housing need/risk factors, but is more vulnerable to problems of sample attrition which seem to particularly affect migrants	Sofa surfing, wider risks
Labour Force Survey	The Labour Force Survey (LFS), given its sample design and size, is the best national and regional source for estimating the overall scale of and change in the EEA (and other migrant) populations, and can also be used to estimate concealed households and hence sofa surfing. It was also used to check representativeness of RDS survey results.	Sofa surfing (esp Scotland, Wales), overall EEA population & profile
Rough sleeper count/ estimates	The annual MHCLG Rough Sleeping counts (together with CHAIN in London) can provide a (low) estimate of numbers of rough sleepers, their local authority level distribution across England and change over time, as well as some demographic profile information including EEA migrant status. Issues with this source as a measure of the overall scale of rough sleeping are discussed in the Bramley (2021) Core Homelessness and Projections Technical Report. Similar count/estimates are produced for Wales, but without EEA profile. In Scotland, RS is estimated differently, using HL1 data on experience in last 3 months.	Rough sleeping
RDS Survey	This survey is a primary source developed in this project, as described further below	All categories

whether in one 'episode' or several. The snapshot stock also makes such measures more comparable with similar and related socio-economic measures like unemployment and poverty. Measures of flow (or stock-and-flow) are of value as indicators of the load on administrative and support services and of the wider incidence of problems over society.

The key links between stocks and flows are data on the duration of episodes of homelessness in its different forms, whether expressed as average lengths of time or distributions of lengths of time. Such data, derived from the range of sources used in this study, play an important role by providing estimates of the average duration of different forms of homelessness. The estimates of core homelessness draw significantly on these estimates, whether expressed as average duration (as a fraction of a year) or its reciprocal, the 'annual multiplier' to get from stock to annual stock-plus-flow. Unfortunately, due to a combination of sample size limitations and lack of access to individual level administrative data sets, we are not generally able to distinguish the duration data for specific migrant groups, so have to apply common values.

Impacts of Covid-19 and Lockdown
As described in the *Homelessness Monitor: England 2021* (Ch's 3-4,) the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdown instituted in late March 2020 had an immediate and significant impact on the homelessness sector. This was predominantly due to government action in response to the pandemic, to support people sleeping rough or living in accommodation where they could not self-isolate to move into emergency accommodation including hotels. There was a notable drop in rough sleeping (-33%) as a direct consequence, along with a 12% increase in hostels, etc (which includes COVID emergency accommodation) between 2019 and 2020.

Using data published by MHCLG in autumn 2020 relating to the national and local numbers of households in England helped through 'Everyone In', we estimated the impact on numbers rough sleeping, sofa surfing and in hostels, etc. In *net terms* this programme led to a 7,000 reduction in rough sleeping in England compared with our estimate for 2019, or 3,000 less than our estimate for 2018, but a 10,700 net increase in hostel etc. provision (including hotels used for the scheme). There was also a notable decrease (11%) in that year of people sofa surfing from 124,200 to 111,100. There were parallel reactions in Scotland and Wales with similar proportionate impacts on numbers.

It is difficult to make precise numerical estimates of the impacts on core homeless EEA citizens, but we have more data for London from CHAIN and from special health-related surveys of people staying in the special hotel accommodation. Approximate estimates of changes in these numbers between 2019 and 2021 for the three GB countries are given in Chapter 4.

2.3 Special Surveys
Targeted Surveys
In addition to the existing, newly emerging and enhanced sources reviewed above, we proposed to conduct some targeted surveys in a limited number of local authority areas. Naturally, these selected localities would be ones where there were indications of significant EEA citizen populations, including people apparently experiencing housing/homelessness difficulties.

The design of the survey was intended to reflect the questions of interest to Crisis and help the research to plug data gaps identified through the first phase of research – relating to coverage of some EEA groups and types of homelessness experience, such as unconventional accommodation (previously referred to as 'quasi-rough sleeping'), sofa–

surfing and super overcrowding. The survey used the same homelessness categories and questions used in the *Public Voice* survey described in Table 4.2 as well as some of the same questions about accommodation, resources and recent adverse events as used in the Destitution in the UK surveys. Alongside or overlapping with these, a more detailed set of survey questions were derived that probe a set of causes likely to lead to homelessness, as well as the perceived experiences of homelessness among this group. These covered both the structural (e.g. labour and housing market, benefit eligibility) and individual causes (e.g. relationship or health problems, addictions, etc.) of homelessness amongst this population. The survey also included key questions about when, why and with whom the respondents came to the UK, their preference and expectations for remaining in UK for the future, and their current status in respect of the EU Settlement Scheme.

The survey was carried out in a number of case study areas. These were selected from local authority areas known to have medium or high numbers of EEA migrants, with active organisations providing information, help and support including in relation to housing difficulties. There was also a clear attempt to represent the three countries of Great Britain and to include mixed urban-rural areas as well as major cities. Ultimately, the case study areas were as follows:

1. Central and West London

2. Haringey and Enfield

3. Coventry

4. Manchester and Salford

5. Hull

6. Newport and Cardiff

7. Fife, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire

Our proposed approach to recruitment of subjects was to define a number of target types of organisation, venue or contact point for sampling in each area, and secure the agreement of one or more relevant organisations to facilitate conduct of the survey in each study area. These focal points for sampling could be organisations providing homelessness or associated support services, including services explicitly geared to migrants, or organisations (including social clubs etc) relating to people with a particular nationality, or other general social venues known to attract significant numbers of EEA users. The research team worked closely with the different organisations in each case study area and used existing networks (including Crisis services), as well as the expertise of key informants, to select appropriate and reputable partner organisations. We ensured these organisations were fully compliant with our own ethical procedures and safeguarding policy (see Appendix One for Ethics statement, Data Processing Agreement and Information Sheet for Respondents) and budgeted to ensure projects and staff were adequately compensated for their involvement in the research project.

The questionnaire was designed for self-completion (paper-based and/or on-line) and targeted EEA citizens involved with services in each contact point, with a further option for 'snowballing' to friends/acquaintances in the same group. In total, we originally aimed to reach 400 people through the survey, but owing to Covid-related restrictions and service changes the final achieved sample fell significantly below that (283) despite substantial additional efforts by the research team and the local agencies.

A major issue to be addressed in this survey was that of languages – as in the Destitution study, translated versions of the questionnaire would be needed, and in addition it might be necessary to engage some survey

helpers from agency staff to conduct interviews in relevant languages. These anticipated elements were accounted for in the proposed budget.

While there is inevitably a degree of informality and selectivity / self-selectivity about this approach, it was arguably justified to follow such an approach in this case, in order to reach the groups and the types of homelessness and housing experiences which we were particularly interested in, and which we know to be under-represented in existing sources. We were keen to ensure the sample would include people who had experienced all forms of Core Homelessness, with a particular interest in picking up experiences people staying in unconventional accommodation, sofa surfing, and super-overcrowding.

Questionnaire design for this survey started with looking closely at the existing Destitution in the UK survey (especially for current housing situation, adverse experiences and markers of support needs, income/benefits) and the Public Voice survey commissioned as part of the core homelessness update within the *Homelessness Monitor* update (especially regarding core homelessness). IPPR's experience in recent studies looking at experiences of migration and integration across different regions also informed other parts of the questionnaire. Successive drafts were reviewed with the Crisis research team, who also carried out cognitive testing of the draft, before arriving at the final version. The final version of the questionnaire is included as Appendix Two.

Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS)
In the study brief, Crisis had encouraged tenderers to consider

utilising innovative survey techniques to try to gain a better picture of the situation of hard-to-reach groups. We reviewed various techniques suggested in the brief, as well as certain others which were identified as being potentially relevant. As a result of this review we determined that there was one relatively new technique, used particularly across a range of countries in health studies of groups such as drug addicts or sex workers, which had not yet been much applied in UK or to homelessness and which offered significant promise. This technique, Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS), is designed to use a network-based sampling approach to gain a representative picture of a coherent social group with key attributes in common and located in a particular city or locality. While this may be seen as a form of structured snowball sampling, unlike normal snowball sampling, and indeed many of the other innovative methods considered, this has been shown to be capable, with appropriate analysis weights, of producing statistically reliable (unbiased) results with known properties (e.g. confidence intervals).[13]

The basic idea is the simple one of 'six degrees of separation'; that following networks of contacts enables you to reach any member of a population. In RDS, survey respondents are asked to invite ('recruit') their contacts to also participate in the survey. By keeping track of who recruited whom, mathematical models of the recruitment process generate weights to compensate sample members for the non-random recruitment process. We decided to run a medium-scale test of this approach to EEA groups at risk of homelessness, in one of our case study areas. The area chosen was Luton, a medium sized town 30 miles from London with quite large

13 See Heckathorn, D. (1997), 'Respondent-Driven Sampling: a new approach to the study of hidden populations', Social Problems, 44, 174-199; Salganick, M. & Heckathorn, D, (2004) 'Sampling and estimation in hidden populations using Respondent-Driven Sampling' *Sociological Methodology*. 34, 193-239. .Handcock, M., Gile, K. & Mar, C. (2014) 'Estimating hidden population size using Respondent-Driven Sampling data, Electronic Journal of Statistics, 8(1), 1491-1521, doi: 10:1214/14-EJS923;.

migrant populations and significant homelessness. Two population groups were targeted: Polish and Romanian[14] nationals living in Luton, with a mobile phone-based version of essentially the same survey questionnaire as used in the Targeted Survey exercise, translated into Polish and Romanian, and marginally modified to include extra information needed to track the network. Initial respondents were seeded from an organisation providing support to homeless and other groups in difficulty, and asked to both complete the questionnaire and to recruit up to three other participants (friends/associates/acquaintances/family members) from within their community. Incentives in the form of shopping vouchers were offered for each completed valid questionnaire and for each additional participant recruited. The same mobile phone could not submit more than one questionnaire and GPS technology was used to make sure that only mobile phones located in Luton were allowed to access the survey.

Ideally, we would have seeded for each group in more than one organisation, seeking a more general (non-homeless oriented) community organisation to balance the support centre initially used, but the Covid lockdown restrictions prevented us from doing this. Despite this, the Polish survey generated a usable sample of around 300; however, the Romanian survey generated only a limited response of around 30, and in this case we judged that further seeding in a wider range of organisations would have been needed. Inspection of the socio-demographic profile of the Polish sample revealed a demographic profile relatively similar to that of working age adults born in new EU member states and living in the East or South East of England in 2019. However, more detailed analysis of the results, as reported in Chapter Four, suggest

that there remains a bias toward people in lower socio-economic circumstances; therefore, it would also have been desirable to seed the Polish sample from several different types of organisation.

Given the difficulties posed by Covid, we regard this trial to have been a partial success, and believe that the data from the Polish sample are genuinely representative of that wider group, itself the largest of the post-2004 'New EU' citizens in Britain. As a first step when exploring the data we applied a simple down-weighting to respondents who are closely linked to the seeds, to get a more representative picture of the whole population. At the final stage, key tables were re-run using the special weighting procedure.

Adaptations to Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown
The overall research programme was seriously hampered by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns. The research team had barely identified case study areas and started to map out and approach potential support services to work with in the Targeted Surveys when the first lockdown occurred. It took time to make contact with these organisations and have a meaningful discussion about whether or how the survey might be conducted. Instead of typical drop-in or face-to-face services, most had to radically change their mode of operation, suspending part of the service, conducting much of it by telephone, or trying to create conditions where social distance could be maintained. Local authorities initially almost stopped rehousing people and then had to adapt their procedures, while the government launched its 'Everyone In' initiative involving hotel accommodation for rough sleepers, former residents of congregate hostels and people at risk.

The research was therefore effectively suspended for a period of months and then gradually restarted. The survey methodology was modified, to place more emphasis on mobile or on-line versions of the questionnaire, together with use of telephone interviews by service staff using the paper questionnaire. In some cases, case study areas were modified, by including additional adjacent authorities to boost numbers, while in other cases new organisations had to be brought in to replace or supplement those which could not achieve many survey responses under these conditions.

In the end sufficient survey responses were achieved (283) and these have been analysed, with results as described in Chapter Four. Because the questionnaire is effectively the same, response patterns can be compared and contrasted with those from the RDS survey, and in some cases with national benchmarks.

2.4 Qualitative Interviews
One of the key purposes of the targeted surveys was to provide a set of individuals and organisations to follow up in order to arrange in-depth semi-structured interviews. This more qualitative approach was seen as essential to develop a stronger and more compelling picture of the background circumstances of EEA citizens experiencing housing difficulties and homelessness, the sequences of events leading to their circumstances, and the beginnings of pathways out of homelessness. These interviews were also considered crucial to derive richer evidence on how homelessness had impacted on other aspects of their lives, including work, relationships, activities, health and wellbeing.

A detailed topic guide was developed for these in-depth interviews, again subject to review between the research partners and Crisis (see Appendix Three). Interviews were arranged

through partner organisations who were working directly with EEA citizens experiencing homelessness and housing difficulties, mainly in local government and the voluntary sector. In general, we conducted the interviews over the phone with relevant interpreters, though in a small number of cases the interviews took place in face-to-face in emergency Covid-19 accommodation. For our Central West London interviews, our partner organisation EERC conducted the interviews directly in the participants' own language (after some preparatory training with IPPR research staff).

Due to challenges with securing interviews in some of our case study areas, participants were skewed towards our London case studies. Moreover, for some of our interviews, participants were not currently based in our case study areas, generally because they had regularly moved between different accommodation sites and their housing situation was in flux. This was particularly the case in London, where there was less of a sharp distinction between local authorities and individuals often moved between different parts of the city. (For instance, one borough's emergency Covid-19 accommodation was based in a neighbouring borough.)

By the end of the project, in depth interviews with 28 EEA citizens had been facilitated, transcribed, and categorised according to relevant demographic and economic information. IPPR research staff analysed the transcripts using the qualitative data software NVivo, identifying a number of key themes based on a preliminary analysis and discussions with the project advisory group. These themes included: experiences of migration; experiences of housing and homelessness; employment; poverty; health; different forms of support; Covid-19; language barriers; relationship breakdown and loss; and suggestions for policy and

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14   Known from other data to be the two largest groups of EEA nationals likely to be experiencing housing difficulty.

practice. The themes were then used as the basis for extracting relevant insights, reference and quotes from the research material.

2.5 Conclusion

This research has been conducted during a period of significant change, including the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuing lockdowns, as well as the end of the Brexit transition period and the introduction of the new points-based immigration system for EEA citizens. Nevertheless, we believe the research has been successful overall, with a full and informative literature review, the data modelling side proceeding well on the back of an existing body of work done for Crisis in previous projects, the successful application of an exciting and innovative new survey approach, and the collection of a valuable body of both quantitative and qualitative data from our target group.

Chapter 3:
Policy background

In this chapter, we aim to summarise the available evidence on the drivers and causes of housing precarity and homelessness among EEA citizens through a review of the academic and policy-oriented research in this area. We have undertaken this research by examining factors which have shaped EEA citizens' migration to the UK and their circumstances across a broad range of areas, including their access to benefits and services, their demographic and economic profile, their housing conditions, and their vulnerability to and experiences of homelessness. We also consider different conceptualisations and causes of homelessness among EEA citizens, including different structural and economic factors. Finally, we set out the new policy context for EEA citizens experiencing homelessness in light of the post-Brexit immigration system and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.1 EEA migration to the UK

The population of EEA citizens in the UK - including citizens from the EU as well as Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein - has grown considerably over the past two decades. While the UK was a member of the EU, it subscribed to the free movement of people between all EEA countries (as well as Switzerland). In 2004, the accession of 'A8' countries to the EU expanded free movement to eight countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Salt and Millar (2006) highlight that the large flow of migration which followed was in all likelihood the largest ever single in-migration to the country. While there was a temporary fall in migration during the financial crisis, EEA migration to the

UK rebounded as a result of rising unemployment in southern Europe and the lifting of transitional controls on Romanian and Bulgarian migrants in 2014. Between 2004 and 2016, the size of the UK's EU-born population more than doubled, from about 1.5 million to 3.5 million people (Vargas-Silva and Walsh 2020).

The consequences of EEA migration to the UK have been the subject of intense public debate in recent years. Most evidence suggests that on average EEA citizens have made a positive fiscal contribution to the UK and have had minimal impacts on employment levels and wages of domestic workers (MAC 2018). However, this evidence has been strongly contested in public debate, and between 2000 and 2015 the salience of immigration grew considerably (Blinder and Richards 2020). Public concerns over free movement tended to focus in particular on increased burdens on public services, EEA citizens' access to the benefits system, and pressures on housing (Ipsos MORI 2015). In some communities with new arrivals of EEA citizens – particular those facing neighbourhood decline or with little prior experience of migration – there was an emergence of local tensions and hostilities (British Future and HOPE not Hate 2018; Migration Yorkshire 2020).

Public concern over EEA migration came to a head in 2016, when the UK voted to withdraw from the EU after a campaign which focused heavily on the free movement of people. After the referendum result, net migration from the EU fell considerably (Vargas-Silva and Walsh 2019), with experts attributing the decline to the fall in the value of sterling, lower unemployment rates in the EU, uncertainty about future immigration status, and the perception that EEA citizens were no longer wanted in the UK (Portes 2020). Since the start of the pandemic, numbers have fallen further, and while

reliable figures are unavailable, in 2020 there was a sharp reduction in all passenger arrivals and a fall in the estimated population of EU citizens in the labour force survey (ONS 2020). A further discussion of policy changes affecting EEA citizens is covered in the following sections.

3.2 The legal status of EEA citizens

Before the completion of the Brexit transition period at the end of December 2020, EEA citizens had the right to live, work and study in the UK under the EU's freedom of movement rules. The rights of EEA citizens were regulated under the 2004 Citizens' Rights Directive and the UK's implementation of this directive in UK law. While the core framework provided by the Citizens' Rights Directive has remained in place over the past two decades, under successive policy changes by the UK government in the 2013-15 period the rules governing EEA citizens' eligibility for welfare benefits were significantly tightened. In particular, new restrictions were introduced for EEA jobseekers claiming Housing Benefit and Universal Credit. In this section we set out the status and entitlements of EEA citizens as they existed after these changes were made.

Before the end of December 2020, EEA citizens had an unconditional 'initial right to reside' in the UK for their first three months in the UK. After three months (and up to five years), EEA citizens had a right to reside depending on whether they fell into one of the following different categories (House of Commons Library 2015; Home Office 2020):

- 'Worker' or 'self-employed person' for employees or the self-employed (provided the work is genuine and effective).

- 'Retained worker' for workers or self-employed people who are temporarily unable to work due to illness or accident, who have

embarked on vocational training, or who have involuntarily lost their job and registered as a job-seeker. For the latter group, there is a six-month limit for 'retained worker' status for those who have become involuntarily unemployed after working for less than a year.

- 'Student' for students who have comprehensive sickness insurance and have sufficient resources for they and their family members to not become a burden on the welfare system.

- 'Self-sufficient person' for others (e.g. the retired) who have comprehensive sickness insurance and sufficient resources for they and their family members to not become a burden on the welfare system.

- 'Jobseeker' for people who are looking for work and have a genuine chance of being employed.

- 'Family member' for the family members of those with an alternative 'right to reside'.[15]

After five years of legal and continuous residence, EEA citizens would gain a permanent and unconditional 'right to reside'.

In general, free movement rules enabled EEA citizens to access benefits and public services in the same way as UK citizens. However, as part of the 'habitual residence test' for accessing the welfare system, only EEA citizens with certain qualifying 'rights to reside' were eligible for government support classed as 'social assistance', including Universal Credit and Housing Benefit. People with a qualifying 'right to reside' for the purpose of accessing benefits included those with the right to reside as a worker or retained worker (and their family members), as well as those with a permanent right to reside, but

it explicitly excluded those with only an initial right to reside and the right to reside as a jobseeker. This meant that EEA citizens who were looking for work were often unable to access Universal Credit (unless they had another right to reside – e.g. as a family member).

In England and Wales, similar rules applied to those seeking social housing or statutory homelessness assistance; however, in Scotland, any form of right to reside, including an initial right to reside and the right to reside as a jobseeker, was sufficient to claim housing support (Housing Rights n.d.).

Following the end of the Brexit transition period and the ceasing of arrangements for free movement between the UK and EEA countries, new rules for EEA citizens have come into force. As of January 2021, newly arriving EEA citizens no longer have a general right to live and work in the UK and are subject to the same immigration rules as non-EEA citizens. EEA citizens who were resident in the UK before January 2021 are able to apply to retain their rights under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), which was officially open from 30 March 2019 to 30 June 2021 (though late applications are still being accepted). Those with continuous residence for at least five years are eligible for 'settled status' (i.e. indefinite leave to remain); those continuously resident for a shorter period can instead claim 'pre-settled status' (i.e. five years' limited leave to remain), with the option of upgrading to settled status once they have five years of continuous residence.

These differing statuses have significant implications for EEA citizens' access to benefits and housing support. EEA citizens who have secured settled status through the EUSS automatically have a qualifying

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15 Some may also be able to claim a 'derivative right to reside' based on the right to reside of another person – e.g. the primary carer of a child of an EEA worker or former worker who is in education in the UK (where the child's education in the UK requires the primary carer to stay in the UK).

right to reside for the purpose of accessing benefits such as Universal Credit. On the other hand, EEA citizens with pre-settled status must demonstrate a qualifying right to reside in the usual way (that is, by demonstrating they have a right to reside as e.g. a worker or retained worker or a permanent right to reside).

However, this has recently been contested in the Fratila case by two Romanian individuals who live in the UK and have been economically inactive, on the grounds that the policy unlawfully discriminates against them based on their nationality (R (Fratila and Tanase) v SSWP & AIRE Centre 2020). The case is soon expected to be heard by the Supreme Court and there is a current stay on benefit applications made before the end of the transition period which relied on pre-settled status as the basis of their claim (DWP 2021). In a parallel case referred to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), the court found that the pre-settled status rules were not discriminatory on grounds of nationality, but claimants may nevertheless be entitled to support if their fundamental rights are at risk of being violated if they are refused (O'Brien 2021). The legal situation for people with pre-settled status therefore remains unclear at the time of writing.

The EEA citizens in the most precarious position after 30 June are those who have not yet applied to the EU Settlement Scheme (and who do not have any other form of leave to remain). While more than six million people have applied to the scheme, it is expected that significant numbers of vulnerable people have missed the deadline – because, for instance, they were unaware they had to apply, they faced barriers to making a digital application, or they were unable to evidence their residency (Sumption and Fernández-Reino 2020). Homeless

EEA citizens are likely to have faced particular challenges due to not having a fixed address. Those who have not applied and who have no legal permission to be in the UK are subject to a series of 'hostile environment' measures – that is, they face barriers finding employment, renting property, and accessing benefits and housing assistance (Morris and Qureshi 2021).

3.3 EEA migrants: a demographic and economic profile

The total number of EEA migrants in the UK is hard to accurately calculate. Based on the annual population survey (APS), Vargas-Silva and Walsh (2020) estimate that 3.6 million EU-born migrants lived in the UK in 2019, making up around 5.5 per cent of the UK population. However, household surveys such as the APS tend to find it harder to capture short-term migrants, new arrivals and people with less stable accommodation (Sumption 2020). As noted above, the EU Settlement Scheme received more than six million applications ahead of the 30 June deadline; the Home Office has estimated that, after removing duplicate applications, around 5.5 million people applied and of these around 4.9 million were granted status (Home Office 2021a). While this cannot be directly used as an estimate of the EEA population (because, for instance, it may include former residents who have now left the UK), it indicates that the APS figure may be an underestimate.

Ultimately, though, the APS is currently the most reliable data source for understanding the profile of EEA migrants. According to analysis by Vargas-Silva and Walsh (2020), EU-born migrants make up around two fifths of the total migrant population (based on 2019 data). Just under half of all EU migrants are from the 'old member states' (known as EU14 states), while the remainder are largely from the 'new member states' (EU8 and EU2

states) in central and Eastern Europe.[16] The most common countries of birth (excluding the Republic of Ireland) are Poland, Romania, Germany, Italy and France.

EU-born migrants, particularly those from Central and Eastern Europe, tend to be of working age: around 90 per cent of the EU8 and EU2 born are aged between 16 and 64, compared with 60 per cent of the UK born (Vargas-Silva and Rienzo 2020).

With respect to education level, EEA migrants from the old member states tend to have higher qualifications than their UK counterparts. According to analysis by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) of the APS, in 2016 more than half of EU14 citizens had degree level qualifications (or the equivalent), compared with only a third of UK citizens. By contrast, around a quarter of EU8 citizens had degree level qualifications (ONS 2017). However, it is hard to reliably compare education level between different EU nationalities, given the varying education systems of countries across Europe.

In contrast with other migrants, EEA migrants have a wider geographical distribution across the UK. While nearly 30 per cent of the EU born were based in London in 2017, this was significantly lower than the share of non-EU born (40 per cent). Compared with the non-EU born, there were also relatively high concentrations of EU migrants in the East of England, the East Midlands, the South West, and Scotland (Kone 2018). EEA migrants from Central and Eastern Europe have tended to settle in more rural areas with less past experiences of migration (Becker and Fetzer 2018).

In 2019, nearly half of EU migrants said they came to the UK for work-related reasons (Vargas-Silva and

Walsh 2020). Accordingly, EEA citizens tend to have higher employment rates than average, particular those from the new member states – around 83 per cent of working age EU8 and EU2 citizens were in employment in 2016, compared to 76 per cent of EU14 citizens and 74 per cent of UK citizens of working age (ONS 2017). EEA workers are concentrated in particular sectors – including food manufacturing, accommodation, and warehousing and logistics. They are also typically concentrated in jobs defined as 'low-skilled' – i.e. those requiring qualifications at level NQF2 or below (MAC 2017).

Studies indicate that poor working conditions are a common experience for EEA workers from the new member states. ONS figures from 2016 suggest that EU8 and EU2 workers were on average paid a third less than UK workers (ONS 2017). Half of working EU8 citizens (50 per cent) and three fifths of working EU2 citizens (61 per cent) worked over 40 hours each week, compared to a third of working UK citizens (32 per cent). According to the Migration Advisory Committee, EEA citizens from the new member states are also more likely to be employed on zero-hours contracts and less likely to be unionised than their UK counterparts (MAC 2018).

Previous research has found evidence of poor employment practices in workplaces with EEA citizens, including unclear wage deductions and sub-standard health and safety conditions (Morris 2020a). In some industries, there are particular concerns over exploitation: for instance, a study of 134 people in London's construction workforce, most of whom were EU citizens, found that half of the workers had no written contract and a third said they had experienced physical or verbal abuse at work (FLEX 2018).

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16   EU14 states include Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, the Republic of Ireland, Spain, and Sweden. EU8 states include the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The EU2 states are Bulgaria and Romania. The remaining EU member states are Cyprus, Malta and Croatia.

Research by Crisis on the links between modern slavery and homelessness provides further evidence of labour exploitation amongst EEA citizens (Parker 2021). In the study, EEA citizens, similar to UK citizens, were most likely to have been exploited in the UK rather than their country of origin. The majority of EEA citizens who were victims of modern slavery had experienced labour exploitation, which reflected the gender profile of respondents (who were largely male). There were also significant proportions of respondents in the study who had no pre-settled or settled status.

Over time, Frattini (2017) has found that the labour market integration of recent arrivals tends to improve in terms of both the likelihood of employment and the type of occupation. However, research suggests that this improvement in labour market outcomes is not necessarily commensurate with individuals' educational qualifications and experience (Sirkeci et al 2017). Analysis from one ONS study suggests that EU workers are significantly more likely to be overqualified for their jobs than UK workers (ONS 2017). As Frattini (2017) points out, there is a risk of migrant workers becoming trapped in prolonged employment in low-skilled jobs.

3.4 EEA migrants: a housing profile
While we know a fair amount about the migration patterns of EEA citizens to the UK, we know comparatively little about their housing profile. As already noted, many EEA citizens have found themselves in a precarious economic position as a result of their recruitment into the low wage economy (Waite et al 2016). While these poor economic outcomes are intuitively likely to result in worse housing outcomes, the lack of available data makes it difficult to understand the extent and the scale

of the problem. Despite this, there are a growing number of studies which help to shed some light on the housing experiences of EEA citizens in the UK. These include poor housing conditions, overcrowding, as well as issues of tenure.

Private rented sector
Like other migrant groups, EEA citizens tend to be in the private rented sector (PRS) (Vargas-Silva and Fernández-Reino 2019). The English Housing Survey has found that around 63 per cent of EU households were privately renting in 2019-20, compared with only 15 per cent of UK/Irish households (MHCLG 2021a).[17]

There are multiple causes for the high concentration of EEA citizens in the PRS. This includes difficulties in accessing social housing and limited knowledge or familiarity with alternatives (Pemberton 2009).

On average, rents tend to be higher in the PRS and households spend a greater proportion of their income on housing costs (Webb and Murphy 2020). Private rent is also not fully covered by Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, which can reduce the volume of properties available to individuals on low income.

In many cases, EEA citizens have been employed in the UK via recruitment agencies, which can place individuals in tied accommodation, linking an individual's housing to their salary and place of work. This has heightened EEA citizens' housing precarity, given that changing accommodation generally requires finding new employment as well (McCollum and Trevena 2021).

Social rented sector and owner occupiers
Approximately 11 per cent of EU households in England rent in the social rented sector (SRS) (MHCLG

2021a). This is significantly less than the proportion of UK/Irish households (17 per cent) and households of other nationalities (21 per cent) who rent in the SRS (Ibid). On the other hand, around 26 per cent of EU households in England are owner occupiers, compared to 68 per cent for UK/Irish households and 28 per cent for households of other nationalities (ibid). Analysing these other tenures reflects the fact that EEA citizens are overwhelmingly likely to be located within the PRS. This helps to explains the lack of evidence exploring the housing situation of EEA citizens within other tenures.

Poor conditions and overcrowding
Poor housing conditions are a recurrent theme in qualitative housing studies of EU8 citizens, including overcrowding, inadequate heating and safety risks (Netto et al 2011). Overcrowding is a particular challenge in London. The Migration Observatory has found that, based on data from the 2016-18 UK Household Longitudinal Survey, 13 per cent of households in London with EU-born adults experienced overcrowded conditions, compared to 4 per cent of households in London with UK-born adults (Vargas-Silva and Fernández-Reino 2019)

Alongside poor-quality accommodation, many EEA citizens find themselves renting in the 'shadow' private rented sector, where they can face exploitation from rogue letting agents and landlords (Spencer et al 2020).

There are multiple explanations for the poor housing conditions experienced by many EEA citizens. Some studies suggest that severe overcrowding is a sacrifice some migrants accept to lower the cost of accommodation (Serpa 2018), while others emphasise poor conditions as a result of limited access to the welfare system

(Fitzpatrick 2015). This is explored further in the next section.

3.5 Experiences and causes of homelessness among EEA citizens
The housing experiences of EEA citizens are currently a major concern in the homelessness sector. A survey conducted by Crisis of 83 respondents working on migration and homelessness in 2019 found that 67 per cent said that migrant homelessness had increased in the areas they had worked in over the past year, while 62 per cent identified Brexit and the implications for EEA citizens as their greatest concern in terms of the future consequences for migrant homelessness (Boobis et al 2019).

Data on the nationality of homeless households is generally poor across the UK nations. For example, MHCLG statistics on nationality among homeless households are only published at the end of the financial year, as opposed to quarterly. As of the 2020/21 financial year, its dataset on statutory homelessness in England suggests that 5 per cent of the 268,560 households assessed and owed a prevention or relief duty by their local authority were EEA citizens, with this proportion being higher in London at 9 per cent (MHCLG 2021b).[18] These numbers are expected to be an underestimate due to the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the statistics. The numbers recorded do not include people who are not entitled to assistance or people who do not approach their local authority for help. In Scotland and Wales, homelessness data collected by the devolved administrations does not capture the nationality of households.

Figures from the multi-agency database CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Information Network) indicate particular challenges for EEA citizens in London. In the

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17   Note that an EU household is defined on the basis of the nationality of the Household Reference Person (HRP).

18   This is based on the nationality of the main applicant of the household.

first two quarters of 2021, data from CHAIN on rough sleepers seen by outreach services in London reveal that 21 per cent of people sleeping rough in January-March and 23 per cent in April-June were from Central and Eastern Europe. In April-June, the largest group of people were Romanian citizens (14 per cent of all rough sleepers), followed by Polish citizens (5 per cent).

Our understanding of the causes of homelessness among EEA citizens is comparatively limited due to a range of factors, including data collection gaps and the lack of visibility of homeless individuals in overcrowded households. This means there is limited evidence on the specific causes of homelessness among this group. As a result, current understanding builds heavily on the more general evidence base on the causes of homelessness.

This wider literature on the causes of homelessness in general provides indirect insights into factors which could affect the vulnerability of EEA citizens and other groups. There is broad agreement that poverty is a key cause of homelessness, as well as evidence that tight housing markets can exacerbate risks (Bramley & Wood forthcoming; o'Flaherty 2019; Bramley & Fitzpatrick 2017). Given these insights, it is unsurprising that the economic literature also highlights the availability or not of income-related housing subsidies, or of subsidised housing opportunities, as key to reducing or resolving homelessness. International comparisons suggest that the coverage and generosity of welfare arrangements explain much of the difference between countries in the scale and profile of homelessness.

Nevertheless, Bramley and Fitzpatrick (2017) underline that a wider range of factors also affect the risks of experiencing homelessness, including demographics, labour market factors, health, relationships and life events. Ethnicity is a significant predictor in

some of the models reviewed here, but this is not always the case, perhaps because there are more fundamental factors such as poverty which are the major drivers. However, poverty may of course reflect the combination of disadvantages which affect some ethnic groups via their experiences of discrimination, both in the labour market and more widely.

Beyond the broader evidence on the causes of homelessness, there are also some studies which explore the circumstances of non-UK citizens in particular. One overview of extreme housing exclusion among migrant groups in the UK suggested that factors such as restrictive rules for accessing welfare benefits and social housing, labour market barriers, and limited financial help from family and friends have all played a role in driving homelessness among migrant groups, including EEA citizens (Netto et al 2015).

Fitzpatrick et al's (2012) multi-stage research into multiple exclusion homelessness among migrants in seven urban locations is one of the few quantitative studies which provides insights into the causes of these more extreme and complex situations of homelessness among migrants in the UK. The study involved a questionnaire of more than 1,200 users of 'low-threshold' support services, followed up with in-depth interviews. People were defined as experiencing multiple exclusion if *'they have been 'homeless' (including experience of temporary/ unsuitable accommodation as well as sleeping rough) and have also experienced one or more of the following additional 'domains' of deep social exclusion – 'institutional care' (prison, local authority care, mental health hospitals or wards); 'substance misuse' (drugs, alcohol, solvents or gas); or participation in 'street culture activities' (begging, street drinking, 'survival' shoplifting and sex work)'* (ibid).

The study found that the support needs of migrants were less complex than non-migrants using low threshold support services. Although migrants to the UK were more likely to report sleeping rough, they were far less likely to report substance misuse or the multiple forms of deep exclusion identified above. They were also less likely to report the more extreme forms of exclusion such as being charged with a violent crime, engaging in self-harm or attempting suicide. Consequently, the study found that the homelessness situation of migrants differs considerably from the rest of the UK population, requiring a distinctive response by homelessness agencies and policymakers (ibid).

There are few studies specifically looking at homelessness among EEA citizens. Of the few that exist, some have suggested that there are particular challenges for homelessness among male Central and Eastern European citizens, who face issues such as housing, employment and language difficulties and, in some cases, alcohol misuse (Homeless Link 2006; Garapich 2008). A small study of Roma rough sleepers in the City of Westminster found that difficulties finding employment, language barriers, low knowledge of the UK welfare system, and a lack of access to support and advice were relevant factors contributing towards hardship among this group (St Mungos 2016). Another study of Eastern Europeans in Edinburgh found that households end up sacrificing adequate housing conditions when faced with other financial demands (Serpa 2018).

One of the most recent studies on the rights of homeless EU citizens was conducted by the Public Interest Law Centre, drawing on analysis of data from advice, casework, and litigation and focus groups with support organisations. The research highlighted that factors driving homelessness included: progressive restrictions on EU citizens' access to benefits;

administrative barriers, including the 'gatekeeping' of homelessness support by local-authority homelessness departments and poor DWP decision-making over EU citizens' benefits claims; difficulties providing the required documentation to enter the private rental sector; unfamiliarity with rights and entitlements; and language difficulties and limited access to interpreters (Morgan 2021).

3.6 Policy responses to homelessness among EEA citizens
People facing homelessness are not a homogenous group and are likely to experience homelessness differently. Types of homelessness vary considerably in severity, ranging from rough sleeping or using emergency shelters to experiencing poor housing conditions or overcrowding (Serpa 2018). Responses to homelessness therefore vary depending on individual circumstances and need.

Housing and employment support
According to a recent review of the literature, the most effective approaches for supporting people out of street homelessness are housing-led and person-centred solutions which ensure fast access to suitable accommodation, combined with access to wider forms of support (Mackie et al 2019). There is also evidence to suggest that programmes which aim to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to secure employment can have a positive impact (Bretherton and Pleace 2019). Yet it is also argued that such approaches have their limitations, given the widespread nature of in-work poverty and high-cost housing in the UK (ibid).

Moreover, research indicates that EEA citizens often struggle to access high-quality support from mainstream homelessness services. First, there are general limits on access to homelessness support at the local level. In England, councils are only required to secure

suitable accommodation (the 'main housing duty') if the household is unintentionally homeless and demonstrates a priority need – for example, living with dependent children. Under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, councils in England also have a duty to take reasonable steps to support all eligible applicants who are threatened with homelessness (the 'prevention duty') and to help homeless applicants with securing accommodation for up to 56 days (the 'relief duty'), but this falls short of the 'main housing duty'. Similar rules apply in Wales, though there are plans to expand support further. In Scotland, councils have a statutory duty to provide accommodation to anyone unintentionally homeless regardless of priority need, including potentially providing access to social rented housing. (House of Commons Library 2018; MHCLG 2021c).

Second, there are specific barriers for EEA citizens, who need to either show they have settled status or, where they have pre-settled status, another qualifying 'right to reside' in order to access homelessness support (Morgan 2021). As explained above, in England and Wales this 'right to reside' cannot be based on being a jobseeker, which makes it hard for unemployed EEA citizens to access local authority support.

In addition to these institutional barriers, a lack of proficiency in English poses a significant challenge for migrants attempting to access services, as they can struggle to interact and build relationships with service providers. This issue can be exacerbated by a lack of professional interpreters. Moreover, EEA citizens may be unaware of their options for accessing support or uncertain of how to navigate UK administrative systems (Morgan 2021).

Removal and reconnections
Instead of providing housing assistance and other forms of support, policy responses to homelessness among EEA citizens have increasingly focused on getting individuals to leave the UK, either through forced or voluntary means.

There have been a number of initiatives in recent years involving cooperation between the police, some local authorities and service providers, and the Home Office to target low-level offenders and rough sleepers for removal from the UK. In 2015, the Home Office introduced Operation Adoze, a pilot project which aimed to target rough sleeping EEA citizens in central London for removal on the basis that this constituted an abuse of EU treaty rights (Demars 2017). The policy was extended across the UK under Operation Gopik. In 2017, the high court ruled that this approach was unlawful and discriminatory and the government was forced to change its policy (ILPA 2017).

However, in late 2020, in light of the UK's withdrawal from EU free movement rules, the government introduced new changes to the Immigration Rules to allow permission to stay in the UK to be refused or cancelled where an individual is rough sleeping. The rules were amended in April 2021 to ensure that permission to stay could only be refused or cancelled where an individual had repeatedly refused offers of suitable support and taken part in persistent anti-social behaviour. Published guidance also clarified that these provisions do not apply to people with settled or pre-settled status (Home Office 2021b). Yet concerns have been raised that this policy change will provide scope for the government to continue efforts to target EEA rough sleepers for removal (Lock 2020). In summer 2021, more than 100 charities and nine local authorities said they would refuse to collaborate on the policy (Bulman 2021).

Alongside these national policy changes, at the local level a number of councils and charities have been pursuing an approach known as 'reconnection' – whereby rough sleepers are helped to return to an area where they have a connection and where they can access other support networks (Johnsen and Jones 2015). For EEA citizens, this generally means leaving the UK and returning to their home country. According to data collected by academics at Cambridge University from 30 councils in England, there were at least 1,352 reconnections of EU citizens between 2016 and 2020. Reconnections tended to involve single men of working age. Common countries of reconnection included Romania, Poland and Latvia (Barnard and Costello 2020a).

3.7 Recent developments on homelessness among EEA citizens
In the past few years, there have been a series of major developments which have changed the economic, social and policy landscape for EEA citizens experiencing homelessness and housing difficulties. In this final section, we consider these developments in turn.

The first significant change has been the coronavirus pandemic. EEA citizens have faced particular risks from Covid-19, because they are concentrated in some sectors with high exposure to the virus, such as food manufacturing and agriculture. There have been a number of major outbreaks of the virus at food factories over the course of the pandemic, likely in part due to cramped working conditions, cold environments, poor ventilation, and shared accommodation and transport arrangements (Reuben 2020; Nabarro et al 2020; Barnard and Costello 2020b). As discussed above, EEA citizens tend to live in overcrowded accommodation, which further increases the risk of transmission. A study by Public Health England found that the number of death registrations of all causes for people born in new EU

member states between 21 March and 8 May 2020 was 2.0 times higher than the 2014-18 average for the equivalent period, compared with 1.7 times higher for people born in England (PHE 2020).

There is also evidence that EEA citizens have been particularly exposed to the economic effects of Covid-19. A study by Migration Exchange (2020) found that a quarter of recently migrated EU citizens worked in the sectors which have been most affected by Covid-19 closures, including hospitality and (non-food, non-pharmaceutical) retail. High proportions are self-employed – around 17 per cent of EU workers compared to 14 per cent of UK workers in the last quarter of 2019 – and so are less likely to be eligible for the government's support schemes (Morris 2020b). As discussed above, some EEA citizens (particularly those without settled status) face barriers to accessing the welfare system. This meant that some were left without a safety net during the height of the pandemic (Parkes and Morris 2020).

In response to Covid-19, the government introduced a series of emergency measures to limit the spread of the virus among people experiencing homelessness. In March 2020, the government announced the 'Everyone In' scheme, asking local authorities in England to provide emergency accommodation for all rough sleepers and others in accommodation where it was difficult to isolate (such as communal night shelters). The government initially indicated that this support should be available to all, regardless of usual restrictions on eligibility, and that alternative powers and funding should be used to help those with no recourse to public funds. By mid-April, more than 90 per cent of rough sleepers in England which local authorities were aware of at the start of the crisis had been made an offer of accommodation through the scheme. Many were housed in hotels (House of Commons Library 2021).

Alongside 'Everyone in', the government took steps to 'suspend derogation' for EEA citizens – i.e. allowing local authorities to provide temporary accommodation and support to EEA citizens with a right to reside as a job seeker, as well as those with an initial right to reside, where they were rough sleeping or being housed in emergency accommodation for self-isolation purposes.[19] The support was limited to up to 12 weeks and the 'suspension of derogation' only lasted until the end of December 2020, at which point the Brexit transition period ended and the new immigration system was introduced. The government chose this approach because they believed it would support people out of homelessness and reduce overall costs by relieving pressures on emergency services. Moreover, a similar suspension had been temporarily applied in Greater London, Bedford, Milton Keynes and Luton in the previous year with some success (MHCLG 2020).

The long-term implications of 'Everyone In' in England are, however, unclear. The emergency provision of hotels was only introduced as a temporary arrangement and central government funding has been short-term and fragmented (Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping 2021). As a result, councils have struggled to maintain the emergency provision over time due to limited resources. Moreover, mixed messaging from government has created confusion over whether councils have the legal powers to offer homelessness support to those who would not normally be eligible.. This has led to inconsistent and patchy provision for EEA citizens, with some local authorities taking steps to evict them from emergency accommodation (Morgan 2021). (A recent high court judgement has now clarified that councils can use

emergency or public health powers to accommodate people who would not normally be eligible for support due to the context of the pandemic (SW 2021).)

The second major development in recent years has been the end of freedom of movement and the introduction of a new points-based immigration system for EEA and non-EEA citizens. As discussed earlier in the chapter, EEA citizens who had been living in the UK before the end of the transition period (31 December 2020) should in principle have their rights to live, work and study in the UK protected in spite of the end of free movement.

In practice, however, the situation is more complicated. EEA citizens were encouraged to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme before the end of the 'grace period' (30 June 2021) in order to retain their rights. Those who secured settled status have indefinite leave to remain and an automatic 'right to reside' for the purpose of accessing benefits. Those with pre-settled status have temporary leave to remain for a period of five years and must demonstrate a qualifying 'right to reside' for benefit purposes (though this is legally contested due to the court cases discussed above). Finally, those who applied before the deadline and are awaiting their application have their rights protected until they receive an outcome (Morris and Qureshi 2021).

There are also provisions in place for people to make late applications after the June deadline. Where individuals have missed the deadline, they can make a late application if they have 'reasonable grounds' for the delay. The government has stated that where there are compelling practical or compassionate reasons for missing the deadline – including a lack of permanent accommodation,

evidenced for instance by a letter from a charity or homeless shelter – this could constitute 'reasonable grounds' (Home Office 2021c). The government has now also introduced protections for people who make late applications and are awaiting their conclusion (Home Office 2021d).

However, individuals who did not apply for the EU Settlement Scheme by the deadline and who have not applied since do not have their rights to live, work and study in the UK protected. This means they are at risk of facing the government's 'hostile environment' measures, including prohibitions on the right to work, rent, and access benefits and homelessness assistance (Morris and Qureshi 2021).

The Home Office has published guidance for employers and landlords on how to manage situations with EEA citizens who have not made an application to the EU Settlement Scheme. (The guidance for landlords only applies to England; 'right to rent' checks do not take place in Wales or Scotland.) In broad terms, the guidance states that employers and landlords are not required to retrospectively make immigration checks on current employees or tenants, but must check the status of new employees and tenants. If they happen to discover that an existing EEA employee or tenant has not applied to the scheme and has no other form of leave, then they do not need to dismiss or evict them. Employers can keep them on if the EEA citizen confirms they have made an application to the scheme within 28 days, while landlords do not need to end the tenancy agreement but are instead required to make a report to the Home Office (Home Office 2021e; Home Office 2021f).

Yet while there are a number of protections in place for EEA citizens, there are concerns that the complexity of the guidance and the digital nature of the EU settlement scheme mean that in practice many EEA citizens are

at risk of discrimination in the labour market and private rental sector. Moreover, campaigners have warned that plans to suspend and terminate welfare support for EEA citizens who have not yet applied to the EU settlement scheme could force them into destitution (the3million 2021).

At the same time, newly arriving EEA citizens after the end of the transition period no longer have free movement rights and are subject to the same immigration system as non-EEA citizens. According to early data from the Home Office, the most common new routes for EEA citizens include the skilled worker visa and the frontier worker permit (Home Office 2021g). The skilled worker visa is subject to strict occupational requirements and salary thresholds and has the 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF) condition attached, which means that visa holders are not eligible for any mainstream welfare benefits, social housing or statutory homelessness assistance. The frontier worker permit, on the other hand, does allow for access to the benefit system, but is only available to those who live primarily outside the UK and previously worked in the UK before the end of December 2020. This suggests that the new immigration system for EEA citizens is set to have substantial impacts on the future experiences of EEA citizens in the housing market in the UK, given many will no longer have any access to housing or welfare support.

Indeed, emerging data suggest that EEA migration patterns have already been substantially affected by the twin impacts of Covid-19 and the UK's withdrawal from the EU. While there are no reliable figures due to methodological challenges resulting from Covid-19, the indications are that there was a fall in the overall population of EU citizens in 2020 (Sumption 2021). Estimates suggest that EU net migration fell below zero at the start of the pandemic

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19   The derogation in question refers to Article 24(2) of the Citizens' Directive, which allows member states to prohibit those with an initial right to reside or a right to reside as a jobseeker from accessing social assistance.

(i.e. there were more EU citizens leaving than entering the UK) (ONS 2021). Reflecting these figures, there are numerous anecdotal reports of EEA citizens returning home once the pandemic hit (Parker et al 2021). Moreover, the first sets of data from 2021 indicate relatively low uptake of the skilled worker visa by EU citizens, raising the possibility that EEA migration could stabilise at lower levels under the new immigration system (Home Office 2021g). Looking ahead, the picture for EEA citizens in the UK is therefore expected to undergo significant change.

3.8 Key Points

The population of EEA citizens in the has grown considerably over the past two decades, following the accession of 'A8' countries to the EU under the 'free movement' regime which enabled the largest ever single in-migration to the country. However, since the Brexit referendum in 2016, and particularly during the Covid pandemic, levels of net migration from the EU have significantly fallen.

Before the completion of the Brexit transition period at the end of December 2020, EEA citizens had the right to live, work and study in the UK under the EU's freedom of movement rules. At the same time, under successive policy changes by the UK government in the 2013-15 period the rules governing EEA citizens' eligibility for welfare benefits were significantly tightened.

Following the end of the Brexit transition period, new rules for EEA citizens have come into force. EEA citizens who were resident in the UK before January 2021 are able to apply to retain their rights under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), which was officially open from March 2019 to June 2021 (though late applications are still being accepted). Those with continuous residence for at least five years are eligible for 'settled status'

(i.e. indefinite leave to remain); those continuously resident for a shorter period can instead claim 'pre-settled status' (i.e. five years' limited leave to remain).

EEA citizens who have not yet applied to the EUSS and who have no other form of leave to remain are in a particularly vulnerable position, as a consequence of the so-called 'hostile environment'. The Home Office has, however, put in place measures to allow for late applications.

There is significant uncertainty about the true numbers of EEA citizens in UK, which has been highlighted by discrepancies between applications to the EUSS and estimates from household surveys. However, it is clearly a population predominantly of working age, with high rates of employment, although often working in lower skilled jobs with lower pay and poorer conditions. Although concentrated in certain sectors (e.g. food, hospitality, logistics) they have a wider geographical dispersal than other migrant groups.

The housing profile of EEA citizens in the UK tends to involve a concentration in the private rented sector (PRS), often experiencing poor housing conditions and overcrowding, with the latter especially apparent in London. Data on homelessness affecting this group is limited, and official data is likely to be an underestimate in view of limited entitlement and familiarity with system. Rough sleeping in London is shown to have a high concentration of people from Central and Eastern Europe.

There is limited specific evidence on the causes of homelessness for EEA citizens, but they may be expected to be affected by the more general known causes of homelessness of the UK population, notably poverty, lack of adequate income-related housing benefits or social housing,

and tight housing markets. In addition, demographics, labour markets, health, relationship and life events can all play a part, as can ethnicity. Some studies suggest EEA and other migrants may be less likely to experience complex needs (e.g. addictions, offending, violence, mental ill-health) alongside homelessness, than single people experiencing homelessness who are UK nationals. A number of studies highlight difficulties accessing benefits or housing support due to combinations of language difficulties and unfamiliarity with rights.

The most effective approaches to support people out of street homelessness are housing-led and person-centred, and support in gaining employment can be helpful. The legal framework for statutory homelessness services has been changing, with more duties to provide prevention and relief in England since 2018, but not all EEA citizens have appropriate residency status to be eligible.

Instead of providing housing assistance and other forms of support, policy responses to homelessness among EEA citizens have increasingly focused on getting individuals to leave the UK, either through forced or voluntary means. In recent months, a number of charities and local authorities have said they will refuse to cooperate with the latest Home Office policy on removing rough sleepers.

The coronavirus pandemic has posed particular risks to EEA citizens, given their concentration in some sectors with high exposure to the virus, such as food manufacturing and agriculture. They are also concentrated in sectors most affected by lockdowns, while in many cases not being eligible for state benefits such as UC.

Many EEA citizens at risk of rough sleeping were helped by the government's 'Everyone In' scheme, though mixed messaging by government tended to lead to inconsistent and patchy provision.

Going forward, newly arriving EEA citizens no longer have free movement rights and are subject to the same rules as non-EEA citizens. Many who apply under the new system will have the 'no recourse to public funds' condition attached to their status.
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Chapter 4:
The scale and profile of homelessness among EEA citizens

4.1 Introduction

As explained in Chapter 2, the research approach to assessing the scale of homelessness among EEA nationals in Great Britain has been to adapt a 'data model' already developed in parallel research designed to assess the scale of 'core homelessness' in Britain. The concept and definition of core homelessness was presented in that chapter, along with the motivation for this approach and a review of the range of data sources employed. In this chapter we present key findings on the scale of homelessness experienced by EEA citizens, derived from an interrogation of essentially the same range of data sources used to generate recent published estimates of core homelessness for England (Fitzpatrick et al 2021) and forthcoming estimates for Scotland and Wales. We discuss the range of uncertainties associated with these estimates, while highlighting the implication of much higher relative risks of homelessness among the EEA population. While emphasizing core homelessness, the data model and framework of analysis enables us also to estimate the scale of the wider categories of 'other statutory homelessness' and people at significant risk of homelessness beyond those groups immediately experiencing it.

The data sources and model used to estimate core homelessness refer mainly to the period immediately preceding the Covid-19 pandemic (2019-20), although estimates are also made of how the numbers may have changed to date during the ongoing pandemic and associated lockdowns. The secondary sources are used not just to estimate numbers but also to generate socio-demographic profiles and to map the broad geographical spread (or concentration) of EEA homelessness. While most of the secondary data sources involve some time lags in reporting, the two specific primary survey exercises conducted within this research - the 'Respondent Directed Sampling' (RDS) survey of Polish people in Luton, and the 'Targeted Surveys' (TS) of EEA people experiencing housing difficulties in seven other locations across GB – reflect experiences during the Covid period. Therefore these can provide both an up-to-date picture as well as additional data on the socio-demographic profile of EEA citizens experiencing homelessness and related housing difficulties. These new primary sources also explore specific aspects of the migration process and associated residency issues, as well as aspects of vulnerabilities within the labour and housing markets or more generally associated with living as an EEA national in Britain today. These issues are explored more fully in the next chapter, drawing on the in-depth interview evidence.

4.2 The scale of core homelessness among EEA citizens

The approach to combining estimates from different data sources is based on the same methodology as that used in constructing the revised national core homelessness estimates which feature in the Crisis Homelessness Monitor or England (Fitzpatrick et al 2021, ch.5). Essentially, for each of five components of core homelessness, 'relevant' datasets (i.e. those which can make a meaningful contribution to estimating the size of that component) are combined by weighted addition. The weights are based on judgements concerning the relative accuracy/reliability and coverage of each dataset for each element. The weights currently used are similar to those used in the national core homelessness estimates, but with slight variation to allow for some differences in terms of inclusion/exclusion of datasets which can contribute to identification of EEA citizens experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Some datasets provide a direct current estimate of the snapshot number of particular components of core homelessness (e.g. Destitution survey using weekly weights, or EHS measure of sofa surfing involving usually resident household members). Others need to have factors applied to translate from annual flows (based on evidence of average durations) or from past experiences over a finite time period (e.g. 2 years, as with Public Voice survey) or 'ever' to an annual figure and then a current snapshot. Local authority-based measures (from H-CLIC) need to be adjusted for the proportion of core homeless estimated to apply to local authorities for assistance (which we can estimate from questions asked in Destitution, PV, EHS or SHS).

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.2 show the central estimate of the number of EEA national households experiencing core homelessness at a point in time in the period 2019-20 (pre-Covid). Of the c. 22,200 total shown, which is about 9% of the national total of core homelessness, around a tenth (2.335) were rough sleeping, with somewhat smaller numbers (c.1,200-1,300) in unconventional forms of accommodation (cars, vans, tents, sheds, commercial premises, caravans, etc) or in 'unsuitable temporary accommodation' ('UTA', including B&B, non-self-contained nightly let spaces, or out of area placements). Larger numbers (c.4,600) were in hostels, refuges or shelters, but the largest number of core homeless EEA citizens (12,850) were 'sofa surfing' (staying temporarily with other households without their own bedroom).

Figure 4.2 shows what proportion each of these numbers represents of the national totals for core homeless households as estimated for and published by Crisis for the same period. These proportions range between just over 6% for unconventional accommodation and UTA to over 9% of sofa surfers, nearly

Figure 4.1: Number of core homeless EEA citizens in Great Britain by category, c.2019

Figure 4.2: Share of core homeless in each category and of total households or adult population who were born in EEA, percent c.2019
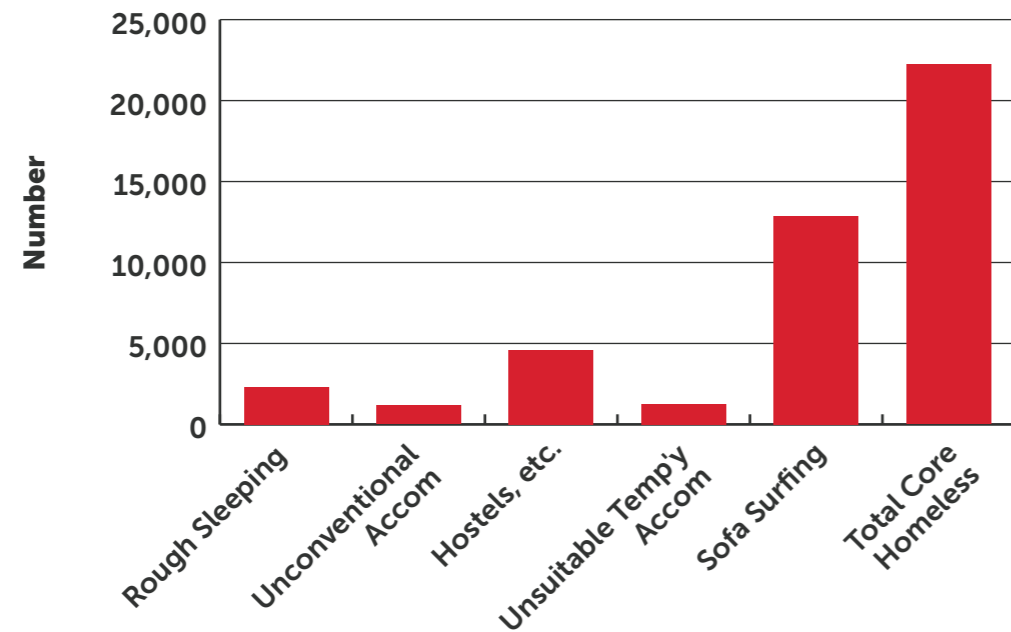
10%% of hostel cases and approaching 15% of rough sleepers, showing higher likelihood of the most visible form of homelessness, rough sleeping. As the chart also shows, all of these proportions are above the benchmark population share of EEA citizens, 5.4% of households or 5.6% of adults. Thus we can say clearly as our first general conclusion here that the risk of experiencing core homelessness for EEA citizens in Britain is very much higher (by 1.7 times) than the risk for the population as a whole. It is also apparent from this Figure that the relative risk of rough sleeping is even higher for EEA citizens, at 2.7 times that for all households.

The full matrix showing the build-up of these estimates from the nine distinct data sources used, including the weights assigned to each source for each category, is shown in the Table 4.1 overleaf

Limitations of coverage

These estimates may still be conservative, for several reasons which more detailed analysis hints

at. Household surveys are likely to under-record EEA citizens in housing difficulties because of the *language issue* – most surveys do not facilitate completion in other languages, but the destitution survey offered 26 translated questionnaires and it was found that 18% of all 'Old EU' respondents and 45% of 'New EU' respondents (but 60% and 44% respectively of core homeless respondents from these two EU groups) utilised translated (non-English) questionnaires in the 2019 Destitution survey. Furthermore, the dummy variable for English language questionnaire is significantly negative in logistic regression models predicting core homelessness.

The H-CLIC administrative data are likely to only refer to cases where local authorities owe a duty of assistance, which will exclude a significant proportion of more recent EEA migrants, as well as other NRPF groups. Of those participating in the Destitution survey in late 2019 who were core homeless, 30% of New EU cases had applied to the LA as homeless by the time of the survey,
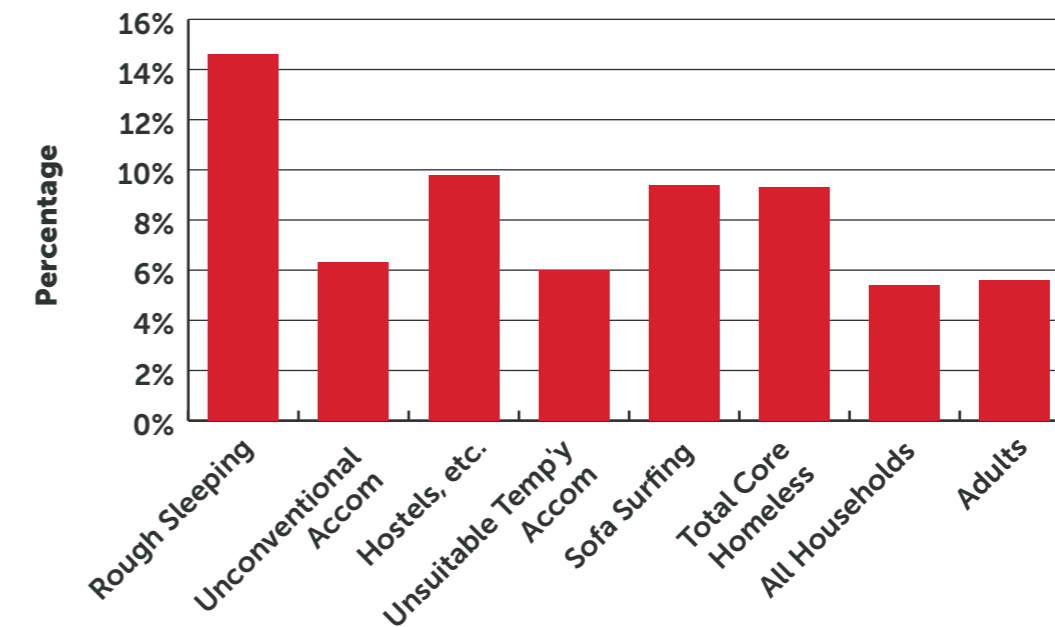
a similar rate to that for UK-born and those from other countries, but for Old EU homeless cases it was only 12% who had applied. These rates might be expected to rise over time as these cases moved to resolution. However, from Public Voice it appears that only 32% of those who had ever been core homeless had applied to the Council in 2020. And the Destitution numbers are comparable in order of magnitude with the H-CLIC numbers of EEA applicants, 10,095 compared with 16,775. Although this indicates that there are some additional numbers not covered by the Destitution survey (typically, sofa surfers or renters facing eviction) who do apply to councils.

From the RDS Survey of Polish people in Luton, between 25% and 30% of core homeless in the last year had applied to the Council, although this rose to 36% for experiences measured over two years. From the Targeted (TS) surveys in 7 localities, 19% of all cases (who would all have had some housing difficulties) but 41% of those experiencing core homelessness in the last year had applied to the

Council. Over the two year horizon, those proportions were 17% and 25%. There is clearly here a consistent story of only a minority of EEA homeless households applying to Councils.

Higher levels of sample attrition for this group are apparent in some surveys where there is a longitudinal repeating element in the sample, notably UKHLS but also the ONS Survey of Living Conditions (SLC). EEA citizens experiencing homelessness may be more concentrated in the non-private household population and also in the population of those who are relatively mobile, more tenuously attached to households, and those with limited English – all groups underrepresented in conventional household surveys, especially those with a panel element. This bias will be less present in Public Voice because of the exceptional lengths gone to by Kantar to ensure the representativeness of its sample.

These limitations affecting most of the secondary sources further underline the value of conducting direct primary surveys with the target population, as

Table 4.1: Buildup of EEA Citizens Core Homelessness Numbers from Different Sources, GB c.2019

Data source	Name	Destitution	Public Voice	ONS-SLC	H-CLIC	EHS-GB	UKHLS	LFS	RS Counts	RDS Survey	Weighted	Percent of
	Type	S U survey	Survey-retro	Survey-retro	Admin	Survey-curr	Survey-curr	Survey-curr	S U Survey	(Luton, Polish)	Total 2018	GB total
											G B	
Rough Sleeping	Weight	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1				0.1	0.1		
	Estimate	3,907	493	615	1,045				1,151	3,921	2,335	14.6%
Unconventional & Non-resid	Weight	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2					0.1		
	Estimate	300	1,038	1,534	631					3,659	1,170	6.3%
Hostels, etc.	Weight	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2					0.1		
	Estimate	2,802	6,583	1,815	1,980					15,682	4,583	9.8%
Unsuitable Temp'y Accommod	Weight	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.5							
	Estimate	674	2,783	778	1,432						1,285	6.0%
Sofa Surfing	Weight	0.0	0.2	0.1		0.3	0.1	0.2		0.1		
	Estimate	760	20,815	6,571		10,037	13,360	16,388		4,107	12,856	9.4%
Total Core Homeless		8,443	31,711	11,313	5,089					37,899	22,228	9.3%
												vs 5.4% of hhd, 5.6% of adults

we have done in this study.

As explained in Chapter Two, core homelessness numbers are generally presented on a 'snapshot' or 'point in time' basis, sometimes referred to as stock measures. This has a number of advantages in terms of consistency and avoiding double counting. Where certain sources give information on the number of households experiencing homelessness over a period of time ('flow' measures), we convert these onto a '*stock*' basis using estimates of the *duration* of homeless episodes, derived from a range of sources.

4.3 Core, statutory and wider homelessness risks
In this section we present evidence on prevalence of core and other manifestations of homelessness, including some indication of the overlap of or balance between core and statutory homelessness. Having regard to the issue of time in measurement, as briefly outlined above, this evidence is presented in three charts corresponding to three time perspectives: the current snapshot, the annual prevalence, and the 'ever experienced' picture. The evidence is drawn from four surveys.

Figure 4.3 presents a very recent snapshot based on three surveys, two of which are new primary sources in this research. For four of the bars in this Figure we can say that the subjects are or have recently been in some form of housing or material difficulty; the exception to this is the RDS 'All Polish' bar, which is intended to represent the general population of Polish adults living in Luton (as discussed in methodology chapter). The Figure shows that high proportions of all groups except the last-mentioned are highly likely to be experiencing some form of homelessness or risk thereof at the point in time. Comparing the first two columns we can see that EEA citizens are significantly more likely than the generality of users of crisis services experiencing material difficulties to report core homelessness, and somewhat less likely to report other statutory homelessness, wider homeless risks, or no current homelessness issue. The two columns on the right show that EEA citizens currently using homelessness-oriented support services (or closely linked to such people) are quite likely to be core homeless now, and this is more prevalent than being in the other statutory category, while being roughly equal to the proportion reporting other risk of homelessness factors (such as eviction).

Figure 4.4 shifts the perspective to the annual prevalence shares. The picture does not change dramatically. For the destitution samples, the share of core homelessness falls slightly, because 'less intensive' users of these crisis services are more likely to be housed households who are short of money for food and essentials. For the general Polish population in the middle bar, there is a slight increase in the prevalence of homeless experiences, but mainly in the wider risk category. For the two right hand bars, there is an increase in the prevalence of core homelessness and a reduction in the proportions reporting none of these housing difficulty issues.

Table 4.5 looks at a picture of homelessness experiences 'ever' reported. This time we replace the Destitution Survey with the Public Voice survey, which is representatives of all adults residing in UK in 2020. We also in this chart split the core homeless group into those reporting that they did also apply to the council as homeless or threatened with homelessness, and those who did not.

Figure 4.5 indicates that most of our EEA citizen Targeted Survey sample, and RDS sample members closely linked to the seed members of the sample, experienced core homelessness at some time (during their time in the UK). For a majority of

Figure 4.3: Estimates of core, other statutory and wider homeless risks experienced at point in time for EEA citizens and comparators in 2019-20
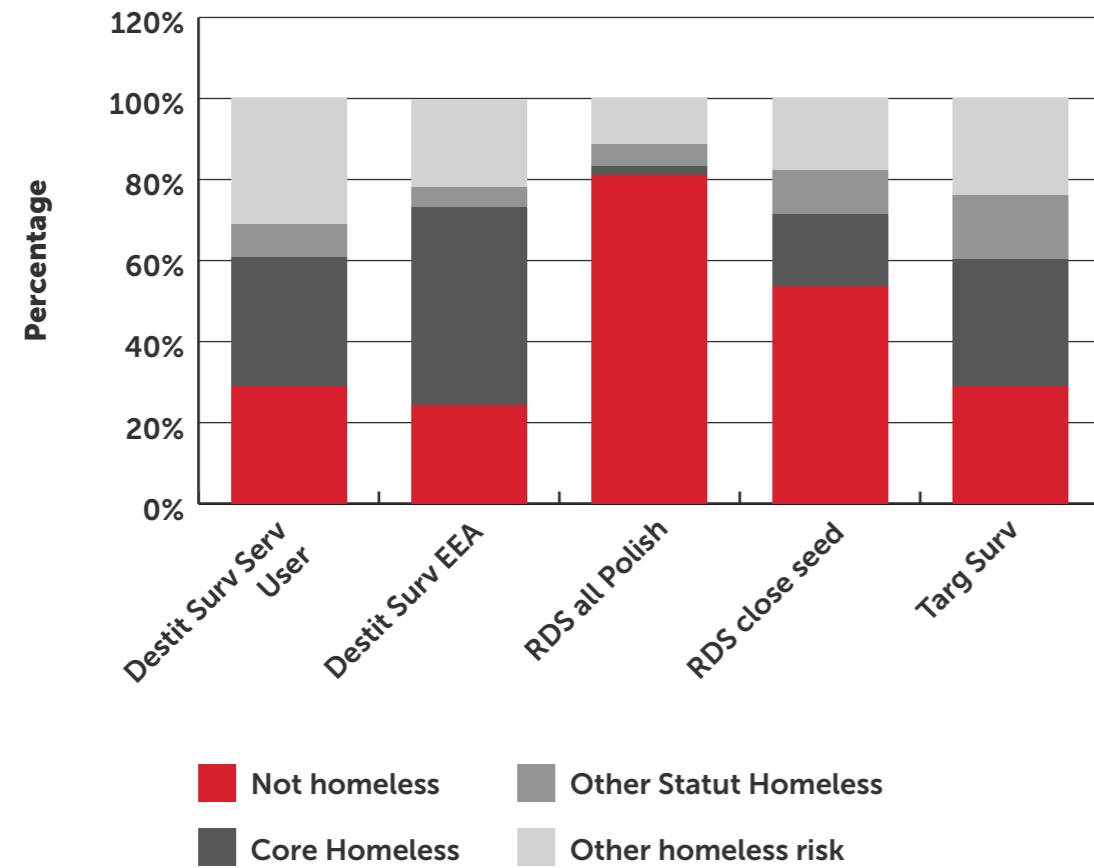
Sources; Destitution in the UK Survey of users of crisis surveys in 18 localities, Oct-Nov 2019; RDS survey of Polish citizens in social networks of those using support service in Luton, 2020-21; Targeted survey of EEA citizens experiencing housing difficulties in seven GB localities, 2020-21.
Notes: RDS 'all Polish' is intended to represent the broader population of Polish adults living in Luton and similar areas; the 'close to seed' group are that sub-group who are closely linked in their social network to 'seed' respondents recruited from a support agency. All subjects of Targeted Survey were in touch with a support service.

these, there had been no application to local authorities under the statutory system, although the proportions who had applied are not trivial. However, the other statutory group, who applied to the council but were not core homeless, is relatively small, as is the wider risk group.

For the wider population groups, core or statutory homelessness appears to have affected one-in-five EEA citizens, again a higher proportion than that for all adults (15%, roughly one-in-seven). For the majority in both cases it was core homelessness that predominated

over other statutory, but by a ratio of 3.7 to one in the case of the EEA citizens as against two-to-one for the overall adult population.

It is not implausible to argue that, as the effects of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 gradually work through in England, that the proportions of core homeless entering the statutory system may increase, while as the proportion of EEA citizens gaining settled status have also increased the share within that group.

Figure 4.4: Estimates of core, other statutory and wider homeless risks experienced over a year for EEA citizens and comparators in 2019-20
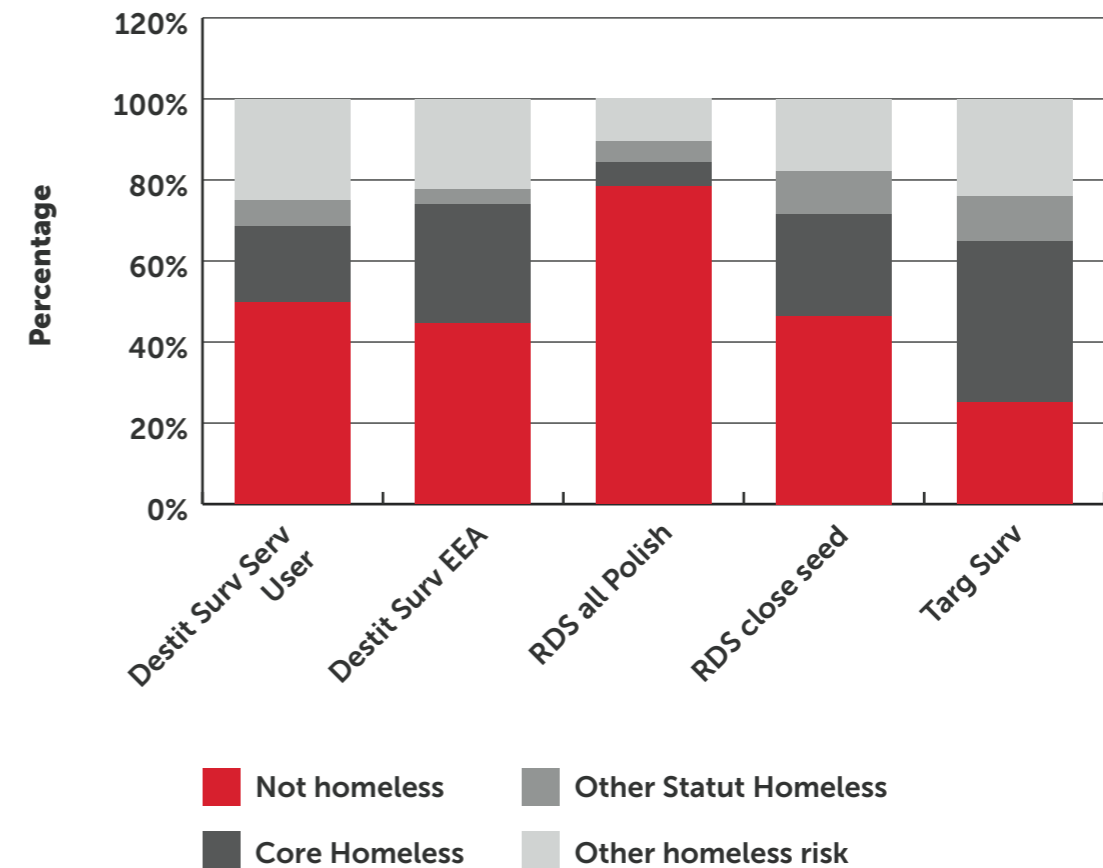
Sources and Notes; As Figure 4.3.

4.4. Geography of EEA citizens experiencing homelessness
In this section we present estimates of the geographical incidence of homelessness experienced by EEA citizens across Great Britain. The focus is upon 'core homelessness' and the estimates are made for four broad regions of England as well as Wales and Scotland, referring to the period immediately preceding the Covid pandemic (2019-20). It should be emphasized that these are estimates, not precise counts, based on the published core homelessness total figures (Fitzpatrick et al 2021 and forthcoming) with EEA shares/incidence within that estimated from a subset of the data sources available

which have viable sample coverage at broad regional level.

The core homelessness rates in Figure 4.6 show a strong concentration in London, both for the overall rates (mirroring wider homelessness measures) and especially for EEA citizens. Their core homelessness rate in London at 3.3% is three-and-a-half times the national GB rate of 0.93%. The EEA citizens core homelessness rate is above the overall rate in all regions except northern England, with a relatively small margin apparent in Scotland.[20] The pattern partly reflects the geography of 'New EU' citizen settlement in England since 2004, with a stronger concentration in London

20   Data sources with viable sample numbers to estimate the exact rate in Wales are not available; the level shown reflects assumptions about the expected relative rates comparing other regions.

Figure 4.5: Estimates of core, other statutory and wider homeless risks experienced ever for EEA citizens and comparators sampled in 2020-21

Legend:
- Not homeless
- Core Homeless only
- Core + Statut H'less
- Other Statut Homeless
- Other homeless risk
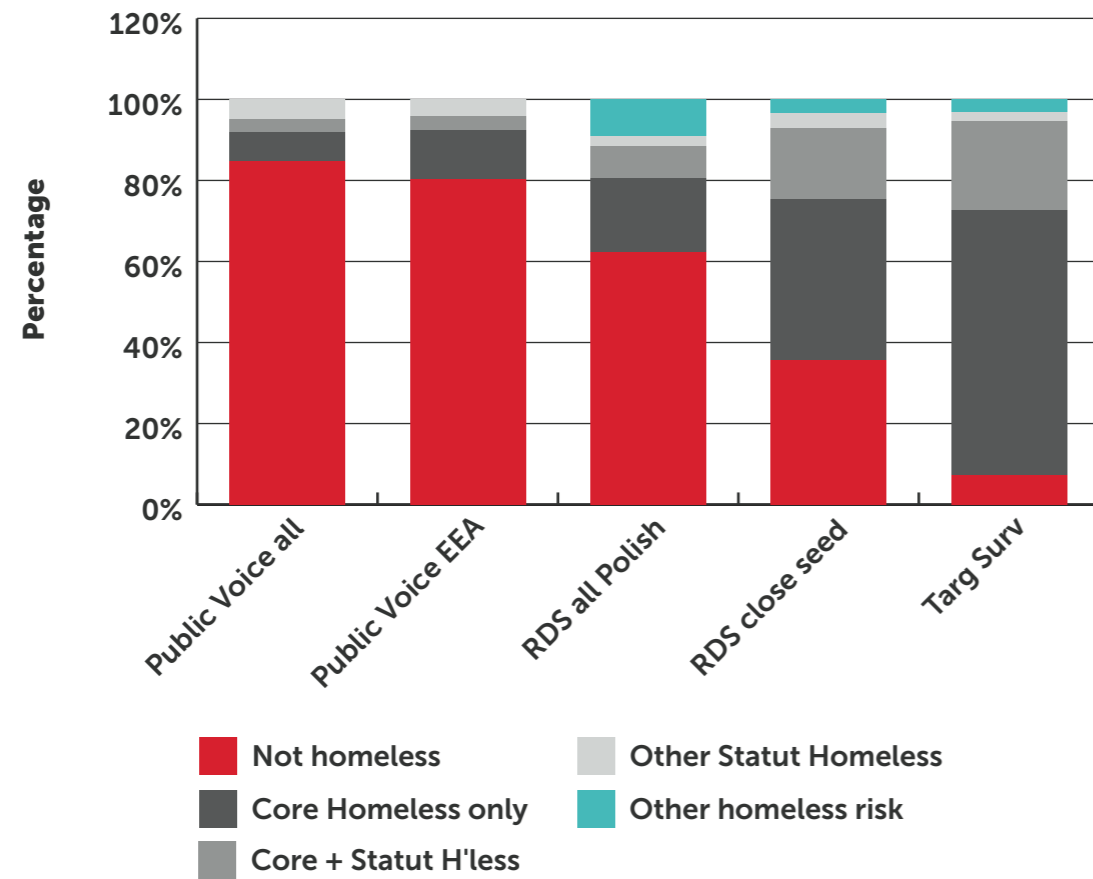
Sources; Kantar *Public Voice* representative survey of UK adults in private households in 2021; RDS survey of Polish citizens in social networks of those using support service in Luton, 2020-21; Targeted survey of EEA citizens experiencing housing difficulties in seven GB localities, 2020-21.
Note: in Public Voice survey 'other homeless risk' are not separately identified, and sit within 'Not homeless' category.

and the Eastern part of the country including the East Midlands. This in turn reflects geographical proximity, labour market opportunities, including in sectors like agriculture as well as hospitality and other services, and (in the case of London) housing market pressure.

Figure 4.7 shows the relative magnitude of the absolute numbers involved. In no region are EEA citizens more than a smallish minority of all core homeless, except perhaps in London where they constitute around a fifth of the total.

The statutory homeless data available in England from the H-CLIC system – although it will understate the full extent of core homelessness because of the ineligibility of significant numbers of EEA citizens for homeless assistance from local authorities – nevertheless does provide a much more detailed mapping of concentrations of EEA citizens experiencing homeless. This information informed our choice of case study areas as locations for our surveys. It also brings out the significant Eastward pattern in the areas with more significant numbers. The share of homeless applicants

Figure 4.6: Core homelessness rates for EEA citizens and all households by broad region and country, percent of households in 2019/20

Legend:
- EEA
- All

Sources: estimated from core homelessness estimates in Fitzpatrick et al (2021 and forthcoming), Destitution in the UK 2019 survey, English Housing Survey, Scottish Housing Survey, Labour Force Survey and HCLIC case data in England

Figure 4.7: Core homelessness numbers for EEA citizens and other households by broad region and country, households in 2019/20

Legend:
- EEA
- UK & Other
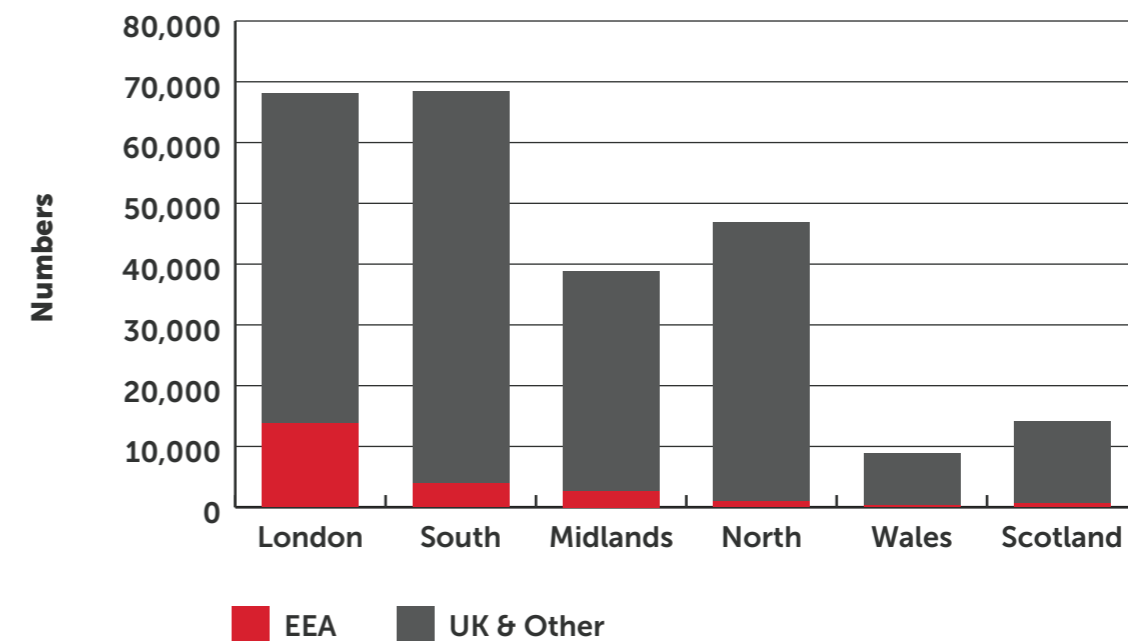
Sources: as Figure 4.6

with an EEA background varies widely across the regions, from 1.3% in the North East to 6.2% in the East of England and 10.9% in London, a consistent story. This is further confirmed by the Rough Sleeper count /estimates which show the shares of EEA among rough sleepers by region rising from 3% in the North East to 21% in the East Midlands, 27% in the East of England and 42% in London. CHAIN for London in 2019-20 gives the EEA share as 36%. The regional skew appears to be greater with the most extreme form of core homelessness. It seemed possible that this skew might have been further exacerbated during the Covid emergency, but the 2020/21 CHAIN data actually indicates a fall in the number and share of EEA cases from 36.2% to 29.0%. This may tie in with some evidence of return migration at the beginning of the pandemic. In a health-related survey of people experiencing homelessness accommodated in special 'Everyone In' hotel accommodation in London in autumn, 33% of residents were from the EEA.[21]

To inform its work across the different countries of Great Britain, Crisis is interested in how the estimated number of EEA citizens experiencing homelessness is likely to have changed over the period of the Covid pandemic. Table 4.2 below presents estimates of the approximate scale of these numbers, based on the limited information available. This takes account of the country-specific estimates and projections of core homeless by homeless category over the relevant years (FYs 2019, 2020, 2021), the Table 4.1 evidence on the relative shares of EEA citizens in each category, and the country-specific trends in core homeless by category allowing for special measures taken in response to Covid. It also takes account of the fragmentary evidence

from CHAIN and H-CLIC (2020/21 returns vs 2019/20) on the relative reduction in EEA homeless numbers.

4.5 Socio-demographic profiles of EEA citizens experiencing homelessness

In this section we draw on our two specific surveys of EEA citizens at risk of or experiencing housing difficulties, as well as other informative data sets, to provide a socio-demographic profile of these groups.

Figure 4.8 looks at the gender profile of respondents in the two primary surveys carried out for this study, the RDS survey of Polish adults in Luton and the Targeted Surveys of EEA citizens experiencing housing difficulties in seven localities across Great Britain. The first block shows the average share in both surveys of those experiencing rough sleeping in the last two years. The next blocks refer to respondents who were core homeless within the last two years, combining the two surveys, while the third and fourth blocks refer to all respondents in the two surveys. The final block gives a national benchmark based on all working age adults across UK in 2020 Q1 who were born in new EEA (EU8+EU2) countries.

This figure is consistent with other evidence in showing that a high proportion of rough sleeping in the EEA population (three quarters) is experienced by males. It shows generally that the Targeted survey (which is more dominated by people experiencing housing difficulties) was more predominantly male, whereas the RDS survey actually had a majority of female respondents.[22] However, in both surveys, males had a higher propensity to report recent core homeless experiences, so that it is clear a majority of core homeless adults were male. In both surveys,

21   Fuller reference for CHRISP study.
22   Speculating slightly, the network sampling approach may generate a larger response from people with more extensive networks, which may impart a bias towards females. This may be corrected through RDS specific weighting procedures, which has now been applied.

Table 4.2: Estimated numbers of core homeless EEA citizens by homeless category and country across Great Britain through Covid period, 2019-21

EEA estimates of core homelessness							
Great Britain	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**England**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Rough sleeping	2,490	1,300	3,190	Rough sleeping	2,400	1,300	3,100
Unconventional accommodation	1,170	1,060	1,020	Unconventional accommodation	1,130	1,000	980
Hostels	4,590	4,460	5,000	Hostels	4,390	4,200	4,780
Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation	1,340	1,040	800	Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation	1,300	1,000	750
Sofa Surfing	12,940	9,840	10,570	Sofa Surfing	12,430	9,500	10,160
Total	22,530	17,700	20,580	Total	21,650	17,000	19,770
Scotland	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**Wales**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Rough sleeping	60	25	40	Rough sleeping	20	5	15
Unconventional accommodation	25	20	25	Unconventional accommodation	10	10	10
Hostels	150	150	160	Hostels	60	70	60
Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation	30	30	40	Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation	10	15	15
Sofa Surfing	340	250	270	Sofa Surfing	170	110	140
Total	605	475	535	Total	270	210	240

Figure 4.8: Gender of recently rough sleeping or core homeless and all respondents in RDS and Targeted Surveys with national population benchmark

Male   Female   Transgender
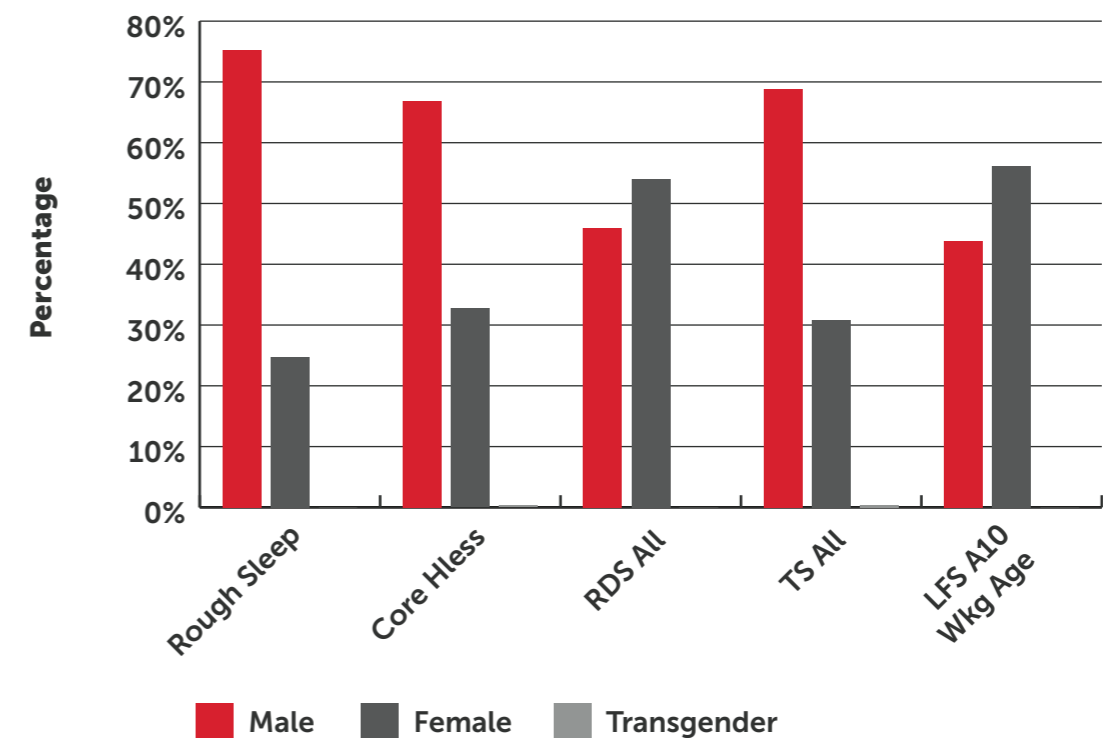
female respondents were more likely to be in the categories of other statutory and other homeless risk, as well as the not homeless category. In the destitution survey, core homeless cases from new EU countries were predominantly male, while a higher proportion of those from old EU countries were female. The final set of bars in the chart show that the benchmark working age population from new EU (A10) countries was in fact majority female.

Reviewing other surveys, there is evidence that more generally across UK homelessness risks for female EEA citizens may be as high as or higher than for males. For example, in the 2019 Destitution survey females were 40.5% of all respondents (users of crisis services) while constituting 42.4% of those who were core homeless. In the recent (2016-18) English Housing Survey, EEA citizens[23] showed higher risks than the rest of the population of experiencing sofa surfing, having experienced homelessness or applied to council as homeless in recent years (by 2.1, 1.2 or 2.6 times); within this EEA group, females had higher rates than the group as a whole (by 1.4, 1.5 and 1.5 times). However, these household survey data are likely to under-represent core homelessness focused on hostels or rough sleeping.

Figure 4.9 looks at the age profile of respondents in these surveys. The RDS had a more even spread across the age groups up to 54, while the Targeted Surveys included fewer people in the younger age group (under 35) and more in the 35-44 and 55-64 age groups, while neither survey captured many (or the case of RDS, any) over 65s. The core homeless group were somewhat more concentrated in the age groups 35-54, with rather less young adults (under 25), when compared with the overall populations surveyed or the national benchmark for working age A10 population.

Recent rough sleepers appear to have a similar age profile to the core homeless group as a whole, except for a rather higher share of under-25s and less over-55s. Similar patterns were found in the Destitution survey, apart from a strong presence of young adults (under 25) in the group from old EU countries.

Figure 4.10 shows the household type profile of these sample groups at the time of the survey in a similar fashion. Both surveys captured a high proportion of single person households and of multi-adult groups, with an overrepresentation of lone parent families and a strong underrepresentation of couples and couple families, although couples without children were quite well represented in the RDS. The recently core homeless groups were, perhaps inevitably, more likely to be in multi-adult households or single person households, and similar patterns were found in the Destitution survey. A majority of those who had been rough sleepers in the last two years were in single person households at the time of the survey, with most of the remainder in multi-adult groupings, and a few in couples.

Given the nature of these samples, the current housing situation of respondents to these surveys is expected to be pretty diverse, as is brought out in Figure 4.11. Particularly for those experiencing rough sleeping or core homelessness in the last two years, but also to varying degrees in the special survey samples as a whole, a majority of cases did not have their own self-contained home, but reported a range of situations including rough sleeping, sharing a house or flat/staying with relatives or friends, being in a temporary house/flat provided by a local authority or support agency, or staying in a hostel/shelter/refuge/B&B. For both former rough sleepers and core homeless more widely,

Figure 4.9: Age profile of recently rough sleeping or core homeless and all respondents in RDS and Targeted Surveys, with national population benchmark
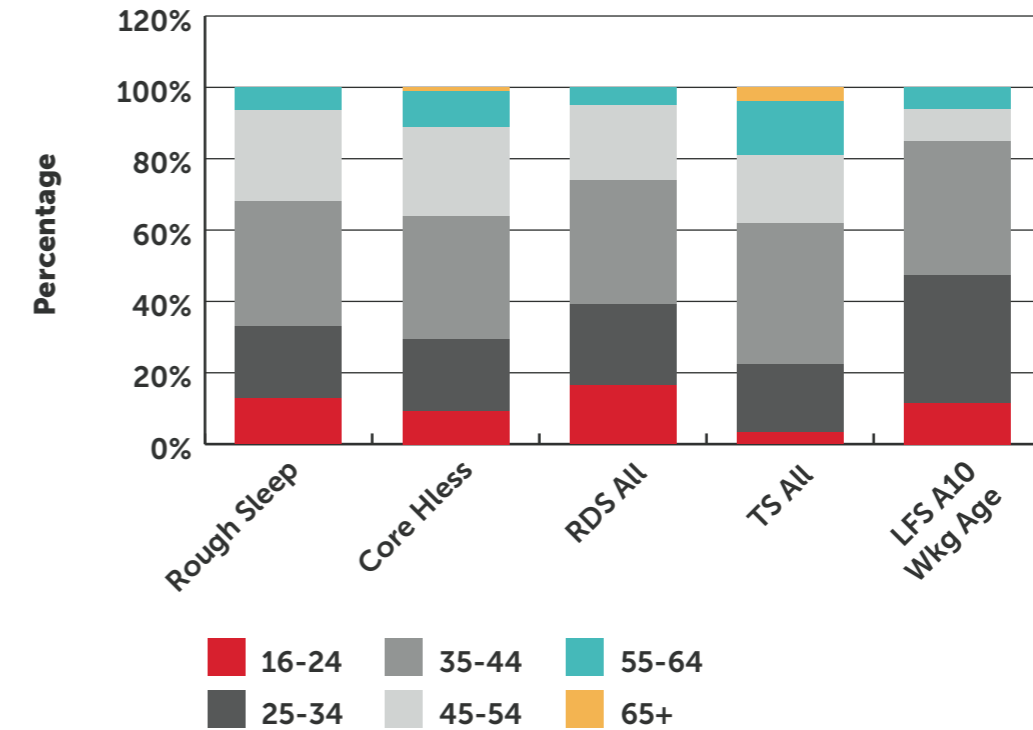
Figure 4.10: Household type profile of recently rough sleeping or core homeless and all respondents in RDS and Targeted Surveys, with national population benchmark

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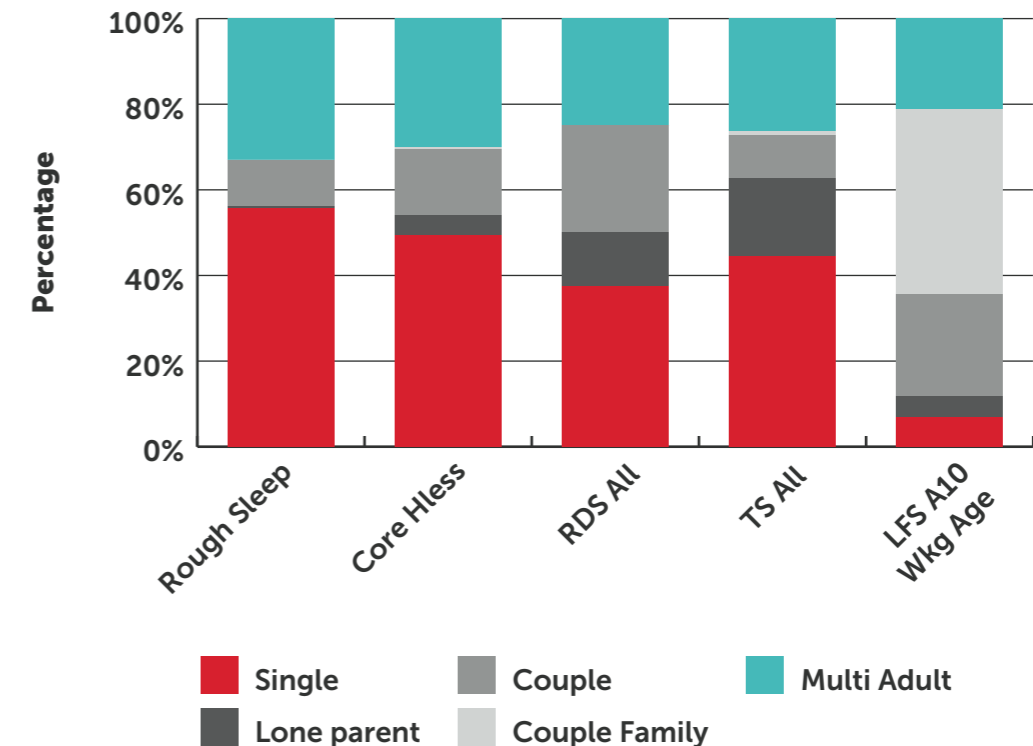
23　EEA may be reasonably proxied by 'white migrants', based on analysis of LFS data

Figure 4.11: Current housing situation profile of recently rough sleeping or core homeless and all respondents in RDS and Targeted Surveys

Figure 4.12: Housing tenure profile of recently core homeless and all respondents in RDS and Targeted Surveys, with a national population benchmark
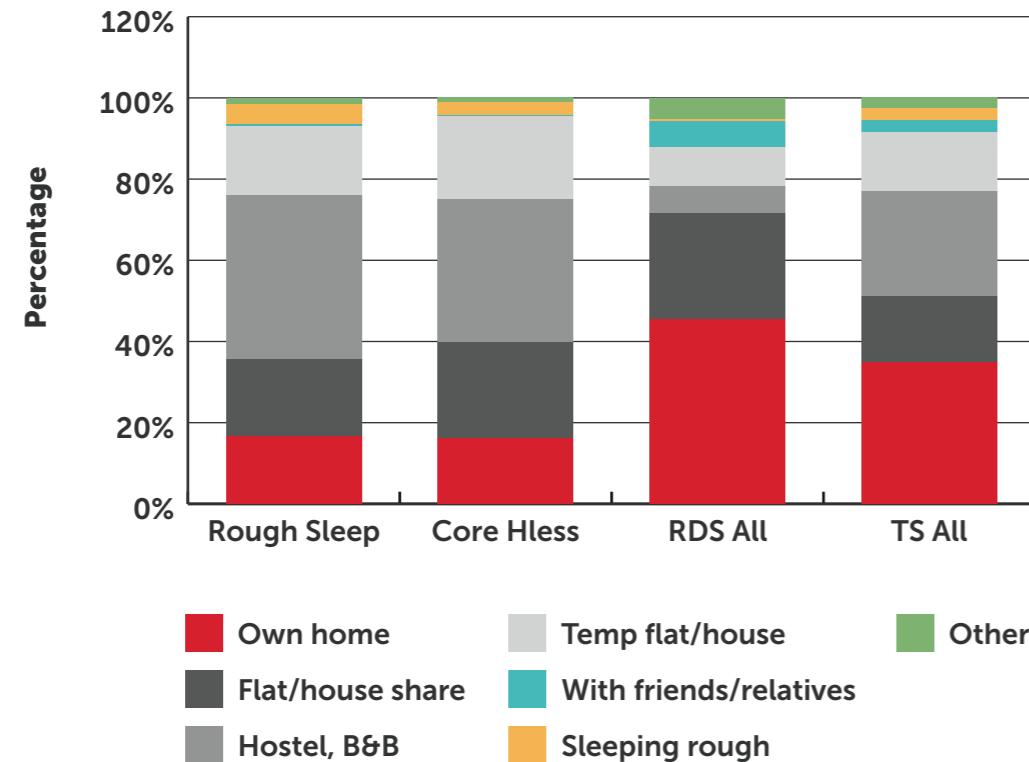
the most common form of current accommodation was hostel, B&B, and similar, reflecting other evidence that shows people are likely to go in and out of different types of homelessness once they have experienced one. This is followed by sharing with other households and being in a temporary house/flat provided by a local authority or other support organisation. Comparing results with the Destitution survey, there were similar proportions in several categories but the Destitution data showed higher levels of rough sleeping and lower levels of temporary flat/house and of sharing a flat or house/with friends relatives.

Figure 4.12 complements this by looking at the current housing tenure profile of these two sample populations, distinguishing again those with recent experience of core homelessness. Inevitably high proportions are classified as 'not a private householder', apart from in the case of the overall RDS sample. Within

the RDS, the dominant current tenure was private renting. However, the targeted surveys appear to include a higher representation of social renting. The national population benchmark for A10 working age population shows a strong dominance of private renting, accounting for a majority, and underlining the greater vulnerability of this population to issues of tenure insecurity and unaffordable rents. Nevertheless, significant numbers have achieved home ownership or social renting status.

4.6 Indicators of economic and other disadvantages
The employment situation of EEA citizens in Britain is a critical factor in their general welfare but also in relation to their ability to avoid homelessness. This reflects their overwhelming concentration in the working age group and, in many cases, limitations on their access to welfare benefits or housing support if they are not working. Figure 4.13 shows
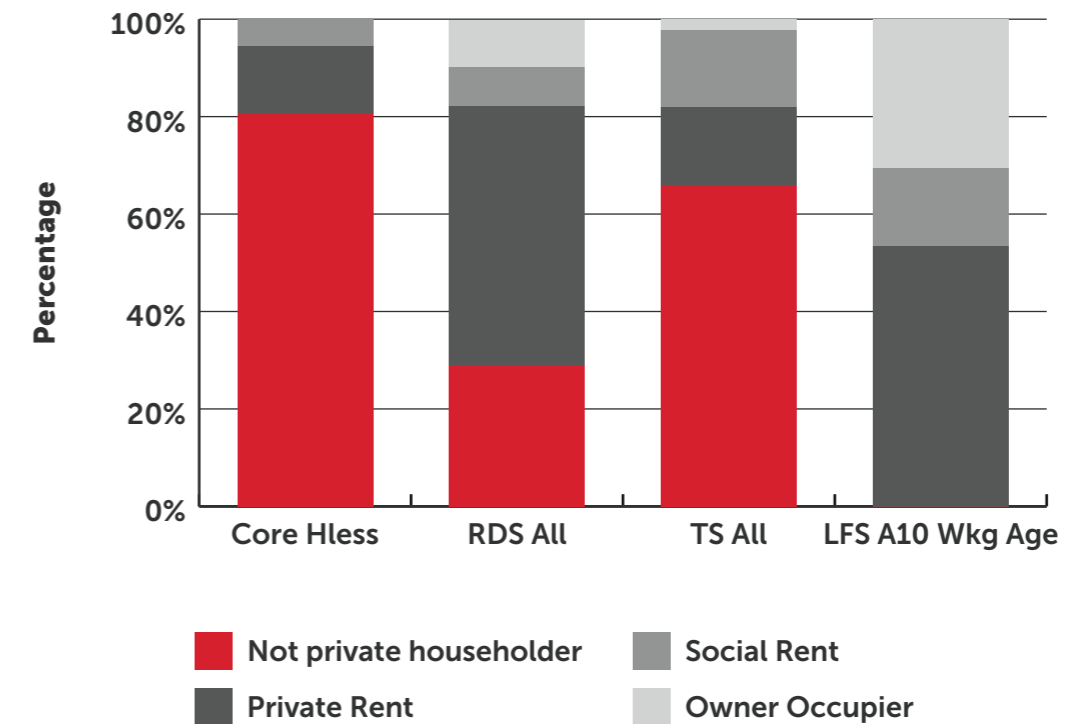
the 'normal' (pre-Covid) employment status of respondents in our two surveys.

The employment picture for those experiencing rough sleeping or core homelessness recently is very adverse in both cases, with similar patterns in both surveys, which again are combined here. 32% of people recently rough sleeping and 25% of core homeless were unemployed, while the proportions working were 30% and 33%.[24] 19% and 18% respectively were unable to work owing to disability or illness, while significant proportions (10-12%) were engaged in education or training. These patterns are very different from the overall new EU

(A10) working age population, where 81% are working, 5% unemployed, and very few unable to work through disability. The employment profile of our survey samples as a whole are in both cases rather skewed towards low employment and high unemployment rates, although self-employment is noticeably more common.[25] This evidence underlines that for the EEA group experiencing homelessness, including rough sleeping, work is very important and interruptions to it are likely to be a significant factor in their homelessness.

As expected, different patterns applied during the Covid pandemic, with even higher proportions of the

24 This employment profile is for their 'normal' situation, immediately pre-Covid (March 2020) if different from their situation at the date of survey.
25 This finding is particularly important in the case of the RDS survey, which appears to have quite a similar demographic profile to the national or regional benchmark for A8/A10 EEA working age, but turns out to have a significantly worse economic and employment profile (particularly after applying the special RDS weighting scheme). This may partially reflect a relatively poor profile for Poles living in Luton, but also almost certainly reflects the fact that, due to Covid restrictions, the survey was seeded from a support organisation for those experiencing housing and other material difficulties, and not from wider community organisations.

Figure 4.13: Normal employment status of recently rough sleeping or core homeless and all respondents in RDS and Targeted Surveys (pre-Covid), with national population benchmark

Figure 4.14: Normal equivalised income bands of recently rough sleeping or core homeless and all respondents in RDS and Targeted Surveys (pre-Covid)
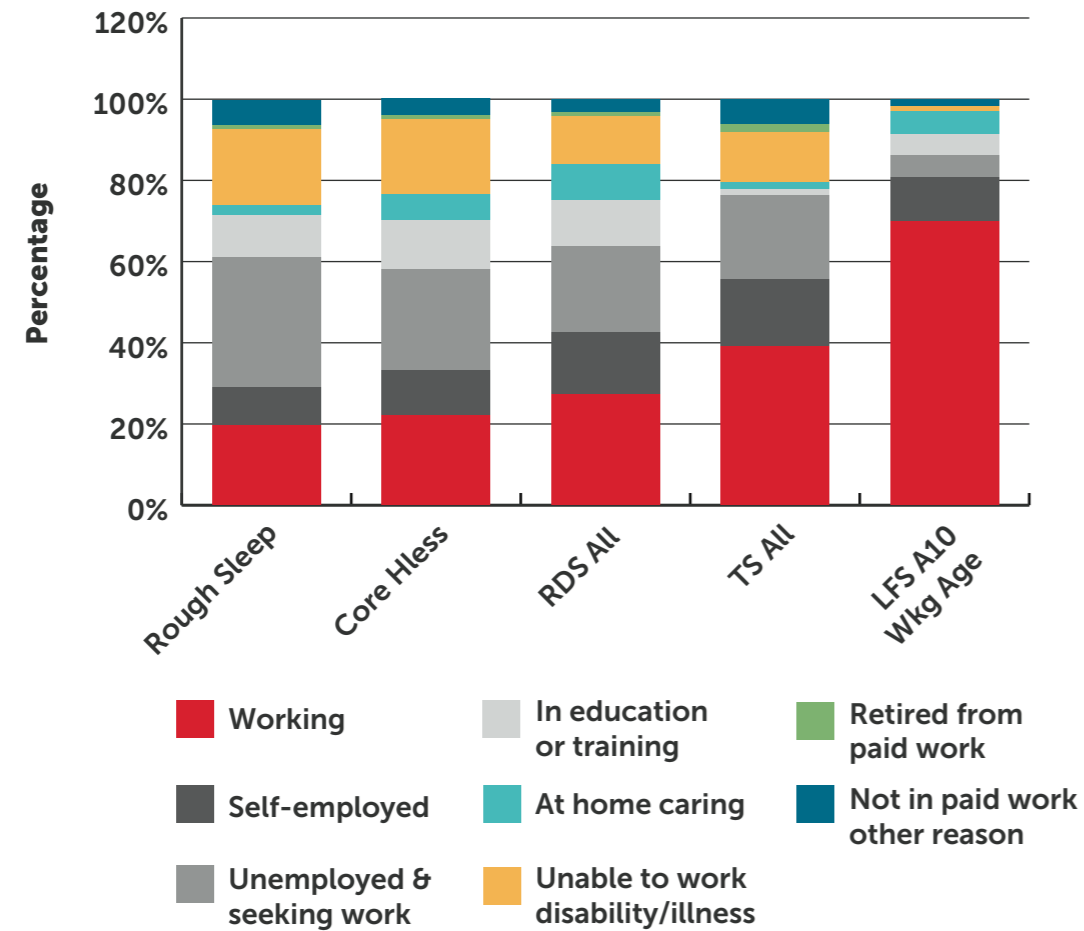
survey sample unemployed at the time of the survey. These proportions rose to 52%/48% for core homeless and 54% for recent rough sleepers. This suggests that the lockdown had a disproportionate impact on EEA citizens and plays a significant role in their housing difficulties including rough sleeping.

Associated with these patterns of employment are levels of income which are often, for these groups, exceptionally low or non-existent, as is shown in Figure 4.14. This looks at incomes normally received, referring to the period immediately before Covid where this was different from the position at the time of interview.[26]

Even in the more mainstream general RDS sample 22% reported no income, 18% destitution level income, and another 15% severe poverty level, with only 12% above the national median. For core homeless, using both surveys, nearly half had no income, with only 13% above the standard poverty line. For recent rough sleepers across the two surveys 59% had zero income before Covid while another 13% were destitute or severely poor, with only 11% above the poverty line. This suggests that loss or lack of income, from work or benefits, has been a critical factor in the situation of EEA citizens experiencing rough sleeping or wider forms of core homelessness.

We collected information on a range of state benefits received currently in both surveys. Figure 4.15 seeks to focus on the increasingly key benefit of Universal Credit, plus any of the other income-related benefits received, versus no benefits currently received; and on households whose reported income was clearly inadequate (i.e. severe poverty level or worse), particularly those reporting core homelessness or rough sleeping in the last two years.

This shows that nearly half (45%) of recent rough sleepers and over half of recent core homeless (51%) who were on clearly inadequate income were not receiving any benefits. Universal Credit was important for these groups, with virtually all of the remainder receiving this at the time of the survey (52% and 44%), while 12-16% were receiving other income-related benefits. For all of those on inadequate income, whether or not experiencing homelessness, 58% were receiving no benefit income, with UC reaching

only 23% and other benefits a similar proportion. This evidence suggests that lack of effective access to benefits, whether through formal rules excluding them or through problems of understanding and successfully navigating the system, is a major factor in both the homelessness (including rough sleeping) and the severe poverty experienced by EEA citizens.

The EEA citizens represented in our surveys, who come from a population which normally has a fairly high level of economic activity (see Figure 4.13, last column), are often employed in relatively menial occupations, including 'manual work' (39%), sales and service (13%), with low proportions in professional work (5%). This is despite their often having higher or intermediate educational qualifications, as shown in Figure 4.16 (and age left full time education shows a similar picture). This will be reflected in income levels but also job security and other aspects of work/contractual conditions. 65-72%

26   It should be noted that there was a high level of non-response to the income question in the Targeted Surveys, owing to the difficult circumstances of the interview.

Figure 4.15: Whether receiving any benefits, Universal Credit or other income-related benefits by recent rough sleeping or core homeless status and all respondents by whether income 'adequate', EEA citizens in RDS and Targeted Surveys combined
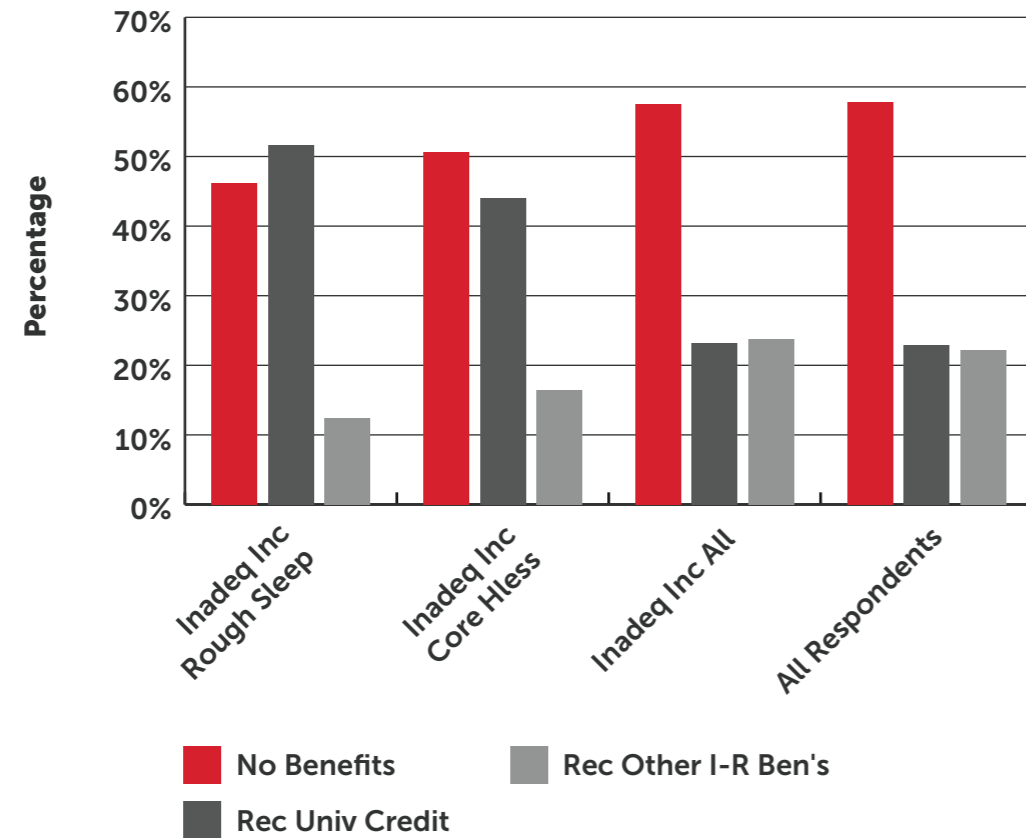
Note: 'adequate income' defined as equivalised income above level of 'severe poverty', cases with missing income excluded (mainly affects Targeted Survey).

reported one or more of four common adverse conditions in their workplace (no contract, abusive employer, non-union, cash in hand payment).

In view of the evidence on the impact on work of the Covid lockdown for the EEA population covered by our surveys, we would expect this to feature prominently as one recent adverse event affecting them over the last year. However, as shown in Figure 4.17, it was also very common for financial difficulties, health and relationship problems to be mentioned, along with evictions. In general, the TS respondents (who all had some degree of housing difficulty)

tended to report these adversities much more frequently than the RDS respondents as a whole, but for both samples, where core homelessness had been experienced in the last two years, the level of adversities was generally high in both surveys.

For recent rough sleepers (combining surveys), the most frequent adversities were job loss (51%) and financial difficulties (49%), followed by family breakdown (40%), relationship and health problems. For the wider core homeless group, job loss was equally common (52%), followed by relationship breakdown (42%), health problem (28%) and financial difficulty (27%).

Figure 4.16: Highest educational qualifications of recently rough sleeping or core homeless and all respondents in RDS and Targeted Surveys, with national benchmark
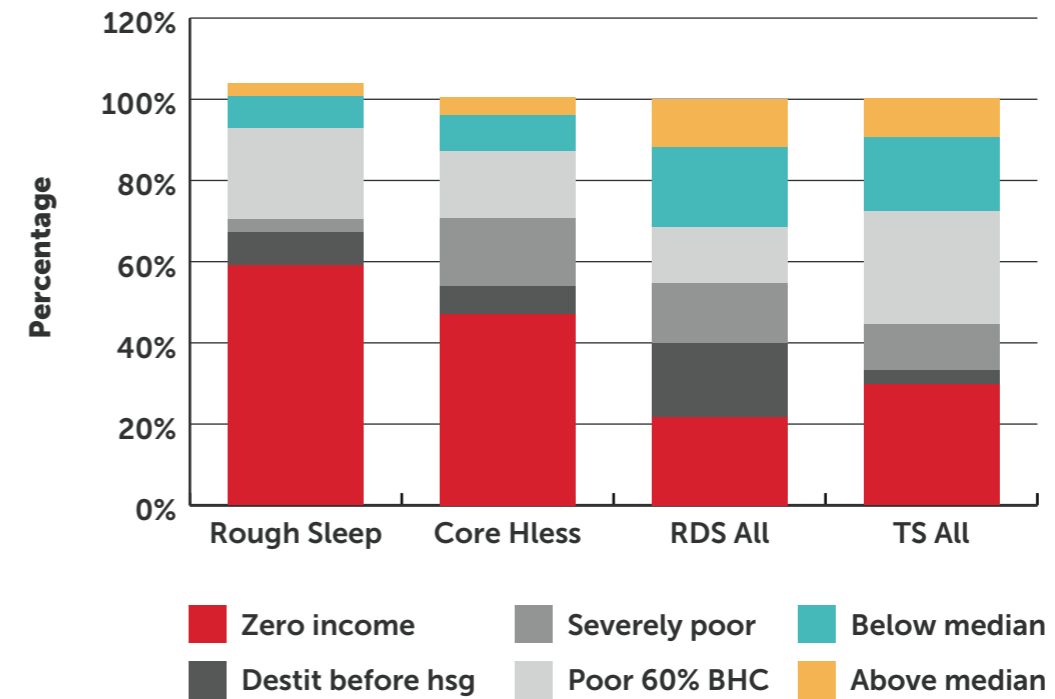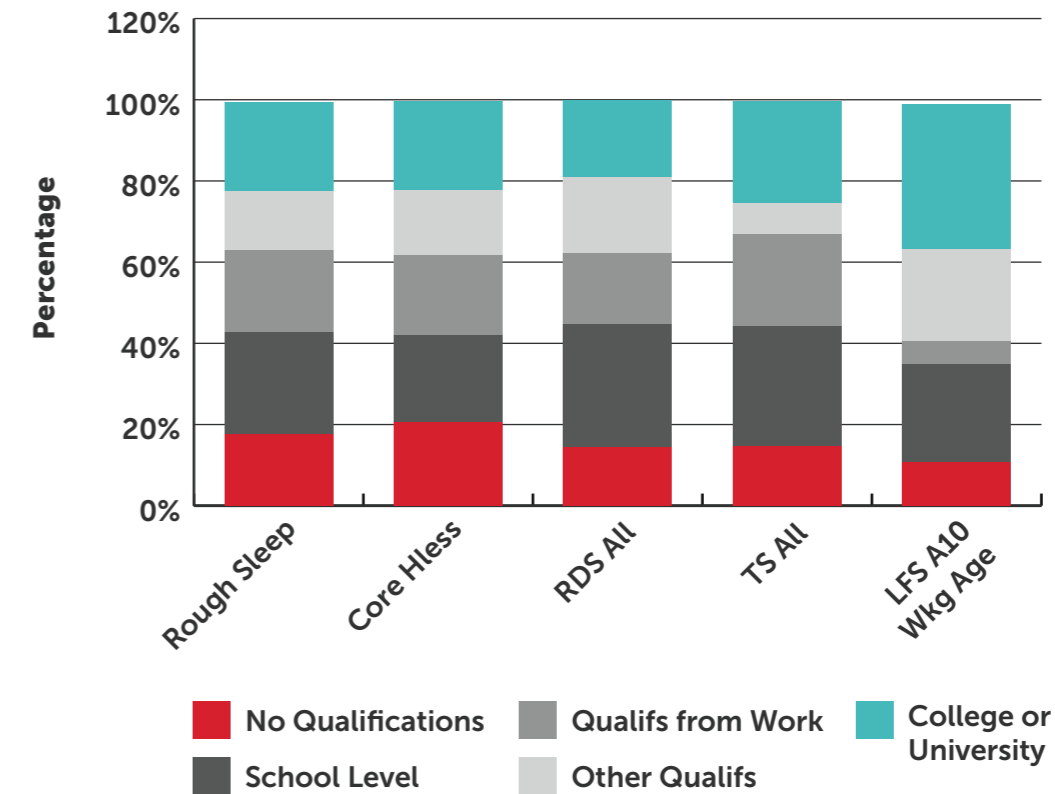

Figure 4.17: Adverse events affecting recently rough sleeping or core homeless and all respondents in RDS and Targeted Surveys over last year (or since arriving in UK if more recent, percent)
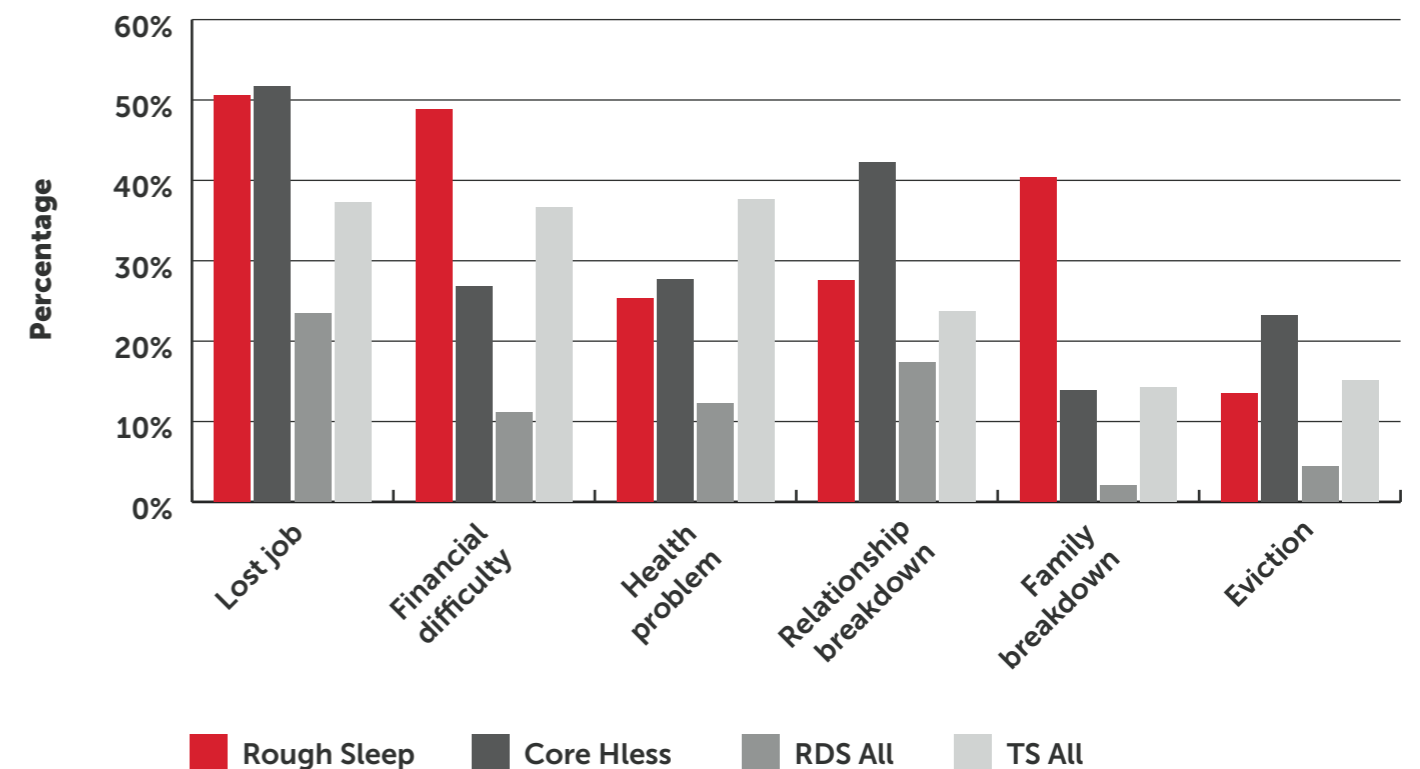
Figure 4.18: Severe and multiple disadvantage reported by recently rough sleeping or core homeless and all respondents in RDS and Targeted Surveys

No or 1 issue ■ 2 or more issues
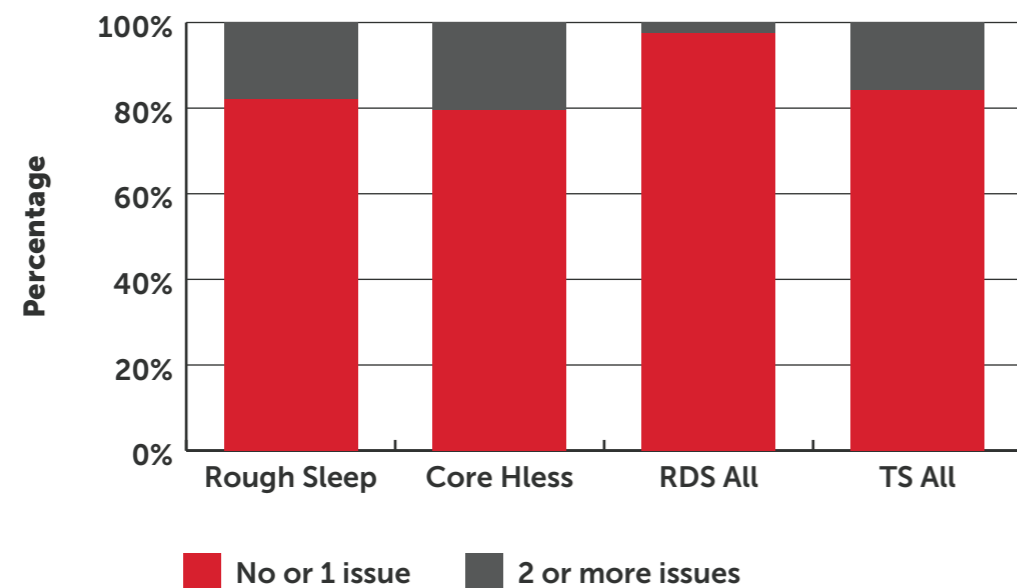
Note: Severe and multiple disadvantage (SMD) indicated by experiencing two or more of homelessness, substance misuse, mental ill-health or domestic violence/abuse in last year.
RDS currently unweighted

Exploratory statistical modelling reported below suggests that a number of these factors are associated with core homelessness, in both datasets.

Some of these adverse experiences are more likely to be suffered by men, while others are more associated with women, according to our surveys and also the Destitution survey (looking just at EEA citizens). In the former category are job loss, serious financial difficulties, eviction, substance misuse and offending. In the latter category, where women are very much more likely to suffer, the standout example is domestic violence/abuse.

If we turn to more serious disadvantages which may affect people experiencing homelessness , we can see the prevalence of one key indicator within the surveys, as in Figure 4.18. This highlights respondents who report two or more of the following four issues in the last

year: homelessness; substance misuse (alcohol or drugs); mental ill-health; or domestic violence or abuse (DVA). It can be seen that around one in five rough sleepers or core homeless reported this level of 'severe and multiple disadvantage' (SMD) problems within our surveys, with a slightly higher prevalence in the Targeted Survey. The prevalence was low in the general RDS sample but still quite high in the Targeted Survey as a whole. Women were less likely to experience these problems, apart from DVA, according to the Targeted Survey and also the Destitution survey.

A cautionary note on this finding, however, is that a similar analysis of the Destitution in the UK 2019 survey found a much higher proportion of SMD cases among core homeless EU migrants, at around 60%. It is not clear why there is such a large discrepancy here. One factor may be an actual change in the profile of EEA homeless

Figure 4.19: Period when first arrived in UK by recently rough sleeping or core homeless and all respondents in RDS and Targeted Surveys

■ Not answered ■ 2004 to 2016
■ Pre-2004 ■ 2017 and later
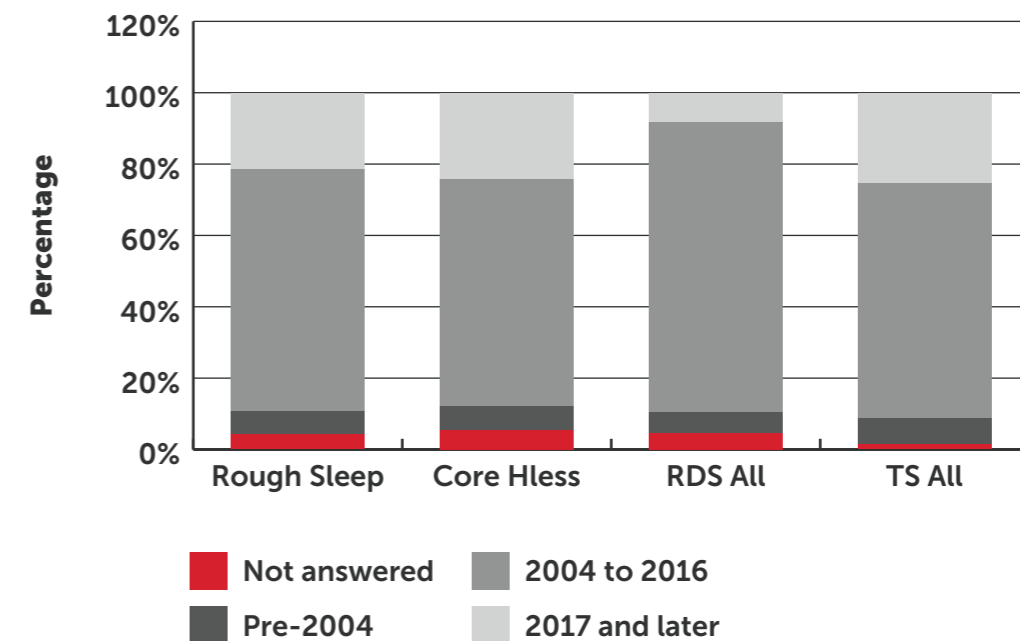
population during the Covid period, partly reflected in data associated with the Everyone In initiative. The proportion of EEA homeless surveyed in hotels in London in late 2020 in relation to health issues showed relatively low proportions with such complex needs, although it should be acknowledged that these can be subject to under-reporting.

4.7 Citizenship and settlement status
It appears that the risks of experiencing housing difficulties and/or core homelessness are somewhat related to how long EEA citizens have been living in the UK. Figure 4.19 shows the broad pattern in terms of when respondents first arrived in UK across our two surveys. The survey which is targeted on people experiencing housing difficulties shows a higher proportion having arrived since 2016, while this is further increased among those who have experienced core homelessness including rough sleeping recently. There is a similar pattern albeit at a lower level in the RDS sample.

Nevertheless, taking both surveys together, it should be emphasized that a large majority of rough sleepers and others experiencing core homeless arrived in the UK in the years up to 2016.

Most EEA citizens came to UK for work reasons. According to the RDS, around half came alone, a quarter with a partner, and about one-fifth with children or other dependents; these proportions do not vary greatly with the categories of homelessness experienced. In the TS sample, two-thirds came alone, and this is associated somewhat with core homelessness experience.

Of critical importance for the ability of EEA citizens to remain in the UK, and in particular to gaining rights to access benefits, housing and formal work, is the step of gaining Settled or Pre-settled status. At the time we conducted these two surveys, the deadline for applications was only around three to six months ahead. Figure 4.20 summarises the status

Figure 4.20: Situation with application for settled status by recently rough sleeping or core homeless and all respondents in RDS and Targeted Surveys (3-6 months before deadline)

Figure 4.21: Projection of core homelessness in England by category to 2041 allowing for Covid effects (number)

Source: Fitzpatrick et al (2021) *The Homeless Monitor: England 2021*, Figure 6.2

of respondents at the time they undertook the survey.

Figure 4.20 reveals quite a concerning picture in terms of readiness for the potential change in status which was to come in at the beginning of July 2021. Although 71% of the overall targeted sample had obtained settled or pre-settled status by that stage, 16% were still waiting and 13% had not applied or were in an uncertain position. For the RDS sample (weighted) the picture was significantly less favourable, with only 47% settled or pre-settled, 7% waiting, 14% not yet applied, 4% rejected, and 27% in some other uncertain position.

Taking both surveys together, both those who had experienced rough sleeping in the last two years and those who had experienced core homelessness were in a similar adverse position to that for the RDS overall, with 46-47% settled/pre-settled, 10-11% waiting, 5-6% rejected, 17% not

yet applied and 18-20% other or don't know.

In spite of this, most of the households responding in both of these surveys expected or wanted to remain in the UK. In the RDS survey only 14% were 'quite likely' to leave, and 14% uncertain, with only 12% of those who had experienced core homelessness saying they were likely to leave (and 9% uncertain). In the Targeted Survey sample only 6% said they were quite likely to leave, although levels of uncertainty were higher.

4.8 Projections and policies
Future projections of core homelessness
An important part of the motivation for developing the concept and measurement of core homelessness was to enable the development of a capacity to make consistent estimates and forward projections of homelessness for different parts of the UK. The particular value of projections

is that they enable estimates to be made of the impact of different policies and other external factors on homelessness levels. This is of value in gearing up services to respond, but more especially as a basis for assessing the impacts of policy changes in terms of reducing homelessness levels. In order to achieve this, it has been necessary to develop a set of models capable of making such conditional forecasts of the different elements of core homelessness, as first exemplified in Bramley (2017) and more recently upgraded and published as part of the *Homelessness Monitor: England 2021* (Fitzpatrick et al 2021, ch.6).[27] Related model-based projections are in preparation covering Scotland and Wales as well. These models

take account of the range of factors identified in Chapter Three as potential causes or drivers of homelessness.

Figure 4.18 shows the key forward projection of core homelessness in England given no change in policies. This indicates growth in numbers in the recent period, a reduction resulting from Covid and associated special measures in 2020, a sharp increase thereafter, and then gradual growth into the longer term. Variants of this suggest the growth could be higher. It may reasonably be assumed that EEA citizens, who are already substantially overrepresented in core homelessness, would experience a similar pattern of increasing numbers affected.

27 Fuller details of the core homelessness estimates and projections, including on the models used to predict future levels of core homelessness and related housing market variables, are given in the associated technical report, Bramley, G 2021, Research on core homelessness and homeless projections: Technical report on new baseline estimates and scenario projections. Heriot-Watt University https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244632/core_homelessness_projections_2020_technical_report.pdf

Figure 4.22: Summary of impacts on core homelessness in England of policies considered individually by selected year, ranked by size of impact by 2041 (percent of with-Covid baseline forecast)

Rough Sleeping
Other Unconventional
Hostels
Bad TA
Sofa Surfing
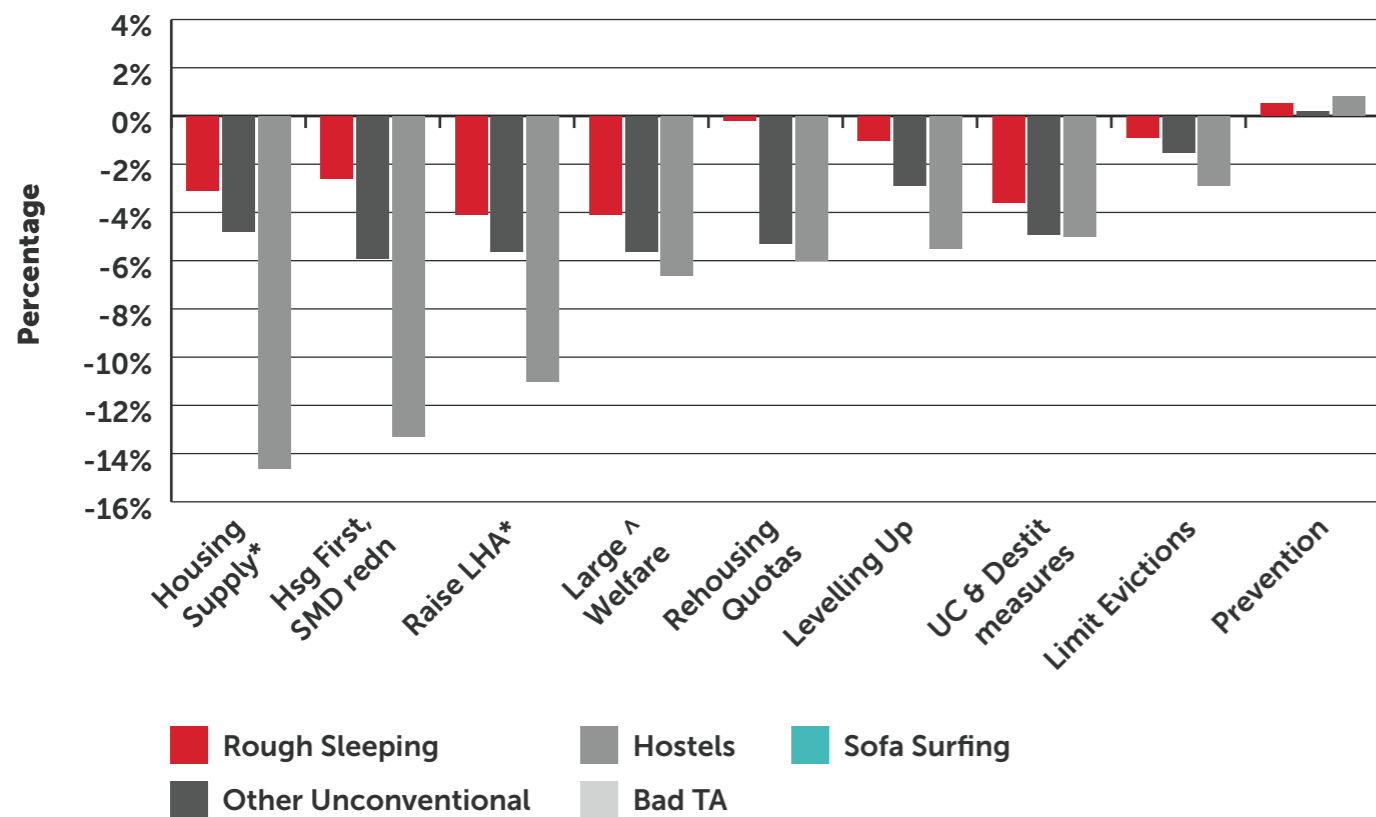
Source: Figure 4.22 is same as Figure 6.6 in Fitzpatrick et al (2021) (England monitor 2021)

Figure 4.19 provides a summary of the model results in terms of which policies might have the greater impact on reducing core homelessness in the medium and longer term. It shows that in the longer term, in England, housing supply, 'Housing First', the level of the Local Housing Allowance and other key welfare benefit parameters, rehousing quotas for core homeless households, and regional development to achieve 'levelling up', would all make significant contributions in the longer term. In the short to medium term, LHA, welfare measures and rehousing quotas would make a more substantial early impact. However, to the extent that significant numbers of EEA citizens experiencing homelessness

remain outside the scope of eligibility for UK welfare benefits or housing support, then this group would not stand to benefit very much from this package.

Implications of statistical models
In the literature review (Chapter Three) some reference is made to research evidence on the drivers and risk factors involved in explaining and predicting homelessness. These factors are reflected in the statistical models developed to predict elements of core homelessness underpinning the projections just reviewed. It is possible to look at some of the models fitted to different data sources in order to tease out examples of where EEA status

or related factors appears to play a specific role in explaining variations in homelessness.

Using the Destitution survey data, we found a significantly positive effect of being born in the New EU (Odds ratio[28], OR=1.77, significance p=0.003) on core homelessness overall in the weekly weighted data, (although this was negative and not statistically significant (p=0.418) in the annual weighted data. This model also showed a significant negative effect associated with having completed an English language questionnaire (p=0.000, OR=0.56), and this effect was even stronger in the annual weighted data. (OR=0.13). Using the same dataset, we developed a similar model for rough sleeping (current or in last month). Being born in the New EU was positive and significant (p=0.000) in both weekly weighted (and annual weighted models. The odds ratios in these two models were 2.77 and 3.24. Subsequently analysis of this dataset was enhanced by joining it to an extract from the UKHLS ('Understanding Society') data (see below).

In the Kantar 'Public Voice' data we were able to fit models to retrospective data on having ever experienced each of three specific types of core homelessness, or any of these. The 'any core homeless' model (P44) showed a significant positive effect for any migrant arriving in last 10 years (p=0.01, OR=1.92). This variable also featured as significantly positive in the models for emergency/ temporary accommodation (p=0.022, OR=2.35) and sofa surfing (p=0.001, OR=2.94). Also using this data we developed a model for ever stayed in unconventional accommodation; this showed a positive but not statistically significant effect from

EEA status (p=0.298, OR=2.30); it also showed very strong relationships with experiencing other forms of core homelessness.

The UKHLS model for sofa surfing shows the variable 'Born Overseas' to have a significant positive effect (p=0.000, OR=3.29). Note that this model is predicting a slightly wider group of concealed households within which sofa surfers (as usual resident members of household) are contained.

A composite model, formed by joining together cases with subsets of common variables from Destitution and UKHLS surveys, showed a significant positive effect of having been born overseas on rough sleeping, but the effect on overall core homelessness was weaker and not significant. Using English language in the surveys significantly reduced the risk of core homelessness, but seemed to have some positive association with rough sleeping. These results did not include anything significant relating to EEA citizens specifically, but Black ethnicity was significantly positively associated with core homelessness. It should be emphasized that these models include a wide range of other explanatory variables, and it may be that it is these other factors which explain any apparent bivariate association of EEA status and homelessness.

We can also report models tested in the RDS and Targeted Survey datasets created in this research, again seeking to predict the odds of experiencing core homelessness within these samples of EEA citizens. Factors which appear to *increase* the odds of core homelessness in the RDS sample include: eviction; poor job conditions; relationship or family breakdown; and

28   In logistic regression models such as this, the most commonly used measure of strength of association is the 'odds ratio' (OR), that is the ratio of the odds of the dependent variable, in this case experiencing core homelessness, if the particular factor (in this case, being born in New EU) does apply, compared with the odds of core homelessness for the rest of the population (not born in New EU). Odds are defined as p/(1-p) where p is probability. For low probability events, odds are similar to probabilities, but ,as probabilities rise, odds can take increasingly high values.

complex needs. Additional positive factors identified in the Targeted Survey sample include: recent arrival in UK; lost job recently; unemployment; and receiving no benefit income. Factors which appear to *reduce* the odds of core homelessness within these survey groups include: higher educational level; adequate (non-poverty) income; receiving other income-related benefits; and general health problems. Additional factors reducing core homelessness risk in the Targeted Survey included having higher work hours. Receiving Universal Credit (UC) had a significant positive effect in the Targeted Survey model, which focuses on people in more general housing difficulties. This perhaps highlights difficulties in first getting onto UC compounded by uncertain eligibility status.

4.8 Key points

Around 22,000 EEA national households were experiencing core homelessness in Great Britain at a point in time in the period preceding the Covid pandemic (2018-19). This was about 9.3% of the national total of core homelessness and indicates that the risk of an EEA household experiencing core homelessness was 1.7 times that for all households in Britain.

This is clearly a conservative estimate, owing to limitations in key data sources relating to survey responses, language and eligibility for public support, with only a minority of EEA homeless households currently applying to local authorities for assistance.

A tenth of these core homeless (2,335) experienced the most extreme form of it in terms of rough sleeping; EEA citizens are 2.7 times more likely than British citizens to experience rough sleeping. There are also relatively large numbers in hostels/refuges/shelters (c4,600), but the largest absolute number of core homeless EEA citizens were 'sofa surfing' (12,850).

Where EEA citizens used voluntary services providing support with housing or other material difficulties, they were more likely to be core homeless than other users, while being less likely to be classified as 'other statutory homeless'.

While core homelessness in general was quite concentrated in London, this was even more the case for EEA citizens in London, who had 1.7 times the overall London rate and 3.5 times the national rate of core homelessness. EEA rates of core homelessness were also relatively high in the Midlands (particularly the East Midlands) and East of England, while being relatively low in the Northern regions of England and in Scotland. However, in spite of their generally higher risk of homelessness, EEA citizens were generally a smallish minority of all core homeless, except in London where they constitute around a fifth.

EEA core homelessness was more experienced by males, and this was particularly true of rough sleeping. Such experiences were spread fairly widely across the age ranges up to but not beyond retirement age. Households with recent experience of core homelessness included a high proportion of single persons and of multi-adult groups, with an overrepresentation of lone parent families and a strong underrepresentation of couples and couple families.

For those EEA households experiencing core homelessness within the last two years, a majority did not did not have their own self-contained home, but were in a range of ongoing homeless or other sharing or temporary accommodation situations.

EEA households experiencing core homelessness had generally had relatively low employment rates pre-Covid, and suffered disproportionately from job loss through the pandemic,

with a majority unemployed at the time of our special surveys.

These EEA homeless households typically had exceptionally low or zero incomes, especially at the time of the survey but also quite often before Covid, with zero incomes particularly common for rough sleepers. Around half of recent rough sleepers and core homeless households with clearly inadequate incomes were receiving no state benefits.

EEA citizens tend in normal circumstances to have high economic activity rates but to be working in relatively menial occupations, even though they often have quite high levels of education and qualification. They also tend to report relatively adverse contractual and workplace conditions.

The EEA citizens in our surveys, especially those with housing difficulties, reported a range of adverse events over the previous year, notably job loss, financial difficulty and health problems, with relationship/family breakdown and eviction also quite common.

EEA citizens experiencing housing difficulties were somewhat more likely to have arrived since 2016, but most respondents in our survey had arrived before that date. Most came for work reasons, and a high proportion came alone, or just with a partner.

At a point 3-6 months before the deadline for registering under the EU Settlement Scheme, less than half of those surveyed who had experienced rough sleeping or core homelessness had obtained Settled or Pre-Settled status, and this was also true for the wider sample in one of our two surveys. The overwhelming majority wanted to stay in UK but some expressed uncertainty about whether this would prove to be possible.

Models used to predict and project core homelessness across England indicate that with a continuance of current policies, such homelessness is likely to increase. However, they also show that a range of policies could see significant reductions in core homelessness, including greater supply of social housing, rehousing quotas, 'Housing First', improved Local Housing Allowance levels and welfare changes, and regional development. However, some EEA citizens may not qualify under current rules to benefit from some of these measures.

Statistical models developed in this context, as well as in relation to the specific surveys undertaken in this study, find evidence of significant relationships between EU status or other related measures, including English language proficiency, and risks of core homelessness. Within the EEA groups surveyed for this study, higher homelessness risk was associated with insecurities in work or housing, family relationships, and health as well as complex needs, lower skills/qualifications, and lack of benefit income.

Chapter 5:

Qualitative evidence on the homelessness experiences and backgrounds of EEA citizens

The previous chapter explored the scale of homelessness of EEA citizens, estimating that around 22,000 EEA national households were homeless in Great Britain at a point in time in the period preceding the Covid pandemic (2018-19). In this chapter, we set out our research findings on the causes and experiences of homelessness and housing difficulties among EEA citizens. Our analysis draws on interviews with 28 EEA citizens who were experiencing or had recently experienced serious difficulties with their housing. We explore their demographics and housing circumstances, the different drivers of their homelessness and housing difficulties, the impacts of their housing situation, and their experiences of different forms of support. We also discuss their plans for the future and their suggestions for future policy and practice for addressing homelessness among EEA citizens.

Background of participants
We begin the chapter with an overview of the background of the people we spoke to and the reasons they gave for moving to the UK.

Our sample of participants for our qualitative interviews were recruited from the different case study areas covered by our research, including Fife / Aberdeen, Haringey, London Central and West, Newport and Manchester. The majority of participants (18 in total) lived in London, reflecting its concentration of homeless EEA citizens and our relative success in recruiting participants in the capital.

All of our interviewees came from Central and Eastern Europe, including 16 from Poland and smaller numbers from Romania, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Just over half of participants were male. A range of age groups were within the cohort, although most fell into either the 35-44 or 45-54 age band.

A large majority of participants were either unemployed or off work due to ill health or disability. However, a small handful were in employment, mostly doing casual work. In terms of their immigration status, half of interviewees had secured settled status and a further third had pre-settled status, with a smaller number having applied for the EU Settlement and waiting for the outcome. Most had experience of applying for benefits and around half were receiving universal credit or another benefit; others had been denied or were awaiting a decision.

In terms of why people came to the UK, the responses were varied, suggesting a range of push and pull factors. The most common response among interviewees related to a desire to find new work and to secure a better life for themselves and their families. Some came with other family members while others travelled to the UK alone.

For those who came with their family, the idea of providing a better life for their children was a strong pull. Interviewees referenced how the salaries of their home countries were comparatively low and how the UK was perceived to offer a better chance for them to lead a good life.

> **"His son was born, he needed the money, and this money wasn't available in Poland, so he came here."** (Male, 35-44, Polish) [interpreter speaking on behalf of participant]

In many cases, interviewees spoke about how opportunities in their country of origin were limited as there was little work available. As a result, they had sought out new opportunities in countries like the UK.

> **"I came in 2004, so this will be my seventeenth year in the UK. I came here, obviously, for work purposes, because in Latvia at that time after the Soviet Union collapsed, there was no work."** (Male, 55-64, Latvian)

While some interviewers came with their families, many others did not. Often, they had come to the UK by themselves with the intention of finding work and for their family to later join them in the UK.

> **"Here, as you already know, you can find a job more easily, I would have more possibilities for the kids I already have, I have two kids, who are in the country, they aren't with me yet. But I hope that in time they will be here by my side. Yes, it was my decision... to come here and rebuild my life for my kids, here in the UK."** (Female, 25-34, Romanian)

While work was cited as the most common reason for EEA citizens to move to the UK, it was not the only reason. Some participants initially came to the UK to join family, for a

visit, or for other more ambiguous reasons. In some cases, moving to the UK was not planned in advance.

> **"I came for a football match, Poland versus England, to relax and have fun, and that's how I stayed... I came here to relax, I wasn't a poor man or anything like that, it was just to have fun and see a friend. I've been here for twenty years, I'm a resident, and this is my new country."** (Male, age unspecified, Polish)

> **"When I finished serving in the army, it turned out all my friends had already come here. Initially, to me this was a holiday trip but I went back to Poland for the first time after seven years."** (Male, 35-44, Polish)

For the most part, interviewees' housing difficulties began once they had moved to the UK. However, a relatively small number of interviewees had a previous experience of housing difficulties or homelessness before migrating.

> **"Yes, I had a situation being in my country. My mum and my dad died and... [the council] took the house back and put me into debt and I stayed on the street. And I came to this country because the situation for me is very bad at this time... Council took my flat, my own flat, my mum's flat, okay, take for debt, and put the debt in my name..."** (Male, 35-44, Latvian)

In another case, a forced eviction in the interviewee's former country of residence acted as a driver for moving to the UK. This highlighted that for some individuals, moving to the UK was not entirely voluntary and the subsequent housing challenges they faced were shaped by past experiences.

> **"For 35 years I've been living with my family, with my mother and my father and they evacuated us [from our home in Romania]... We've been accused and chased away from my father's house... they threw us out, after living there for 35 years."** (Male, 45-44, Romanian)

Experiences of homelessness and housing difficulties
Chapter 4 showed clearly that EEA citizens in Britain were more likely to experience core homelessness, and particularly its most extreme form rough sleeping, both currently and in the recent past. This is clear across a range of statistical sources despite clear limitations in the coverage of this group in several key sources including those relating to the statutory homelessness service, to which only a minority of EEA core homeless have gained access to date.

Current circumstances of participants
There were a range of different experiences of homelessness and housing difficulties raised by our research participants, who were at different stages on their journey out of homelessness. Five of the participants we spoke to were in a critical situation at the time of interview – for instance, living in a tent or in a friend's car. One participant was also still living with an abusive partner, unable to secure alternative accommodation.

A further 17 were in a period of transition with ongoing issues, typically in temporary accommodation – such as hotels, hostels or shared accommodation - or with family and friends in untenable or cramped conditions. The remaining six were now in stable accommodation – primarily social housing, although one woman had moved into a private flat – and they reflected on their past experiences of more severe housing difficulties or homelessness in the interviews.

Those whose homelessness had been resolved offered insight into how they eventually secured a good home – typically through support from charities (across a range of sectors, including homelessness, domestic abuse and mental health charities) to resolve welfare and housing issues; advocacy from key professionals such as health workers or social workers; and assistance from the local authority based on being assessed as having a priority need. A number of those who were in stable accommodation spoke of the importance of language support for resolving their homelessness.

In our sample of EEA citizens, there was a gender divide in the resolution of homelessness. Five of the six participants who were now in their own home were women, four of whom were mothers with children in their care. Two women had become homeless due to domestic abuse and had been supported into a safe home through women's refuge support and local authority assistance. One woman had moved to Scotland where she could afford rent for her own home, compared to living in severely overcrowded accommodation in London. A number of these routes out of homelessness are outlined in more detail in the remainder of the chapter.

A number of those with ongoing housing issues were living in hostels or hotels, generally emergency accommodation arranged as a result of the pandemic. This was particularly the case for those that we spoke to in our London case study areas. Participants were typically supported to access temporary accommodation through charity and faith-based organisations who they came into contact with in the course of becoming homeless.

Participants spoke in different ways about the quality of this temporary accommodation. While some were satisfied – particularly in comparison with their previous experiences – others raised serious concerns over

the facilities, the quality of the food, and the conditions imposed on them during their stay. One participant said that it was too cold in the hostel where they stayed, noting that *"sometimes we have to sleep in our jackets"* because there were no heaters available. Another staying in a student hotel expressed their frustration at how they were not allowed to see friends and family: *"where I am now, I feel like I'm in a prison"*.

A further common issue raised by those in temporary accommodation was that they were regularly moved between different hostels and hotels. This made it hard to feel settled in their accommodation, particularly where people were moved between locations at considerable distance from one another. In one case, a participant explained how they were moved every six months:

> **"Yes, the first hotel was in Ilford... Then in Waterloo, The [Name] Hotel for six months and now the [Name] Airport. Roughly every six months I move to a different hotel. I've been in the present hotel since January."** (Male, 35-44, Polish)

Living in a tent
This Polish interviewee originally came to the UK on vacation because many of his friends had already moved here. Two years before the interview, he began to experience housing difficulties when his landlord demanded money that he couldn't pay. Because his landlord wouldn't give him a signed rental contract, it was difficult for him to prove his tenancy and as a result, he was unable to claim the housing element of Universal Credit.

After being taken in by his friends for a while, he had subsequently ended up living in a tent for the past six months. He was being supported by local organisations and said he hoped to find accommodation so he could get mental rest and go back to having a normal life.

Past experiences of homelessness
Participants spoke of a variety of past experiences of housing and homelessness difficulties, including rough sleeping, overcrowded housing, and sleeping in unconventional accommodation such as a garage.

Experiences of rough sleeping included sleeping in tents in parks, in church grounds, and on street pavements. One participant spoke of their experience rough sleeping in Central London:

"Yes, yes, I was out on the street. I went to central London. I knew there were a lot of homeless people there, people facing similar problems. I slept rough for about a month, you see, straight under the pillars, on the pavement, in a sleeping bag. Every evening voluntary workers would give us tea. They would show interest. Anyway, I did seek help with this, you know. And that's how I ended up in the hotel." (Male, 45-54, Polish)

Participants who had experienced rough sleeping spoke of the practical challenges and hardships of living on the street, including adverse weather conditions, safety risks and difficulties finding food and support. One participant explained how they found it hard to find a safe and stable place to sleep:

"It was very difficult to find a place, a safe place to live. So, I found a piece of garden that I could put a tent on and there was a fence around. So, I started to live there. One time, there was the police who came in with the council, where they came and checked, they asked if everything was okay, and they left… But later someone purchased it and we had to move away because someone started building something there." (Male, age unspecified, Polish)

Overcrowded accommodation was another common challenge discussed in our interviews. One participant talked of *"10 people in one room"* in their previous accommodation, while another spoke of having to share a room with their 28 year-old son. In one case, a participant explained their experiences of renting a flat in London:

"London if you are renting a flat, and you don't have enough income, it's so difficult to find a flat. I was sharing a house all the time with six people… it was a two bedroom flat, and six people were living there… [I slept in] the living room, and they rented it to me. How can I explain it? it was a room for £100, with damp everywhere, and two people were in one room. And they created that room like a sleeping room, a bedroom but this was the dining room they were renting." (Female, 45-54, Latvian)

Other housing challenges raised by participants including problems with exploitative landlords, threats from aggressive neighbours, and difficulties finding accommodation after fleeing domestic abuse. In one interview, a participant spoke of how she and her family had become trapped into paying unreasonable fees for their accommodation by their landlord:

"We had a dispute with our former landlord… who seemed to cause us a lot of hardship… When we moved in, the issues started and because I didn't understand English, I relied on my female friend, that she had arranged that the rent should be all inclusive. So, the electricity, water and gas bill is all within the rent of £400 … However, the following month, he requested that £500 is to be paid. Because we had no other solution and because we couldn't speak the language. It went on like this, and it was becoming more and more difficult… [Our support

worker] explained to us that there is no way there any one should be treated the way we were treated, regardless of whether we speak English or not. And we were fed up with being used as mules, and being extorted." (Female, 34-44, Slovakian/Hungarian)

The drivers of homelessness
The drivers of homelessness tend to be multifaceted and complex. Often, causes are interlinked and, while sometimes a single factor can drive someone into homelessness, usually the explanations involve a combination of structural factors (such as employment conditions and housing supply), individual and relational factors (such as relationship breakdown) and system failures (such as barriers to welfare support) (Gaetz and Dej 2017). For instance, while individual factors – such as alcohol use - may contribute to experiences of homelessness, underlying these are structural inequalities, such as poverty, which can exacerbate unhealthy coping mechanisms and make them far more challenging to address and manage. Previous research has confirmed that a wide range of different structural, individual and relational factors contributing to homelessness among EEA citizens in particular (Striano 2020). With this in mind, this section focuses on explanations within these three categories, while acknowledging that the accounts of our interviewees often reflect an interplay between multiple different factors.

Drivers of homelessness - structural factors
Employment
Chapter 4 showed evidence that unemployment and inability to work for health reasons and the associated very low or non-existent incomes were strongly associated with core homelessness in our surveys (Figures 4.13-4.14). Loss of job or serious financial/debt problems were the most common adverse events very

commonly reported by core homeless EEA citizens (Figure 4.17). Statistical modelling also underlines the role of these factors, including also poor working conditions.

The employment conditions of EEA citizens are often a contributing factor to their homelessness. This reflects the results of our quantitative analysis, which highlighted the high unemployment levels of EEA citizens experiencing core homelessness. Our interviews provided further insights into the labour market experiences of homeless EEA citizens with housing difficulties. These came in many forms – from sustained unemployment to insecure and exploitative work. In many cases, EEA citizens found themselves working in the grey areas of the economy and as a result were more likely to face poor or exploitative working conditions.

While losing a job or struggling to find work was not the only factor that contributed to homelessness, many interviews spoke about it as a catalyst which, when intersecting with other factors (such as relationship breakdown), made it extremely difficult to stay in their home.

"I lost my job. Things between myself and my family went awry. I'd had a legal job for six years in a company. I was dismissed. Then I did some temporary jobs at building sites, that was illegal, simply I was not registered. I also made extra money doing legal jobs. Then I lost my balance and spent some time in hospital, and then my health was poor, and I ended up on the street. That's what happened, what can I say…" (Male, 35-44, Polish)

Others spoke of their experiences of insecure and exploitative work, including instances where they had not received earnings from their employer.

"When I was at the restaurant, I wasn't paid, 30 hours, because the manager took the money, she always took my money." (Female, 16-24, Romanian)

One interviewee spoke about how his journey into homelessness began with not being paid for his work. As a result, he couldn't afford to pay his rent and so when he ran out of savings he found himself homeless.

"The boss didn't pay me three and a half thousand pounds, and because of that I had a debt at the start, and I was thrown out … [The boss] didn't pay a lot of people." (Male, 35-44, Polish)

Some of the people we spoke to were previously living in tied accommodation that was linked to their job. One interviewee explained how this meant they faced exploitation from their employer which precipitated their homelessness:

"I worked for a person for seven months and that's where I slept, and received food. However, didn't get any money. I didn't get the money after seven months of work. So, that's why I was basically forced to live on the street… it was very hard.." (Male, 45-54, Romanian)

Others explained how they were paid below the minimum wage. A number of male interviewees had found work in the construction sector, which tended to involve low pay and long hours:

"[I work in] construction. I used to work 55 hours per week. And now I work 50 hours, but for 6 pounds per hour… I leave at 6 o'clock in the morning and get back at 7pm. So 13 hours, commute included. The work starts at 8am. But I leave at 6am, I get to work at 7:30am, I drink a tea until 8:00 and get back home at 7:00pm. 13 hours

per day. And 10 hours of work, with 6 pounds per hour, because of the pandemic…" (Male, 35-44, Romanian)

The experiences of the people we spoke to suggested that finding legal and adequately paid work was often a significant challenge. One interviewee explained how he wanted to find legal work, but despite his search few places would take him on with a formal contract of employment:

"I tried to find part-time, but every time people ask how old I am, when I disclose my age, they always say, 'we'll call you back' and they never do. So, probably I am old. And one of [them] said, 'we might take you but with no contract' and I said no. I need to have a contract, it has to be a legal job, and I have to pay my taxes, national insurance, otherwise it's not good for the country, it's not good for me." (Male, 55-64, Latvian)

As a result, a number of participants spoke of how they had been employed in casual work, which could lead to potential exploitation or problems with being paid on time. Moreover, the income from casual work was often not sufficient or secure enough to avoid destitution or progress from temporary accommodation into the private rental sector:

"Right now that I'm not working, I only sometimes go out to work and help my friend for a day. I spend my time in the hotel. To be honest, I don't have money. I pick up cigarette butts and come to the hotel, have my dinner and rest. This is my routine … I don't have a job so how could I rent a flat… I just help my friend. When he goes to his friend to do something, I help him and get twenty or thirty pounds. Nothing major. One or two hours of work." (Male, 35-44, Polish)

Private rental sector

The interplay between high housing costs and low incomes was well-documented in the previous chapter, with EEA homeless households often having exceptionally low or zero incomes. As a result of low incomes, interviewees tended to have limited housing options. Some interviewees highlighted how they had struggled to keep up with their rent payments in the private rental sector:

"The landlord stated that he couldn't keep us if we couldn't pay rent, you know. And that way in April, mid-April I found myself on the street." (Male, 45-54, Polish)

Others highlighted how they had faced similar housing problems, including being forced out of accommodation due to debt, moving in with friends after being unable to pay the landlord, and becoming trapped in temporary council accommodation because other options were unaffordable. One participant described how hard they found it to get secure accommodation in the UK:

"Here, by themselves, nobody can afford to buy a house. First, they need to pay something in advance, 2-3 months, and secondly you need documents, an employment contract, and the employment contract, even if you have it you need a large amount of money. If I have 1400 pounds, they won't even look at me … And I believe that's normal. Me, one person, if I work for 10 years in England, I can't afford to buy a house." (Male, 35-44, Romanian)

Others described private rental accommodation that was in severe disrepair or overcrowded, as well as poor practice from landlords. One participant described the extent of the intimidating and exploitative behaviour that they received at the hands of their landlord:

"…whenever I wanted to tell my landlord something, he treated us aggressively, so I no longer have the courage to stand up. I didn't speak English; I didn't understand him. The only thing he was telling me was 'money, money, money', that he constantly wanted from us… I decided that this is not why we came to this country, to be fearful of someone else, and paid to someone else for ever, and not have freedom." (Female, 34-44, Slovakian/Hungarian)

Exploitative landlords

In 2015, this couple moved to the UK. They were initially living in Bradford but faced difficulties with their landlord. Off the back of this experience, they found another landlord who was recommended by a friend. However, the relationship with their landlord soon soured. Despite initially promising an inclusive rate for the accommodation, the landlord subsequently requested additional money from the couple.

Despite continuing to pay the landlord the additional money, things would not get fixed around the house. They were also intimidated by the landlord and felt unable to challenge him. Eventually, they were put in touch with an organisation in Newport which helped them to find temporary accommodation.

Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic had also had a major impact on the lives of our participants. Not only had it made sustaining employment harder; it had also highlighted other challenges in accessing housing and services. Many participants who worked in industries such as construction spoke about how businesses simply shut down and they were initially unable to find work.

"The way [my homelessness] happened is very simple. I did not have work, and on top of that the previous employer had not been very honest, it turned out the job was illegal. But it was a job and I did have financial gains from it... I had been renting a flat and I lived in it. Then the Covid happened and construction sites were closed... After Easter then everything started to close, then also retailers with building materials closed. You couldn't get your materials or anything. It turned out I found myself without work, without financial means and so I had to move out of my flat." (Male, 45-54, Polish)

After losing work as a result of the pandemic, many participants struggled to get help. Only a very small number of participants reported being able to access government initiatives such as the job retention scheme (furlough). One person working as a cleaner in a hotel had been placed on furlough, but then had to leave work due to ill health:

"For three months we were still paid, and we thought we'd come back because that's what they said, that we would come back after the three months. So, I did not look for another job, I liked my job. They kept paying and they assured us that we would be coming back to work, so I didn't look... That's when my health issues started. I couldn't go to work, I had to... I spent most of my time going to doctors." (Female, 45-54, Polish)

For some, their loss of employment due to Covid-19 directly resulted in becoming homeless:

"Because of the virus, I ended up sleeping on the streets. The people who took me in took me from the streets, I was sleeping on the streets. I showed them, I had

my employment contract, I had at least 11 payslips. I showed them, see, I work, I had 1780 pounds, I explained to them where I used to sleep, but since I'd been fired, I couldn't afford it, and I ended up homeless" (Male, 35-44, Romanian)

As this section has highlighted, there are a number of interrelated structural factors that play a significant role in explaining EEA citizens' homelessness and housing difficulties. The qualitative material presented here mirrors the headline findings from our quantitative analysis presented in Chapter Four. Many of the EEA citizens we spoke with were subject to some of the worst conditions of the UK's labour and housing markets, including low wages, long hours, high rents, and exploitation. The dramatic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on sectors such as construction and cleaning led to many falling into homelessness and destitution. Yet many of the underlying factors also relate to more long-standing challenges faced by our participants, including their employment in precarious and low-paid work without formal contracts or job security.

Losing work during the pandemic
This interviewee originally came to the UK as a visitor and then ended up staying for the long term. At the time of the interview, he was currently living in a hostel in London. He previously had his own building company. However, the person he was working for left the UK as the Covid-19 pandemic set in. After his savings ran out, he ended up on the street.

Since living in the hostel, his life had changed quite dramatically. Because he was obliged to leave the hostel during the day, he found himself often struggling to fill the time outside. Even when in the hostel, the interviewee said he was often cold, sleeping in his jacket to keep warm. He had applied for benefits but was yet to receive an outcome.

Drivers of homelessness – individual and relational factors
Asked about what caused their homelessness or housing difficulties, participants shared the personal – and often traumatic – experiences that had affected them. These were generally not seen to be the sole drivers of their homelessness; rather, they were contributing factors that created a domino effect when combined with the structural factors discussed above.

Our interviews reflect the results of the surveys discussed in the previous chapter, which found that respondents who had recently experienced core homelessness commonly reported adverse life events, such as partner and family relationship difficulties. As Chapter Three highlights however, previous research suggests that EEA citizens are less likely to be affected by complex needs and more likely to be influenced by economic, employment and financial problems. Regardless, it is still important to understand how these complex needs are experienced among this group, particularly in light of the need to design preventative interventions that tackle the causes of homelessness.

Interpersonal and relational problems
Many participants spoke about the interpersonal and relational problems which precipitated their homelessness. Mirroring the issues faced by the general population, this included family conflict and relationship breakdown as a trigger for homelessness. For instance, a young person that we spoke with told us:

"We became homeless [because] there was an argument with my mum – where we were staying – and because of the arguments she tried to kick my boyfriend out and I'd just had enough of it, so we left." (Female, 16-24, Czech)

Others spoke about the breakdown of their relationship with a partner as contributing to their homelessness. One participant told us that their problems started *"since my wife filed for divorce"*, while another explained how:

"In 2017 I came with a woman from Romania... I can't say anything bad about her, but we split up. After that, I was just on a downwards spiral a bit." (Male, 35-44, Romanian)

Such 'downward spirals' were also triggered by the loss of a loved one. Bereavement was a relatively common contributor to participants' own explanations of their homelessness, as illustrated by one participant:

"My father was everything to me and I talked to him all the time, he gave me a kind of mental stability... And then suddenly... he had a stroke and he died... Because of what happened to my dad, that he passed away and my dad was like a rock for me in my life, it was difficult for me to overcome my own situations." (Male, 55-64, Latvian)

Finally, a number of the women who participated also spoke of experiencing domestic abuse, which was a key cause of their homelessness and housing difficulties. As Chapter Four showed, domestic abuse was a much greater driver of homeless in women then in men. As one woman explained:

"Basically I've had a bit of trouble, a lot of trouble actually with my partner... I have presented as homeless... For me, it's a very clear situation; I don't want to be with him, I don't want to live in this house, but on the other had I am very scared of going to the hostel. It's difficult because I was raised by my parents... and my parents gave each other support and respected each other. Here it's

a different story. At the moment my daughters are staying in Poland... because I am very afraid to bring them to this house. It's a very difficult situation for me." (Female, 35-44, Polish)

Health problems
Poor physical health, either as a result of persistent health conditions or following an injury, were common reasons for participants' inability to work. Poor health was also experienced as a barrier to resolving homelessness and housing difficulties. For instance, one participant told us:

"The difficulties started, obviously, because I experienced problems with my legs... and I was waiting for an operation. And because of that I couldn't work... I loved my job. I always loved my job. I worked for eleven years in the UK... It's only the problem with my legs which has stopped me actually working, because it is my passion. This is what I love to do. And obviously, I stopped only because of my medical condition." (Male, 55-64, Latvian)

Another participant reflected on how their ill health had affected their ability to take up opportunities in the pandemic-stricken job market:

"What hurts me the most is that I cannot go to work right now. The market has shown some movements, some job offers have started to show on 'Londynek' [a Polish community website], right. They are looking for construction workers. And my situation, the illness I suffer from, excludes me, at this time at least, from the possibility of undertaking a job." (Male, 45-54, Polish)

One woman explained how her ill health meant that she could not afford to pay rent and had to share a room with her son:

"I don't have the money, so I have to stay in one room with my son... I used to work and have my wages, things were different... Then I was forced to stay together with my son. I simply cannot afford to have a room to myself... I'm on sick leave because I began seeing doctors and they found diseases... I don't know what will happen next." (Female, 45-54, Polish)

As well as physical health problems, a number of participants described their mental health and wellbeing in the context of their housing problems. For many, mental health problems were more a consequence rather than a cause of their housing difficulties, but for some they were a contributing factor. As one participant explained:

"At first it was all going very well. For five years. I rented places, not even knowing there are options to live and stay somewhere at lower costs, or at no costs. I was doing well. Then I began to get ill. First, I got depression. I already had depression after my wife passed away, but then this time I got bipolar disorder. I was admitted to a hospital. After the few months in hospital, when I was discharged, I was on the street. And again, starting from zero, without any money, without anything... And so, I found myself on the street." (Male, 55-64, Polish).

Substance Misuse
Some of our participants spoke about their experiences of substance misuse, primarily with respect to alcohol, and how this was both a consequence and a driver of their homelessness. The following participant, for instance, directly attributed their drinking as a contributing factor:

"[This all started] because of me... I had a good job but couldn't be bothered to do anything. I had alcohol issues. I wasn't worrying about anything but only enjoyed myself. It seems all right but you can't live like this for a long time and have to change something... I've already changed things but it's difficult... it's difficult to get back on your feet so to speak. It's difficult when you didn't do anything for such a long time, but I need to get back on the right track..." (Male, 25-34, Polish)

Drinking alcohol was described at times as a way to cope with traumatic personal events, such as those already described above. As the following participant recounted, drinking could then trigger or exacerbate their housing difficulties:

"I actually had a fight, or an argument, with my partner and because of that, I started drinking. That's the reason why my documents were either stolen or left or I couldn't find them anymore. They were left on this bench and that's how I lost them. And it was because of too much drinking... since I split up with that lady, I've been drinking every day. Only if I don't have any money then I don't drink..." (Male, 35-44, Romanian)

This section has highlighted a number of ways in which the circumstances of participants' personal lives – be that the end of a relationship, conflict with a family member or partner, the loss of a loved one, or their own ailing health – and the negative coping mechanisms (such as problem drinking) adopted by some, have contributed to their experiencing homelessness. It is important to note that these factors are multifaceted and complex, but when combined with the structural factors and service failures also described in this section, they can have major consequences, both in terms of driving homelessness and increasing the challenges of resolving their housing situation.

In Chapter 4 we reported the incidence of complex needs involving combinations of substance misuse with homelessness, mental ill-health and/or domestic violence and abuse, which appeared to affect around 20% of the core homeless in our targeted and RDS surveys (Figure 4.19). However, we also pointed out that these proportions were lower than those reported from the 2019 Destitution in the UK survey. This, and some other evidence, suggests that the cohort of EEA citizens experiencing homelessness in the Covid period may be less affected by complex needs, and more influenced by economic, employment and financial problems.

Drivers of homelessness - system failures
While many of the drivers of homelessness we discussed with participants related to the structural and personal factors discussed above, a further set of factors were based on how individuals had faced barriers to accessing sufficient support. In many cases, participants who faced loss of employment and challenging financial circumstances were left without an adequate social safety net, which served to exacerbate and prolong their housing difficulties. This chimes with the findings from Chapter Four, where around half of recent core homeless EEA citizens in our surveys who were on inadequate income were not receiving any benefits (Figure 4.15).

For some participants, the issues they faced were similar to those experienced by the rest of the UK's homeless population. For instance, individuals noted that the support provided by universal credit was insufficient to meet living expenses. Others highlighted problems with delays in accessing support from the council and the quality of social and privately rented housing.

However, many participants raised issues that were related to their status as EEA citizens. A number explained

how for long periods they had not come forward to make a claim for benefits or assistance from the council because they were unaware they were entitled to such support or they faced language and communication difficulties. One participant explained how they had not known about the process of making a benefit application:

> "He said he didn't know at the time that he could get benefits, because obviously when he worked, he never thought about it, and he didn't know how to do them, how to apply for benefits." (Male, 55-64, Latvian) [interpreter speaking on behalf of participant]

Another felt that there were too many practical difficulties involved in accessing the benefits system:

> "I don't even know how to apply for [benefits] because, you know, at the moment I don't have even a steady address... to pick up the documents about my settled status I have to... use the mission address. So, I don't even know how to start with this." (Male, age unspecified, Polish)

Where participants had made a claim, they had on a number of occasions been rejected or had had to wait for long periods for a resolution. In some cases, it was likely this was because they had failed the habitual residence test due to not having a qualifying 'right to reside' for benefit purposes. This was because they said that they had been rejected for not being in work and at the same time did not have settled status:

> "They are trying [to help us to apply for benefits] but I don't know because we still didn't get nothing. They are doing like one and a half year ... until today, and the answer was 'we cannot do nothing because we need some proof you are working', that's it" (Male, Lithuanian, 35-44)

Generally, participants did not refer to the habitual residence test directly, even though it is likely this was the key barrier, because the process of claiming benefits was often opaque and hard to understand. However, in one case the test was mentioned explicitly:

> "I did try to get the universal credit before but didn't receive it due to failing the habitual test. I didn't have my status either back then. Now to apply I need to have a permanent job." (Female, 25-34, Polish)

Participants also spoke of being unable to access benefits due to administrative issues or a lack of documentation, which again is likely to have been connected to a failure to pass the habitual residence test. In some cases, these issues emerged because claimants were working in the informal economy and so were unable to provide proof of employment:

> "I am supposed to have the tax number, right. I have not worked through the required time. Like I said, I worked more often for the illegal employers than the legitimate ones, but I have another problem as it turned out that in 2018, at the end of 2018 I received the tax number and I did not earn any money and I've not completed my tax return." (Male, 45-54, Polish)

For many, access to benefits was tied to the issue of applying for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), because a successful grant of settled status would provide an automatic right of residence for the purpose of passing the habitual residence test. While most people we spoke with had successfully applied to the EUSS and there was generally widespread awareness of the scheme, around a third had only been granted pre-settled status. Those with pre-settled status were not necessarily entitled to benefits if they could not

demonstrate another qualifying right to reside.

In Chapter Four we found that only 71% (targeted survey) and 47% (RDS) of respondents had obtained settled or pre-settled status shortly before the mid-2021 deadline (Figure 4.20). Our interviewees raised a number of issues with the EU Settlement Scheme, some of which had affected their housing situation. Some participants highlighted delays with their application:

> "[The application process was] terrible. I waited six months. Two times I sent my passport, and they have [made] a mistake." (Female, 35-44, Polish)

Around four participants were awaiting the outcome of their EU Settlement Scheme application. Some said that they were unable to get universal credit until they had secured their status, which meant they were waiting for a resolution to their situation from the Home Office:

> "I would like to [apply for benefits] but to do this I would need to get my status first. Then I could apply for this first benefit and receive some 400 pounds like others do. From what I know, first you need to get your legal status and a bank account." (Male, 35-44, Polish)

> "He hasn't applied for benefits or universal credit because he applied for his settlement status and that didn't come back yet. He is still waiting. So, he can't apply for universal credit. I asked him when he applied for settlement, and he said it's been three months already." (Male, 35-44, Romanian) [interpreter speaking on behalf of participant]

Other issues were also raised about the impacts of delays in the EU Settlement Scheme. In one case, a participant on universal credit who was waiting for the conclusion of their EU Settlement Scheme application said that they faced barriers to renting due to the delay:

> "I've been waiting for a year now. My passport has been sent to the Home Office for me to be granted the status and all the organisations are trying to help me with something called 'private tenancy'. But what is needed is the scan of my passport and everybody requests my status. So, everything depends on when all the documents come back from the Home Office" (Male, 35-44, Polish)

Overall, this section has detailed how a number of research participants struggled to get help for their housing situation – in particular, welfare benefits – as a result of rules restricting EEA citizens' access to support. While those who had successfully applied to the EUSS for settled status were more easily able to get help, those either with pre-settled status or awaiting the outcome of their application tended to face greater challenges. For some we interviewed, the welfare and immigration system had left individuals in extended periods of limbo while they tried to resolve their accommodation and employment issues. Welfare rules, administrative delays and confusion over rights and entitlements had all contributed in different ways to our participants' housing difficulties.

Difficulties with the EU Settlement Scheme
This interviewee came to the UK from Romania in 2007. At the time of the interview, he was living in a hotel, and before that he was sleeping in a tent in a park. His housing difficulties began after his relationship with his partner broke down and he started drinking heavily. After losing all his documents due to his drinking, he then found himself unable to work and became homeless.

The interviewee explained that he had no Universal Credit, because he was told he could only apply once he had secured his settled status (and before that he was unaware of his entitlements). He had applied to the EU Settlement Scheme a few months ago but as far as he knew he had yet to receive an outcome, and without a phone he was unsure how he would hear from the Home Office.

Impacts of homelessness
The impacts of homelessness for participants were wide-ranging and varied depending on their precise circumstances. Often, the impacts of homelessness related to the causes. For example, while losing a job might have initially pushed some participants into homelessness, their housing situation then often detrimentally impacted their prospects for returning to employment.

In assessing the impacts of homelessness, our analysis focusses on specific themes. These include the health consequences of homelessness, the emotional and social impacts, feelings of safety, and labour market outcomes.

Health impacts
Health problems – including a deterioration in health linked to homelessness – were often mentioned by participants. This included a number of physical ailments, as described by the following participant:

"What does it look like? Well, I'll tell you this. I'm in the hotel. It was May or June when I first got there. In July, or actually in June I fell ill. I started having pains in my back. I began treating this. It turned out I must have exposed it too much to cold when I was sleeping on the ground and so on. I went under the care of medical doctors, I started to receive treatment and they got me various tests and what happened was that they discovered cancer." (Male, 45-54, Polish)

Another participant mentioned how health conditions were difficult to cope with when experiencing homelessness:

"It's very difficult. What can I say, if I have to, I'm obliged to leave the hostel or flat at ten o'clock and come back at six o'clock and I have to be outside doing nothing. It's especially difficult when he has screws in his legs, so his mobility is limited. He has had two operations on his leg, and they are forcing him to be outside …" (Male, age unspecified, Polish) [interpreter speaking on behalf of participant]

While some were reluctant to discuss them, mental health problems were also common among participants. Participants highlighted how the experience of homelessness had created new stresses and anxieties:

"My life before coming here was, how should I put it, easier, without stress. This is where I've been more stressed out and started having problems, since I came here in the UK, to be honest. This is where I found stress and difficulties." (Female, 25-34, Romanian)

These impacts would often extend to the families of participants, including young children:

"[The landlord] was not only causing hardship to me, but the whole family, to the family as a whole. My daughter is 13 years old now, but back then, she was 10 or 12. When she was 10 years old, I got contacted from the school that [my daughter] disclosed that she cannot take it. She just said that she doesn't want to live anymore." (Female, 35-44, Slovakian/Hungarian)

A common health problem reported by participants was a reliance on alcohol. Many spoke of how the experience of homelessness had resulted in them drinking more to cope with their situation:

"Then when I landed on the street. It was extremely stressful for me, first time in my life I found myself in that situation, I had no idea what to do. I reached more for alcohol then. It dawned on me after a while that it was too often that I was reaching for it. And when the illness came, I had not got too deep into the alcoholism by then, so I was able to put the alcohol away for the time of the medical treatment… I myself started to notice that I was overdoing it. I began to worry about myself." (Male, 45-54, Polish)

Emotional and social impacts
Many participants described how their situation made them feel a loss of control. Some spoke of experiencing stress over the repeated struggles that they had to deal with on a daily basis:

"Every day you're thinking about same, same, you're going to sleep, you wake up with same things, what is going to be tomorrow? What's happening? What's happening tomorrow? What's happening today? When are we going to go outside? Because everything has stopped, no work, no job, nothing. So you know it's a headache, it's the pressure, a headache, and yeah, it's the same every day." (Male, 35-44, Lithuanian)

Others referenced feeling a sense of sadness, hopelessness and loneliness. For example, one participant spoke about feeling lonely and ashamed as a result of their situation:

"Of course, I felt lonely and stupid. I was ashamed to sleep on the street. I had a decent living before. I lived with 2-3 people before, in the same room, but that's normal." (Male, 35-44, Romanian)

Another spoke about how they felt it was difficult to get their old life back and bring an end to their current circumstances:

"it's difficult to get back on your feet so to speak. It's difficult when you didn't do anything for such a long time, but I need to get back on the right track… somehow, I'm coping right now… [my daily routine is…] dreary and grey, but I'm getting there." (Male, 25-34, Polish)

Safety
Some participants spoke of how they had been victims of crime and had faced abuse as a result of their housing situation. In a small number of cases, this abuse stemmed from discrimination on account of their nationality or ethnicity. For example, one interviewee explained that they had been physically assaulted because they were Polish:

"There was a person, a drug addict who attacked him racially, and... Actually, he was attacked by a drug user, based on his origin... He was racially attacked, but because he's a strong person who was in the military before. He could protect himself." (Male, 35-44, Polish)

Participants also raised broader concerns about their feelings of security due to their housing situation. One woman highlighted her fears over her and her child's safety in temporary accommodation:

"I don't have a place of my own, to stay alone, with my little girl. Where I'm living now... there are other people in the house, there are men... we have a common kitchen, for all the people in the house, they all have the right to use the kitchen... And I'm afraid, I can't trust anybody, even if they speak nicely, I'm afraid that they would want to take advantage of me..." (Female, 25-34, Romanian)

Employment
As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the causes and impacts of homelessness can often reinforce each other. In particular, participants spoke about how both their employment struggles had led to homelessness and their homelessness had made it harder to access employment:

"For some time I haven't had my own place and I cannot shower or wash clothes. That means I can't go to work even if I had work. Even if I comes to work, you can smell that there is damp, or they are poorly cleaned. They ask you, where did you come from, or you're stinky or something." (Male, 35-44, Polish)

Often participants' financial situations made it difficult to undertake work due to practical constraints. For example, one participant spoke about

challenges over arranging childcare in their situation and how this impacted their ability to work:

"You know... no-one will come for an hour at 5 o'clock in the morning to look after a child. And, you know, so I'm not working, because the nursery is only for four hours and I'm not able to afford the childcare." (Female, 45-54, Polish)

Where participants were not able to work, they typically had little money to get by. As a result, many had got into debt or had to sell personal possessions. One participant spoke of having to sell their work tools to raise money, making it harder for them to return to work:

"I had a lot of tools actually as well, and had to sell them to pay the bills, for one fifth of the price because when I ended up on the street, I wouldn't have a place to keep them. So, I lost a lot of money on the tools." (Male, 45-44, Polish)

Participants who had lost work faced further difficulties if they were unable to access welfare support or if this support was insufficient. One participant set out the challenges of living on severely limited means:

"With the foodbank, now we get some money. But from that money we have to pay everything and it's really difficult. It's very difficult for her... [her partner doesn't receive benefits, so] she's only receiving the benefit. She's helping him so they are both living off her benefit... When she was working, she would make three hundred pounds a week. And now she is living for the whole month, on that much, for two people." (Female, 45-54, Polish) [interpreter speaking on behalf of participant]

Even in cases where participants had resolved their housing challenges, low incomes contributed to ongoing precarity and impacted other areas of housing costs, such as paying utility bills:

"You know, she received her new flat, and there was no flowing water, nothing, she had to do it herself or she had to make an application to apply for a washer, a freezer, or whatever. washing machine, and other appliances." (Female, 45-54, Polish)

Experiences of support
As we sought to understand experiences of homelessness, a key part of our conversations with participants related to the quality of support they had received from others. This section looks at these varying experiences, highlighting the challenges that participants described when they asked for support or advice, as well as including examples of where participants had received transformative help to alleviate their difficulties.[29]

Overwhelmingly, interviewees described relying on the intervention of one key individual to make progress with their situation. These individuals – whether from a local charity, council or service – helped participants to navigate their complex situations:

"I showed [the charity worker] all our paperwork... From that moment on, she started helping us, she told us where we needed to go, who we need to speak to. I am ever so grateful that... despite not being able to speak English fluently, that there are avenues that we could receive help and support, and [she] was a great help from the very beginning. She arranged everything for us... So we are happy that [she] was the

one who helped us." (Female, 35-44, Slovakian/Hungarian)

In some instances, the potential for mainstream services, such as healthcare and social work, to resolve homelessness was clear. One person spoke of their social worker *"from the mental health hospital"* and how:

"...she, together with my lawyers, over the time I have been under her protection, untangled this whole situation and I was given housing again." (Male, 55-64, Polish)

A number of interviewees, however, felt that they had at times received insufficient support or advice. When some participants approached the local authority for homelessness support, they had experienced delays and inaction:

"A [voluntary sector key worker] applied but hasn't heard back. She wrote to the council, but without a reply. No one has come back to me... And it was supposed to be within a month. It's been two months. Two and a half even." (Female, 45-54, Polish)

In another case, a participant who had been rough sleeping was refused accommodation because they had missed a meeting:

"Things have been dragging on. I was offered a hostel, but the weather back then wasn't good, my mobile died, and I didn't wake up on time. When I charged up my phone, I got a text message saying that my application had been rejected as I hadn't turned up for the morning meeting." (Male, 35-44, Polish)

29   In this section we do not cover access to welfare, given this is discussed in the previous section on systemic drivers of homelessness.

Where individuals were able to get assistance with their housing situation, some highlighted that their support workers were unhelpful and the quality of accommodation was poor:

> **"The woman in the Holiday Inn weren't very helpful. The woman from Holiday Inn they didn't do anything… The hotel was really horrible, everyone was complaining. There were like eight women there and they didn't help at all… They didn't help at all. They were playing computer games on the, you know, the computer…"** (Female, 45-54, Polish)

Concerns were also raised about access to healthcare. One participant described how delays in receiving healthcare had hindered their ability to work and contributed to their becoming homeless:

> **"The GP said I should have the operation within two months. That's why I stopped working, because it was painful, I could not continue to work normally. So, I thought, okay, two months, I will get my operation. But then two months passed, and I still did not have the operation. The second letter came and then every time I went to the GP or hospital, every time it was a different doctor who saw me… In the end, I waited for fourteen, fifteen months for that operation. So, because I was out of work all that time, I couldn't pay for accommodation. So, I slept in buses, I slept in parks, and I had friends who helped me."** (Male, 55-64, Latvian).

Another complained of facing discrimination from her GP:

> **"I'm sorry to have to say that the doctor that was treating me was ever so negligent… He did not want to assess me. He didn't want me to take my coat off, even though I was so sick, I vomited…**

> **The way I was treated, [me and my key worker] felt it very vividly, especially after the Brexit, that the way they treated me, they showed me clearly, and quite lastly, that I'm a foreigner…"** (Female, 35-44, Slovakian/Hungarian)

Others spoke of insufficient help in other domains too. One woman experiencing domestic abuse said of the police: *"the way they treated me… they don't take it seriously"* and that the two times she had called a domestic abuse helpline she had simply been told *"If you have this problem again call back".*

Language barriers
Language barriers were seen as one of the key issues preventing people from accessing the support that they required. This reflects the evidence reported in Chapter Four, which suggests that a lack of English language proficiency is associated with experiencing core homelessness. Interviewees described how language barriers had directly contributed to their housing difficulties because they found it hard to convey their circumstances or they struggled to understand their rights:

> **"The biggest barrier was the language barrier, the fact that I couldn't speak and now I can understand more, although I do find it harder to speak in longer sentences, but at the beginning… it was very hard and it's all in your head and it was very hard."** (Female, 25-34, Polish)

One woman, who had called the police in the early hours of the morning due to her violent partner, was told after asking for an interpreter that *"they don't have any police interpreter at this time".*

Where participants had been able to access the interpreters and translation that they required, this had been invaluable for resolving their issues:

> **"Yes, and what can I do, poor me, you know, the letters I get in English, they are so complicated, those e-mails. I am truly lucky to have a proper phone, a good computer where I translate it all, one way or another, but then after that a competent person is a must. I pass it all on, you know, to the lawyers. You know that function: forward. I forward it all to the lawyers, to my key worker, at the same time, as they come."** (Male, 55-64, Polish)

Voluntary sector and faith-based organisations
In lieu of mainstream or statutory support, many of our participants relied on the voluntary sector (namely homelessness and migrants' rights charities) and faith-based organisations:

> **"I found Day Centre [Name] for the homeless that has helped me an awful lot. For example, they've helped me get my passport in only three days… Right now, three institutions are taking care of my case. Everybody is saying it's impossible to be living on the street after 16 years here. They're trying to solve this problem for me."** (Male, 35-44, Polish)

When asked about where they got support, many of those in critical circumstances named charities or community organisations that met their basic needs – offering meals, a shower and clean clothing.

> **"He mentioned that the church support was amazing… Because on a daily basis he could go there and take a shower. They provided some food, sometimes clothes, and the main thing was during the winter months he could sleep there. And the laundry as well; they had a washing machine so he could come and wash his stuff."** (Male, age unspecified, Polish) [interpreter speaking on behalf of participant]

Yet some participants highlighted challenges with getting such support – for instance, being forced to travel far in order to reach charities and community groups. Others noted that, during the pandemic, places they had formerly relied upon had closed down.

Family and friend networks
Participants also spoke about the support they received from family and friends. Often people described borrowing money or asking for help in moments of crisis:

> **"I have one friend who has… he has a shower which I am very grateful…"** (Male, Polish)

However, it was also evident that such informal networks were limited for some participants, and that moving to the UK and becoming homeless had made it harder to rely on family and friends:

> **"You know, we don't have that many people that we know, obviously in Poland we do because we were born there but here no."** (Male, 45-54, Polish)

Overall, it is evident that the quality of support for people experiencing homelessness is inconsistent. Language barriers and an apparent lack of formal and informal safety nets meant that for many of our participants it was challenging to find the support they needed. Often it appeared to be luck or chance that brought someone into contact with a person who could help them to begin to resolve their housing problems. This is likely to have been compounded by the complexity of immigration rules, which may have made it harder for charities and support workers to understand the eligibility criteria for benefits and housing support.

There is wider evidence for this limited or lack of support from the Destitution in the UK survey from 2019. This found that a quarter of EEA citizens who

were core homeless and using crisis services reported receiving no financial support from any source, with a similar proportion reporting no in-kind support.

Looking ahead
Rounding off the interviews, participants were asked to share their plans or hopes for the future, as well as their suggestions on how government, policymakers and services could improve their support for people in similar positions to themselves.

Plans for the future
The most common response to being asked about the future was that participants hoped and intended to stay in the UK – in spite of Brexit and the pandemic. Irrespective of the very real challenges that participants described in relation to their housing, the UK was still seen by most people as 'home':

> **"I am settled here. London is my home. I can say that now. I am here, it is my home."** (Male, 55-64, Latvian)

> **"I have brought my two sons here; they both live here now. I will want to stay here."** (Female, 45-54, Polish)

> **"I like Manchester very much. I don't want to move out, I like it."** (Male, 45-54, Polish)

Another common response from participants was that they wished to find work. This was seen to be vital for rebuilding their lives and independence, as the following quotes demonstrate:

> **"I want to go back to work. That's my main goal. And I want to finish, graduate from this food hygiene course, and I want to start working as soon as possible. I don't know whether it's Wales or some other place, but anywhere I can find work."** (Male, age unspecified, Polish)

> **"My plan for the future is firstly, to get myself together, to improve my well-being, and God willing, to firstly start working because I enjoy it and I like my work."** (Female, 35-44, Slovakian/Hungarian)

> **"I don't care [what work I do]. I can even dig a hole in the ground if that's what I need to do."** (Male, 35-44, Romanian)

Finally, participants with children in the UK hoped to be able to offer them a more stable and fulfilling future:

> **"I'm staying here for her, to offer her a good education, to send her to university. I don't want her to have my life, everything I do now is for her… I want my girl to thank me! I'm staying here for her, to fight for her. It will get better after all I've been through. The sun will also rise for me."** (Female, 25-34, Romanian)

Suggestions for policy and practice
Asked for how policy and practice could be improved, participants gave a variety of responses. Many participants said that there was nothing more that could have been done to support them – particularly where they felt they alone had caused their homelessness and it was their own responsibility to resolve it or where they had already made strides to resolve their housing difficulties.

Others proposed specific ideas, included improving access to language support and helping people to learn English; providing help with finding work; improving advice and legal or practical support to navigate bureaucratic systems; offering more affordable housing and temporary accommodation; and introducing better mechanisms to prevent exploitative landlords.

Typically, participants concluded the interviews by explaining that they

simply wanted to be able to recover from the hardships that had led them to become homeless – to live a normal life, with a roof over their head, and with a job to provide for themselves and their family:

> **"There are things which I just cannot understand, you know. There are people for example who receive benefits and they use that money for alcohol and drugs, they don't care, they would never go to work. And then there's that other group of people who are thinking of their life, they're trying to figure out how to bounce back, how to keep going, return to the society and carry on living as normal. But they are not eligible for the benefits. Like myself, right. I would like to return, you see. And I think I will. I will manage to do it this way or another."** (Male, 45-54, Polish)

> **"I just want to get a place where I can come after work to have a shower and sleep until the next day and go to work. Some place where you can live."** (Male, 35-44, Romanian)

Key points
We interviewed 28 EEA citizens who had faced homelessness and housing difficulties to find out more about their experiences and the factors behind their housing circumstances. Our participants were recruited from the case study areas used for our targeted surveys, including Central London and West, Haringey, Fife / Aberdeen, Newport, and Manchester. Most of our interviewees were based in London, reflecting the concentration of homeless EEA citizens in the capital.

All those interviewed came from Central and Eastern Europe. Just over half were men and most were between 35 and 54 years of age. A large majority were unemployed or unable to work and, of those who

were employed, most were doing casual work. Five participants were in a critical situation, such as living in a friend's car or in a tent. Seventeen were in a period of transition with ongoing issues, such as in temporary accommodation or living with friends and family. A number were living in hostels or hotels, generally emergency accommodation arranged due to the pandemic. Six were now in stable accommodation but had experience of housing difficulties.

The interviews revealed that the drivers of homelessness are often multifaceted and complex, with no single cause but several contributing and intersecting factors. A key factor, often the catalyst, was employment issues, which meant that participants could not afford stable accommodation. Many experienced insecure or exploitative work, including long hours and very low pay. Some cited difficulties finding work at all, especially outside the informal economy, and some struggled to earn enough through casual work to afford stable housing.

The experiences of our interview participants highlighted that Covid-19 had made sustaining jobs and accessing housing and services harder. For some in sectors such as construction, their businesses shut down and they were unable to work. Only a very small number of participants were able to access the furlough scheme.

Interpersonal and relational factors, such as family conflict, relationship breakdown, bereavement and domestic abuse, often contributed to homelessness. Many participants also cited poor physical health – as a result of persistent health conditions or sustaining an injury – as contributing to their inability to work and their housing situation. Participants also mentioned mental health problems and substance misuse, primarily in relation to alcohol, as contributors.

Many participants faced barriers to accessing sufficient support, which contributed to their experience of homelessness. While some issues with support were typical of the general UK homeless population, participants also cited issues specifically applicable to EEA citizens, such as the habitual residence test, as well as language barriers and a lack of awareness of the welfare system.

Most participants were aware of the EU Settlement Scheme and had made an application. However, a third had pre-settled status and were therefore not necessarily entitled to certain benefits unless they could demonstrate another qualifying 'right to reside' for benefit purposes. Some participants' applications for benefits were rejected as a result. Others said they were unable to claim benefits because they were still waiting for an outcome to their EUSS application.

The impacts of homelessness were wide-ranging and often related to the initial causes. In a number of cases, homelessness led to a deterioration of health and these problems were difficult to cope with while homeless. Experiencing homelessness also often exacerbated mental health problems and some reported resorting to alcohol to cope with their situation. While employment struggles were a key cause of homelessness, being homeless often exacerbated the difficulty in finding employment as well. Lack of money meant some went into debt or had to sell possessions.

In recounting experiences of support, participants overwhelmingly emphasised the intervention of one key individual allowing them to make progress, such as a specific family nurse or council worker. Some participants also recounted system failures resulting in insufficient support or advice, such as delays in accessing homelessness assistance, discrimination from a healthcare provider, and insufficient help from

the police and helpline services when experiencing domestic abuse. Language barriers were also a key issue preventing participants from accessing support, because they could not convey their circumstances sufficiently or were unable to understand their rights.

Many relied on the voluntary sector, such as homelessness charities, migrants' rights charities and faith-based organisations, rather than mainstream support services. Interviewees also received help from family and friends. However, for some participants, moving to the UK and becoming homeless had made it harder to rely on informal support networks.

Concerning participants' hopes for the future, most hoped to remain in the UK and wished to find work and recover from their hardships. When asked what could be done to help them, some suggestions included better access to language support and assistance with learning English; help with finding work; greater legal or practical support to navigate bureaucratic systems; more affordable housing and better access to temporary accommodation; and improved mechanisms to prevent exploitative landlords.

Chapter 6:
Conclusions and policy implications

This research project has helped to shed light on the scale, causes, and experiences of EEA citizens experiencing homelessness and housing difficulties in Great Britain. Through new quantitative and qualitative analysis, we have built up a picture of how many EEA citizens face different types of homelessness, the reasons behind their circumstances, and the daily impacts of their housing difficulties.

The research builds on previous work, including a scoping study and estimates of 'core homelessness' across Great Britain, and has entailed a review of literature and policy, detailed interrogation of a range of secondary statistical sources, two distinct surveys of the target population, and qualitative interviews with EEA citizens experiencing homelessness. The research was conducted largely during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, bringing fresh evidence of experiences and challenges arising during this period.

Our review of existing data and literature in Chapter Three highlighted

that the population of EEA citizens in Britain grew rapidly over the period after 2004. Before the end of the transition period, EEA citizens had the right to live, work and study in the UK under free movement rules. Access to benefits depended on being able to demonstrate a qualifying 'right to reside' – for instance, as a worker, former worker, or someone with permanent residence. New restrictions in 2013-15 made it harder for EEA citizens to access benefits – in particular, by preventing those with the right to reside as a jobseeker from accessing Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

EEA citizens from the new member states tend to have high employment rates, but are concentrated in low-paid occupations and often face precarious employment and poor working conditions. The housing profile of EEA citizens is not very well documented but it is clear that they are heavily concentrated in the private rented sector and are more subject to poor conditions and overcrowding.

UK and international research underlines that the fundamental causes of homelessness relate to poverty, but are often exacerbated by tight housing markets and the limitations of housing subsidies or allowances, as well as a wider range of demographic, labour market, health, relationship or life event factors. Some people experiencing homelessness experience more severe complex needs, such as substance misuse or mental health problems, although some studies suggest these are less prevalent among EEA citizens experiencing homelessness.

Our quantitative analysis – set out in detail in Chapter Four – has found that, at a point in time in the 2018-19 period before the Covid-19 pandemic, approximately 22,000 EEA households were experiencing core homelessness in Great Britain, indicating a markedly higher risk than for the overall population . This included around 2,300 rough sleepers (approaching three times the average risk) and around 12,900 'sofa surfers' (those staying temporarily with other households without their own bedroom), around 4,600 in hostels, refuges, and shelters, around 1,200 in unsuitable temporary accommodation (such as B&Bs), and around 1,200 in unconventional forms of accommodation (such as cars, vans and tents). EEA homelessness was particularly concentrated in London, as well as in the East Midlands and the East of England.

These are likely to be conservative estimates given that response rates in key data sets are expected to be low and many EEA citizens do not apply to their local authority for homelessness assistance. Moreover, our modelling suggests that core homelessness among this group is expected to increase in the coming years.

Our new surveys – including our targeted survey of EEA citizens experiencing housing difficulties and homelessness and our 'respondent driven sampling' survey of Polish residents in Luton – gave us new insights into the likely demographics and socioeconomic profile of the EEA homeless population. The surveys of EEA citizens indicated that core homelessness – in particular rough sleeping – was more common for men of working age. Single people and multi-adult groups were disproportionately likely to have recently faced core homelessness.

The findings from the surveys indicated that EEA households experiencing core homelessness generally had low employment rates and exceptionally low or zero income. Many reported a range of adverse events over the past year, including job losses, financial difficulties and health problems. Descriptive and modelling evidence highlighted the significant role of lack of access to benefits and English language proficiency. While less than half of those surveyed who had experienced rough sleeping or core homelessness had received settled or pre-settled status at the time of the survey (approximately 3-6 month before the EU Settlement Scheme deadline), the vast majority said they wanted to stay in the UK in future.

As we explored in Chapter Five, our qualitative analysis consisted of interviews with 28 EEA citizens who had faced homelessness and housing difficulties. We found that the causes of homelessness were often

multifaceted and complex, generally involving several contributing and intersecting factors. Employment issues, such as experiencing insecure work or difficulty finding a job outside the formal economy, were often a catalyst that triggered journeys into homelessness. A number of participants spoke of their experiences of low-paid and exploitative work, while others highlighted how they had fallen out of employment as a result of the pandemic. Interpersonal and relational factors, such as family conflict, relationship breakdown, bereavement and domestic abuse, also played a role. Finally, restrictions on access to welfare support were further significant drivers of homelessness.

The impacts of homelessness and housing difficulties on individuals were wide-ranging and often related to the initial causes. Participants spoke of worsening physical health, mental health problems, and resorting to alcohol to cope with their situation. They mentioned difficulties in finding employment, falling into debt, and selling possessions due to lack of income.

Many participants faced barriers to accessing sufficient support, both in preventing their housing situations from deteriorating and once they became homeless. In some cases, this related to language difficulties, which meant they struggled to convey their circumstances sufficiently or did not understand their rights. Some were also restricted from accessing certain benefits because they were out of work, likely as a result of the habitual residence test. Other participants said they were unable to claim benefits because they were still waiting for the outcome of their EU Settlement Scheme application.

Policy implications
Our research findings point to a number of implications for how to develop effective policy responses to homelessness among EEA citizens.

First, it is clear from our study that, for EEA citizens, structural factors related to employment and housing play a critical role in contributing to homelessness. In many cases, EEA citizens are subject to some of the worst conditions in the labour and housing market, including low pay, long hours, high rents, overcrowding, and various forms of exploitation. These experiences reflect wider challenges for economic and housing policy, including problems related to poverty, insecurity, and under-employment. Addressing these challenges will likely require considering more effective regulation of both the private rental sector and industries which heavily employ EEA workers, such as construction, cleaning, and hospitality.

Second, our analysis highlights long-standing weaknesses with the UK's system for providing welfare and accommodation support. Some of these weaknesses apply to the system in general – for instance, inadequate benefit levels and poor housing conditions. However, others relate specifically to the situation for EEA citizens. In a number of cases, EEA citizens with pre-settled status were refused benefits because they were not in work – most likely as a result of failing the habitual residence test due to not having a 'right to reside' for the purpose of accessing benefits. In other cases, EEA citizens said they had faced difficulties securing benefits because of delays in processing their application to the EU Settlement Scheme. These examples illustrate systemic issues with the welfare and immigration rules for EEA citizens, including long waiting times, complex administrative procedures, and opaque decision-making.

Third, the study makes clear the need for tailored support for EEA citizens to resolve their housing difficulties. Our research indicates that many EEA citizens can struggle to access support due to language barriers and

confusion over rights. This highlights the need for high-quality interpretation and translation and more effective communication of EEA citizens' legal entitlements. Moreover, our findings suggest that, aside from housing and homelessness assistance, EEA citizens could benefit from other forms of help, such as English language provision, immigration and welfare advice, and mental health support. It was also clear that support with finding secure, decently paid employment in the formal labour market – including education and training relevant to key sectors such as construction, food processing, and hospitality – could be particularly valuable for supporting people on a sustainable route out of homelessness.

Finally, as we highlight in Chapter Three, the policy context for EEA citizens experiencing homelessness is fast-moving. The Covid-19 pandemic and the UK's withdrawal from EU free movement rules have had a significant impact on EEA migration flows. Combined with new rules on rights and entitlements and the introduction of temporary visa routes to relieve labour shortages, these shifting migration patterns are likely to change the profile and experiences of EEA citizens in Great Britain in future. The circumstances of EEA citizens facing homelessness and housing difficulties will therefore continue to need close monitoring in the months and years to come.

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APPENDIX 1

HOUSING DIFFICULTIES AMONG EEA NATIONALS: OVERVIEW FOR QUESTIONNAIRE PARTICIPANTS

What is this research about?
The aim of this research project is to understand the scale of housing difficulties among EEA nationals and the causes and implications of these difficulties.

This research is taking place across the country to help Crisis understand how it can help EEA nationals currently experiencing housing difficulties and those at risk of housing difficulties.

Alongside this questionnaire, we will also undertake in-depth interviews to explore the issues highlighted in this questionnaire. There is an option to take part in these interviews by ticking the relevant box towards the end of the questionnaire.

This information sheet describes in more detail the research project that you have been asked to participate in.

What is the purpose of the research?
The overall aim of this research is to provide insight into the experience of housing difficulties among EEA nationals. This will help Crisis with service planning, advocacy work, influencing government policies, and informing further research.

What will happen if I take part in the research?
If you take part in this research, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire, either online or on paper if you prefer. Please answer all the questions in the questionnaire which are relevant to you and indicate at the end whether you are willing to be contacted in future for a follow up interview. We will give you a £10 voucher as a thank you for filling in the survey. Your information will not be shared with the Home Office or any other government department.

Do I have to take part in the research?
No, it is completely voluntary. If you choose to take part, you can withdraw from the research at any time. Your decision not to answer the questionnaire will not impact in any way the services you receive from the partner organisation helping to administer the survey, or from any other agency.

Are there any risks to taking part in the research?
We don't think there are any significant risks. Some of the topics in the questionnaire are sensitive and may be difficult or uncomfortable to answer. You don't have to answer any question if you don't want to.

How will my information be used and stored?
The data will be used to help us understand EEA nationals' experiences of housing difficulties and will provide Crisis and other organisations with information on how to support them.

The information provided through this survey will be retained and analysed by researchers at IPPR and Heriot-Watt University. The data will be stored on a secure IT system. The analysis will then be passed on to Crisis. The results will be published by Crisis in a variety of formats and will inform further research. The researchers will also produce a final written report for Crisis that will be publicly available.

The data from individuals participating in the questionnaire will be anonymous in all research reports. This means we won't use your name or anything else that could identify you.

Who is involved in the research?
This project is funded by the charity Crisis, who have commissioned the Institute for Public Policy Research, Heriot-Watt University, and University College London (UCL) to undertake the research.

Who can I contact if I want to know more?
If any questions or concerns arise during or after your participation, please contact:

• Jonathan Webb on 020 7470 6110 or at j.webb@ippr.org

• Marley Morris on 020 7470 6112 or at m.morris@ippr.org

IPPR is an independent charity that carries out research and policy analysis. For more information please visit our website: https://www.ippr.org/. For more information on Crisis, please visit: https://www.crisis.org.uk/

Privacy notice
Our purposes for collecting your personal information are:

• to assist with research

• to share findings from research with you, if you want us to do this

• to send you the incentive

• to maintain a record that you have consented to this research

The data controller for this project is Crisis. The legal basis we rely on for processing your personal data (e.g. your nationality, housing situation, and occupation) is that it is necessary for the purposes of legitimate interests. Crisis' legitimate interests in processing your data are to conduct social research on the causes and impacts of housing difficulties.

For certain types of 'Special Category' data such as data on race, ethnic origin, politics, religion, trade union membership, and health, the legal basis we rely on for processing your personal data is that it is necessary for the purposes of scientific research.

We will keep your name, contact details (if you give us them) and consent form on our records until the end of the project when we will securely destroy them.

You can end your participation at any time. We won't share any other personal information that could identify you, unless for safeguarding reasons we are required by law to do so.

We will keep your information safe and only use it in the ways you agree to.

The data you have contributed to the research will only be shared with: IPPR; Heriot-Watt research staff; UCL research staff; [INSERT LOCAL ORGANISATION] staff handling the survey; and staff within the research team at Crisis who have commissioned this project. At the end of this research

project, all data held by IPPR, Heriot-Watt and UCL will be transferred to Crisis. Crisis will store the research data securely. Crisis may use this data in other research during this time, but only after it has anonymised the data. By the end of 2025, Crisis will securely destroy all of the research data.

You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time - if you do that, we'll delete the personal data we have about you. To withdraw your consent or to request information about our research, contact us on j.webb@ippr.org or m.morris@ippr.org. Your decision not to answer the questionnaire will not impact in any way the services you receive from the partner organisation helping administer the survey, or from any other agency.

Crisis is the data controller for the information you provide. Details of your rights under Data Protection Act 2018, including details of Crisis' Data Protection Officer, your rights as a Data Subject, and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office are available at the following link: https://www.crisis.org.uk/about-us/privacy-statement.

Housing difficulties among EEA nationals research project: Informed consent to participate in research and to share your contact details with us

Please tick if you agree:

☐ I have read the information sheet, or it was read to me, and I understand the contents.

☐ I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

☐ I understand that my responses to the research questions - once anonymised - may be used in other research that Crisis is working on.

☐ I agree that IPPR can record my name and a copy of my consent form, so that they know what I have consented to.

☐ I understand my responses to the questionnaire will be recorded and stored securely.

Name of Participant (printed): _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 2
TARGETED SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
SURVEY: UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS AMONGST EEA NATIONALS

Introductory Questions

1. What is your nationality? Tick all those that apply.

Austria	
Belgium	
Bulgaria	
Croatia	
Cyprus	
Czech Republic	
Denmark	
Estonia	
Finland	
France	
Germany	
Greece	
Hungary	
Iceland	
Ireland	
Italy	
Latvia	
Liechtenstein	
Lithuania	
Luxembourg	
Malta	
Netherlands	
Norway	
Poland	
Portugal	
Romania	
Slovakia	
Slovenia	
Spain	
Sweden	
Switzerland	
United Kingdom	
Other	

If you only ticked 'United Kingdom', 'Ireland' or 'Other' for question 1, you do not need to any further questions. Thank you for your time.

Housing and homelessness

2. We would like to ask you about the difficulties you may have experienced with your housing situation. Please tick below the boxes which have applied to you since moving to the UK (you may tick more than one box).

	Experienced this ever?	Experienced this in the past two years?	Experienced this since March 2020?
I applied to the Council for housing assistance because I was told to leave my home			
I applied to the Council for housing assistance because I didn't have anywhere to live			
I have had to 'sleep rough'			
I have had to stay with friends or relatives on a short term or insecure basis because I did not have anywhere else to live			
I have had to stay in emergency or temporary accommodation (e.g. hostel, refuge, B&B, shelter)			
I have had to stay in very crowded accommodation sharing a bedroom with non-family members			
I have had to stay or sleep in some other unconventional housing or space (e.g. car, van, bus, train, boat, tent, caravan, squat, shed, garage, warehouse)			
Other			
None of the above			

If you ticked 'None of the above' for question 2, you do not need to any further questions. Thank you for your time.

3. If you have stayed at the home of a friend or relative because you did not have anywhere else to stay, please state whether you had your own bedroom or if you slept in a living room or other shared space. (You may tick more than one box)

I have/had my own bedroom	
I slept in a living room or other shared space	
I have not stayed at the home of a friend or relative	

4. If you have had to stay or sleep in some other unconventional housing or space, was this … (you may tick more than one box)

A car	
A van or lorry	
A caravan or motor-home	
A (night) bus or train	
A boat	
A tent	
A 'squat' in an empty house	
A 'squat' in an industrial or commercial building or warehouse	
A shed or garage or barn	
Other	

5. In what sort of place are you living at the moment?

Flat or house of your own, either rented or owned	
Flat or house which you share with other people/households	
A hostel, refuge, B&B, hotel, night shelter	
A temporary flat/house arranged by council or support agency	
Your partner's, parent's or other family/friend's house	
Sleeping rough	
Other	

6. If you are renting or own your home, please state which of these applies to you?

Renting from a private landlord	
Renting from a council or housing association	
Own a home	

Time in the UK

7. What year did you first arrive in the UK? If you have always lived in the UK, please answer not applicable.

Year of arrival	
Not applicable	

8. Apart from holidays and short visits abroad, have you lived in the UK continuously since you arrived in the UK?

Yes	
No	

9. If no, what year did you last arrive in the UK?

Year of last arrival	

10. What was your main reason for coming to the UK? Please tick the one that most applies

For employment (I had a job offer before moving to the UK)	
For employment (I did not have a job offer before moving to the UK)	
For study	
As a family member of a person already living in the UK	
As a family member of someone coming to the UK	
As a visitor	
Other reason	

About you

11. How would you describe your gender?

Male	
Female	
Transgender	
Other	

12. How old are you?

13. Who did you move to the UK with?

Alone	
With partner	
With partner and children and/or dependents	
Single with children and/or dependents	
With other adults (not family)	

14. Do you currently live alone or with others/family? (Tick all those that apply)

Alone	
Partner	
Family	
Others (not family)	

15. If you don't live alone, please state the number of adults that live with you.

16. If children or dependents live with you, please state the number living with you.

Education and work

17. At what age did you finish your full time education?

18. Where did you get your qualifications (tick all that apply)?

From school	
From college or university	
From work	
In some other way	
I have no qualifications	

19. Regarding your current employment status, which of the following best describes you:

Working	
Self-employed	
Unemployed and seeking work	
On furlough	
In education or training	
At home caring for family members	
Unable to work because of disability or illness	
Retired from paid work	
Not in paid work for some other reason	

20. If your employment status has changed due to Coronavirus, which of the following best describes your situation in February 2020:

Working	
Self-employed	
Unemployed and seeking work	
On furlough	
In education or training	
At home caring for family members	
Unable to work because of disability or illness	
Retired from paid work	
Not in paid work for some other reason	
My situation has not changed	

21. If you work, how many hours a week do you currently work? If you have worked in the past 12 months but are currently not working, please answer the question based on your last job.

22. If your hours have changed due to Coronavirus, please state how many hours a week you were working in February 2020.

23. Which of the following best describes your current occupation? If you have worked in the past 12 months but are currently not working, please answer the question based on your last job.

Manual work	
Clerical and administrative work	
Sales and service work	
Professional work	
Other	

24. If you are in work, please state whether you have a contract. If you have worked in the past 12 months but are currently not working, please answer the question based on your last job.

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

25. If you are in work please state whether you receive your payment into a bank account or via cash in hand. If you have worked in the past 12 months but are currently not working, please answer the question based on your last job.

Via a bank account	
Cash in hand	
Both	
Don't know	

26. If you are in work please state whether you have received abusive behaviour or threats from your current employer. If you have worked in the past 12 months but are currently not working, please answer the question based on your last job.

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

27. If you are in work please state whether you are a member of a union. If you have worked in the past 12 months but are currently not working, please answer the question based on your last job.

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

Finances

28. To the best of your ability, please state what your total household income, including the income of all people living with you with whom you share expenses, was in the last month (after tax and including any benefits received).

29. If your income has changed due to Coronavirus, please state your total household income in February 2020.

30. If you pay rent, please state how much you normally pay (to the nearest pound) every month.

£

31. Has your rent changed as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic?

I'm currently paying the same rent as before March this year	
I'm currently paying less rent than before March this year	
I'm currently paying no rent at all	

32. If your rent has changed, have you agreed this change with your landlord?

Yes	
No	

33. Does anyone in your household receive state benefits in the UK?

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

34. If yes, please state which benefits your household receives. Please tick all that apply.

Universal Credit	
Working Tax Credit	
Child Tax Credit	
Child Benefit	
Housing Benefit	
Council Tax Reduction / Support	
State Pension and /or Pension Credit	
Jobseeker's Allowance	
Employment and Support Allowance and/or Income Support	
Carer's Allowance	
Disability Living Allowance	
Personal Independence Payment	
Other benefit	
Don't know	

35. In the last 12 months (or since, you arrived in the UK if you have been here less than one year), have you experienced any of the following? Please tick all that apply.

Personal finance

I have had problems with claiming benefits	
I have been behind on paying bills	
I have had to take out a loan or borrow money to meet everyday living costs	
I have had difficulties paying back a loan or money which I had borrowed	

Work

I have lost a job	
I have had my hours reduced or received a pay cut	
My employer has withheld payment for work	
I was forced by someone else into work I did not want to do	
My employer told me to go to work without safety measures to protect me from Coronavirus	

Health

I have been unable to register with a GP (a doctor)	
I have registered with a GP (a doctor) but have experienced problems with the registration process	
I have experienced problems with accessing services at a hospital	
I have experienced mental health problems (such as depression, anxiety or other mental health issues)	
I have experienced physical health problems	
I have become ill with Coronavirus symptoms	

Relationships

I have gone through a divorce or relationship breakdown	
I have experienced domestic violence or abuse	
My relationship with my parents and/or family has broken down	

Other problems

I have found it difficult to rent a property from the council or housing association	
I have found it difficult to rent privately	
I have been evicted from my home	
I had to leave my property because I couldn't afford the rent	
I have lost my ID and found it difficult to replace it	
I have found it difficult to follow the government's guidance on Coronavirus due to my housing situation	

None of these things apply to me	

36. In the last 12 months, how often on average have you had any kind of drink containing alcohol?

Every day	
5-6 times a week	
3-4 times a week	
Twice a week	
One a week	
2-3 times a month	
Once a month	
Less than once a month	
Never	
Don't know	

37. In the last 12 months, how many alcoholic drinks did you have on a typical day when you drank alcohol?

38. In the last month, have you used any of the following drugs? (tick all that apply)

Crack cocaine	
Heroin	
Cannabis	
Spice	
Powder cocaine	
Amphetamine (speed) or methamphetamine (ice)	
MDMA (ecstasy)	
Other illegal drugs	
I have not used any illegal drugs in the last month	
Don't know	

39. In the last 12 months, how often on average have you gambled (e.g. in a betting shop or on a game of chance)

Every day	
5-6 times a week	
3-4 times a week	
Twice a week	
One a week	
2-3 times a month	
Once a month	
Less than once a month	
Never	
Don't know	

Situation in the UK

40. Please state whether you have applied for Settled Status under the EU Settlement Scheme and what response you have received.

I have applied and been granted Settled Status	
I have applied and been granted Pre-Settled Status	
I have applied and am awaiting a decision	
I have applied and been turned down	
I have not yet applied	
Other	
Don't know	

41. Thinking about the future, which of the following statements is most accurate for you?

I will definitely remain living in the UK	
I will probably remain living in the UK	
I would like to remain in the UK, but I am uncertain about the future	
I am quite likely to leave the UK	
Other	
Don't know	

Refer a friend

42. If you know other people that have moved to the UK from a European country and have experienced homelessness or housing problems, please share their contact details below (please ensure that it is okay to share their contact details).

Name	
Mobile phone number	
Other phone number	
Email Address	
Contact via Organisation name	
Preferred/first Language	

Are you interested in sharing more about your experiences?

We would like to invite you to take part in an interview with a researcher, to talk in more detail about your experiences of homelessness and housing problems in the UK. We are interested in hearing about your experiences of moving to and living in the UK, and about any advice and support you may have received. We hope this will be an opportunity to share your experiences in your own words. We can provide an interpreter if you feel this would help you, and we are offering £30 (as a voucher) as a thank you for taking part in the study. Everything that you say will be strictly confidential and will have no impact on any service you receive or on your immigration status.

If you are happy to take part in an interview for this study, please share your contact details below and one of our researchers will be in touch.

Thank you very much for your participation in this study.

Name	
Mobile phone number	
Other phone number	
Email Address	
Contact via Organisation name	
Preferred/first Language	

APPENDIX 3

TOPIC GUIDE FOR QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

UNDERSTANDING HOUSING DIFFICULTIES AMONG EEA CITIZENS

Background

My name is XXX and I work for the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). We are an independent research organisation undertaking work in partnership with Crisis, Heriot-Watt University, and University College London. I am interviewing you because we are conducting research to understand the experiences and impacts of homelessness and housing difficulties for EEA citizens in the UK.

Through this research, we hope to find out more about the reasons for EEA citizens becoming homeless or having housing difficulties, their experiences of homelessness and housing difficulties, and the effects of homelessness and housing difficulties on their lives.

You have been asked to participate because of your own personal experience of housing difficulties. There are no right or wrong answers - we are just interested to find out more about your personal experiences. There are four broad areas that we will cover that relate to: your living situation, your economic situation, your personal situation, and your experiences of migration. Some of the questions are quite personal; if anything feels uncomfortable let me know and we can move on to the next question.

Everything that you say is completely confidential. You can stop the interview at any time and you do not have to answer anything you are not comfortable with. If you want to take a break, just let me know.

We will use the information to produce a report, which will summarise the findings from our interviews, as well as other research conducted as part of the project. The report will also make recommendations for how policy could be improved in response to the findings.

This interview will take about 45 minutes.

I would like to record the interview. The recording is to help me ensure that I have captured everything that you say accurately. It will be kept securely and will only be accessible to researchers working on the project. We might want to quote you but any quotes will be completely anonymous – no one will be able to tell who said it. Are you happy for me to record the interview?

Do you have any questions before we begin? *[Interviewer to note any concerns that the interviewee has – If the participant is in any way uncomfortable, do not continue the interview.]*

I will also leave you my contact details – so if there is anything that you want to ask after the interview is over, then you can get in touch.

Introduction

1. **Firstly, please could you confirm your name, age and country of birth/nationality?**

2. **How long have you have been living in the UK? Have you been in the UK continuously or have you gone back and forth?**

3. **Under what circumstances did you come to the UK?**
    Prompts: Did you come for work, for example? Was it your choice to come to the UK? [trafficking]

4. **What was your life like before you came to the UK?**
    Prompts: Did you experience any homelessness or housing difficulties before you arrived in the UK? If so, could you say more about what they were?

Living situation

5. **What sort of place are you living in at the moment?**
    Prompts: What are the conditions like? How long have you lived there? Who do you live with? Where were you living / sleeping before that? [If in temporary COVID accommodation: Are you being supported to find a permanent place to live?]

6. **In the past twelve months, have you had any experiences of housing difficulties? Can I ask what these difficulties were?**
    Prompts: Could you give further details about these difficulties? [e.g. rough sleeping, emergency or temporary accommodation, super-overcrowded accommodation]. Are you still experiencing those difficulties now?

7. **Thinking about your homelessness or housing difficulties, how did these difficulties begin?**
    Prompts: Was there anything in particular that created these difficulties or made them worse [e.g. Coronavirus]?

8. **Thinking about your experience of homelessness or housing difficulties, how is/was your daily life during this period?**
    Prompts: What impact did/does your housing difficulties have on your life? What are/were the main challenges? How are/were you able to deal with these challenges?

9. **Thinking about your experience of homelessness or housing difficulties, what are/were the key barriers to improving your housing situation?**
    Prompts: What kind of help do/did you need to overcome these barriers? What might help/have helped you to overcome these barriers?

10. **Can I ask, have you had any support to help with your housing difficulties?**
    Prompts: Who gave you this support? [e.g. local authority, charity support, friends and family] What type of support was this? [e.g. hotel accommodation during lockdown, reconnections] Have you faced any barriers in getting this support? What were they? [e.g. LA said you were not entitled to support] How was your experience of getting (or trying to get) this support? What is your view of organisations who you were offering support?

11. **How does your experience of homelessness or housing difficulties make you feel about your local community/area?**
    Prompts: Do you think that homelessness is a significant problem in your area? Are people living in this area friendly, unfriendly or indifferent towards homeless people?

Economic situation

12. **Can I ask, are you in (paid) work at the moment? What is it you do?**
    Prompts: How long have you done this work? What work have you done in the past?

13. **If you're not working at the moment, have you worked at all over the past year? What is it you did then?**
    Prompts: Can you say why you stopped? Have you experienced any difficulties finding work? What have these been? [e.g. language barriers, lack of contacts, unrecognised qualifications, discrimination due to nationality or immigration status]

14. **How do you find your experience at work?**
    Prompts: How are you treated by your employer? Do you face any particular challenges at work? [e.g. uncertain hours, irregular pay, exploitative behaviour from employer] Can I ask, have you ever been forced into work you didn't want to do? Have you ever been provided a place to live by an employer?

15. **How do you 'get by' just now?**
    Prompts: what do you do to get what you need to live [e.g. work, Universal Credit, friends / family, charitable organisations, selling Big Issue, begging]

16. **Can I just check, do you know if you're entitled to claim welfare benefits in the UK? Which ones (if any) do you [and your partner] receive just now?**
    Prompts: Have you received any other benefits in the past? Have you tried to claim benefits and been refused? If you have been refused, do you know why? How was your experience of getting (or trying to get) benefits from the government? Have you had any help to claim benefits or appeal a refusal [e.g. from friend/support worker/law centre/CAB]? [If they have children: do you received Child Benefit?]

Personal situation
Some of the next questions are a bit more sensitive; if anything feels uncomfortable let me know and we can take a break or move on to the next question.

17. **Can I ask, have you experienced any physical or mental health issues over the past twelve months?**
    Prompts: Have you had any issues getting healthcare in the UK? Have you faced any difficulties registering with a GP? How about accessing services at a hospital? Have you faced any barriers to getting access to healthcare? What were these? [e.g. language barriers, lack of information about the NHS, concerns about charging]

18. **Can I ask, how often do you drink alcohol?**
    Prompts: How much do you drink every day/week/month? Would you say that you have an alcohol problem? Are your family or friends worried about your drinking at all? How has drinking had an impact on your daily life?

19. **Can I ask if you take any other type of drugs?**
    Prompts: Can I ask what type of drugs you usually take? How often do you take these [every day/week/month]? Are your family or friends worried about this at all? Has it had an impact on your daily life?

20. **Can I ask, how often on average do you gamble (e.g. in a betting shop or on a game of chance)?**
    Prompts: How often do you gamble [every day/week/month]? Are your family or friends worried about your gambling at all? How has gambling had an impact, if any, on your daily life?

21. **Can I ask, do you think that your housing situation has affected your mental health and wellbeing?**
    Prompts: Have you had any experiences of anxiety or depression? Have you ever felt lonely or isolated? Do you think you have people you can turn to for help?

22. **How has your housing situation affected your relationships with friends and family?**
    Prompts: Can I ask, have you recently experienced any difficulties in relationships with people close to you? [e.g. a divorce or relationship breakdown]

23. **Can I ask, do you have experience of being exploited?**
    Prompts: Have you had your independence taken away, such as through threats, or financial means? Have you ever felt forced to do work of any kind? Has anyone ever tried to take your passport?

Experience of migration

24. **Can I just check whether you've applied for the government's EU Settlement Scheme? Were you successful?**
    Prompts: Did you get settled or pre-settled status? Is this the outcome you expected? How was your experience of applying for the scheme? If you haven't yet applied, would you mind if I ask the reason you haven't yet applied to the scheme? Are there any particular barriers you face in applying or any concerns you have [e.g. COVID-19]? Do you think you have the information you need to apply [e.g. ID]? Do you believe that the scheme will protect your rights?

25. **Can I ask whether you think you've experienced any discrimination in the UK because of your country of origin?**
    Prompts: If you are comfortable discussing this, would you mind sharing what this was? [e.g. discrimination at work, in renting from a landlord, in accessing public services or government support, or elsewhere] Have you ever experienced harassment or hate speech because of your country of origin? Has this changed at all since the time you arrived in the UK?

The future

26. **Can I ask what your plans for the future are?**
    Prompts: Are you planning to stay in the UK or move to a different country? Has the UK's exit from the EU or the Coronavirus pandemic changed your plans at all?

27. **What could the [UK/Scottish/Welsh] government do to support people in your situation?**
    Prompts: What type of support could have helped you? What would have helped you get this support more easily? What support do you wish you had had?

28. **Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't covered?**

CriSiS

**Together
we will end
homelessness**