



Together  
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homelessness

# The homelessness monitor: England 2022

**Beth Watts, Glen Bramley, Hal Pawson, Gillian Young, Suzanne Fitzpatrick, & Lynne McMordie**, Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research (I-SPHERE), Heriot-Watt University; City Futures Research Centre, University of New South Wales.

February 2022



## The homelessness monitor

The homelessness monitor is a longitudinal study providing an independent analysis of the homelessness impacts of recent economic and policy developments across Great Britain. Separate reports are produced for England, Scotland and Wales.

This tenth annual report updates our account of how homelessness stands in England in 2021, or as close to 2021 as data availability allows. It also highlights emerging trends and forecasts some of the likely future changes, identifying the developments likely to have the most significant impacts on homelessness.

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## About Crisis

Crisis is the national charity for homeless people. We help people directly out of homelessness, and campaign for the social changes needed to solve it altogether. We know that together we can end homelessness.

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**Disclaimer:** All views and any errors contained in this report are the responsibility of the authors. The views expressed should not be assumed to be those of Crisis or any of the key informants who assisted with this work.

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			GDP	Gross Domestic Product
			GFC	Global Financial Crisis
			GLA	Greater London Authority
			GVA	Gross Value Added
			HB	Housing Benefits
			H-CLIC	Case-level statutory homelessness data collection tool
			HRA	Homelessness Reduction Act
			IFS	Institute of Fiscal Studies
			JRF	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
			LA	Local authority
			LHA	Local Housing Allowance
			MD	Main Duty
			MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
			NAO	National Audit Office
			NRPF/Other RE	Non-UK nationals with No Recourse to Public Funds or other restricted eligibility for statutory support
			OBR	Office for Budget Responsibility
			PRS	Private Rented Sector
			RSAP	Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme
			SMD	Severe and Multiple Disadvantage
			TA	Temporary Accommodation
			UC	Universal Credit

# Foreword

The findings of the 2022 England Homelessness Monitor create huge cause for concern. Whilst we know the decisive action at the start of the pandemic saved thousands of lives, councils are now warning of rising homelessness. We can't let this happen.

Thanks to Everyone In, over 37,000 people sleeping rough or at risk of doing so were given accommodation, including people who are usually excluded from receiving any support because of their immigration status. We also saw a shift away from using dormitory-style accommodation because of the concerns about the health impact of this, giving people greater dignity when they had their own living space instead. Financial measures that have now ended – including furlough, the evictions moratorium, and uplifts to Universal Credit and LHA – were also crucial in preventing people from becoming homelessness.

Support like this made an enormous difference. Local authorities all report it has since become harder and harder to house people in both private or social accommodation, with thousands of households still trapped in emergency accommodation and B&Bs.

What the pandemic illustrated, in my view, is how it's possible to support more people experiencing homelessness and reduce the number of people who become homeless. When political will changed, unfair restrictions that prevent some homeless people from receiving support were removed, and people who become homeless when their rent is unaffordable, or because they are evicted without adequate notice, were given stronger protection.

We are now facing a cost of living crisis that will see people all over the country paying hundreds of pounds more for their energy and day-to-day essentials. The evidence from both policy specialists and people on the frontline is telling us that if nothing changes, levels of homelessness will increase significantly. Heriot Watt University's projections in this report show that under the status quo, levels of 'core' homelessness will have gone up by one third between 2019 and 2024.

This should shock and concern all of us – but it can be prevented. The modelling in this report shows that targeted policy changes, such as reinstating the £20 uplift Universal Credit, and raising and indexing Local Housing Allowance, would have an enormous impact.

I also want to acknowledge the research contains valuable insight into areas of homelessness policy that are part of longer-term solutions to ending homelessness, including important progress that's been made as a result of the Housing First pilots and the Homelessness Reduction Act.

But I'm struck once again by the huge number of people facing homelessness who have to go through the often complex and frightening process of requesting support from their local council only to be told they cannot be given accommodation because they are not in 'priority' need, or that they were 'intentionally' homeless. This was the case for at least 22,000 families and individuals in 2020-21.

Homelessness shouldn't be 'managed' in this way which says some people 'deserve' to be helped and others do not. Homelessness can and should be ended for everyone.



Matt Downie  
Chief Executive, Crisis

# Executive summary

## Key points

The Homelessness Monitor series is a longitudinal study providing an independent analysis of the homelessness impacts of recent economic and policy developments across Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> This tenth annual Homelessness Monitor England updates our account of how homelessness stands in 2021, or as close to 2021 as data availability allows. This year's report focuses on two key themes: first, the homelessness impacts associated with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and second, rough sleeping and responses to it, which have been a major Government policy priority both before and during the COVID-19 crisis. The report also includes a comprehensive analysis of Homelessness Reduction Act processes and outcomes, as well as updated modelling estimates and forward projections of extreme forms of 'core' homelessness.

Key points to emerge from our latest analysis are as follows:

- Some 282,000 single people, couples and families were judged as homeless or threatened with homelessness by local authorities in 2020/21, an 8% fall on 2019/20 levels. This reduction resulted wholly from a 20% drop in the numbers assessed as 'threatened with homelessness', with numbers assessed as actually homeless up by 7%.
- Applications involving family households fell by 22% in 2020/21, whereas single adult household applications rose by 3%. People losing accommodation provided by family or friends, or homeless due to relationship breakdown or domestic abuse account for just over half of all applications in 2020/21 (53%), up by 14% on the previous year. These trends reflect pandemic-related homelessness drivers, including evictions protections

disproportionately protecting families, and the intensification of pressures within the home putting those in informal sofa-surfing arrangements and experiencing domestic abuse at greater risk.

- While overall statutory homelessness demand decreased slightly in the first pandemic year, total temporary accommodation placements continued to increase (up by 4% in 2020/21), and Bed and Breakfast hotel placements rose very significantly (by 37%). Some of this increase reflects actions under the Everyone In programme, although such placements are unlikely to have been comprehensively recorded through standard statutory homelessness statistics.
  - The vast majority of local authority homelessness Main Duty decision outcomes (77%) involve the household accepting a social housing tenancy offer, with an additional 7% accepting an offer of private rented sector accommodation. Most local authority survey respondents (78%) reported that access to private rented sector accommodation became more difficult during 2020/21, with 57% identifying access to the social rented sector as becoming more challenging also.
  - While Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 provisions give far better protection to single homeless households than the prior legal framework, some (mainly single) applicants still navigate the system without having secured settled accommodation. In 2020/21, this included around 22,000 homeless households deemed either not to be in priority need or to be intentionally homeless.
  - 'Core homelessness' in England – a concept which captures the most acute forms of homelessness – is estimated to have totalled 203,400 in 2020, down 5% on 2019 levels.
- This reduction is primarily due to the Everyone In initiative, with clear reductions in rough sleeping (down 33%) and sofa surfing (down 11%), albeit somewhat offset by an increase in forms of core homelessness associated with emergency accommodation brought on stream as part of the pandemic response.
- It is predicted that the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic risks a substantial rise in core homelessness, with overall levels expected to sit one-third higher than 2019 levels on current trends. Anticipated increases could however be avoided. Levels of rough sleeping are also predicted to rise, despite the Government's target of ending this form of homelessness by 2024, but these rises could be avoided. The largest rough sleeping reductions are forecast to be associated with a package of welfare benefit policies aimed at reducing destitution. Policies seeking to reduce evictions and scale up Housing First would also contribute to reducing rough sleeping on this timescale.
  - In the longer term, the largest potential contributions to reduce core homelessness would come from raising the Local Housing Allowance, rehousing quotas for core homeless households, consistent large-scale application of Housing First accompanied by appropriate rehabilitation provision and a reduction of traditional hostel accommodation, and welfare benefit measures to reduce destitution. Maximised prevention, boosted social housing supply, and a successful 'levelling up' of economic performance across the English regions would also help reduce core homelessness in the long run.
  - The Everyone In initiative prompted by the pandemic accommodated over 37,000 individuals experiencing or at risk of rough sleeping between March 2020 and January 2021, including those usually excluded

<sup>1</sup> Parallel Homelessness Monitors have recently been published for Scotland and Wales. All of the UK Homelessness Monitor reports are available from <http://www.crisis.org.uk/pages/homelessnessmonitor.html>

from assistance because of their immigration status. The early response is calculated to have prevented substantial numbers of COVID-19 infections, hospitalisations and deaths among the target cohort. Substantial reductions in rough sleeping (of 37% between Autumn 2019 and Autumn 2020 on one key measure) and radically reduced reliance on the use of dormitory-style night shelters in winter 2020/21 were also achieved as a result. The pandemic response also engendered much improved joint working between the homelessness and health sectors.

- Key limitations of the Everyone In response included patchy accommodation quality and insufficient support provision for those accommodated in some areas. It is also clear that the emergency response worked less well for particular groups, including young people, women and those with more complex needs. Non-UK nationals with No Recourse to Public Funds or other restricted eligibility for statutory support have been subject to inconsistent treatment following a shift in Government messaging and the ramping down of funding.
- Available data indicates that more than two thirds (over 26,000) of those accommodated via Everyone In have been moved on to more settled accommodation options including rental tenancies or supported accommodation placements. There are concerns, however, about those who have left emergency accommodation without a settled or appropriate offer. Most local authorities have found it challenging to secure move-on accommodation for those with complex needs or No Recourse to Public Funds.
- The Government target of ending rough sleeping by 2024 has been supported by substantially

increased investment, including via the Rough Sleeping Initiative. Progress against this target has been radically accelerated by responses to the pandemic. But there is little confidence in the Government's ability to achieve this objective without a clear definition of what 'ending rough sleeping' means in practice, an agreed approach to measurement, an updated strategy, a wider focus on rough sleeping prevention and move-on, and a willingness to address the clear tensions between the target and immigration policy.

- Initial evaluation outputs indicate positive results for the more than 500 people accommodated via the Government-funded Housing First Pilots in three regions, albeit that numbers are short of target, reflecting challenges associated with the regional scale of the pilots and the pandemic. Access to housing, challenges sustaining low caseloads, and difficulties recruiting appropriate staff were identified as key challenges. Housing First-type services are reportedly also in operation in a majority of local authority areas in England (59%), albeit that fidelity to Housing First principles varies.
- The pandemic significantly accelerated the support offered to single homeless households, in line with one of the key aims of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Resourcing and administration of the Act is a key challenge for local authorities. Stakeholders nevertheless see the Act as failing to adequately expand statutory support for homeless households: the continued lack of entitlement to accommodation for some groups and the 'duty to refer' (rather than cooperate) placed on wider partners are two key weaknesses. New provisions according automatic 'priority need' status to households homeless as a result of domestic

abuse were strongly welcomed and anticipated to contribute to increased demand from this group in the future.

- While overall poverty rates remained largely stable in the ten years to 2019/20, child poverty (after housing costs) increased by 4% to 31% and child poverty among larger families by 12% to 47% linked to specific welfare reforms including the Benefit Cap, the 'two child' limit on Child Tax Credit and Universal Credit claims. Poverty also became increasingly skewed towards households with someone in work.
- Deep poverty and destitution were also on upward trajectories prior to the onset of the pandemic. These issues are very likely to be compounded by the 'cost of living crisis', which saw prices rise by their highest rate for 30 years in the year to December 2021.
- The £20 uplift in the Universal Credit weekly allowance boosted claimant income during the pandemic, though it was not extended to legacy benefits. It was ended in October 2021 affecting 3.6 million households. The refreezing of Local Housing Allowance rates from 2021/22 will also put pressure on claimant household budgets in the context of rising rents.
- An estimated 7% of private tenants were in arrears in April-May 2021, 4 percentage points more than in 2019/20. While protections introduced during the pandemic prevented widespread evictions from rental housing, numbers have been increasing significantly since the end of the eviction ban at the close of May 2021. There are mounting concerns that evictions could rise sharply in 2022, depending on landlord behaviour and court capacity.
- The Affordable Homes Programme remains heavily focused on delivery

of 'affordable rented' homes generally seen to be unaffordable for many low-income households. Just 11% of all new affordable homes provided with government support in 2020/21 were for (lower cost) social rent, down from 65% in 2011/12. This has been accompanied by a long-term decline in new social lettings, with the 2019/20 total (149,000) 47,000 (24%) fewer than in 2011/12. While the share of all lettings to new social tenants (excluding supported housing or hostel) allocated to statutory homeless households increased in the nine years to 2019/20 (from 20% to 26%), the actual numbers of tenancies allocated to this group remained broadly static, averaging 39,000 per annum.

- COVID-19 inflicted considerable damage on the economy during 2020. 2021 has seen some bounce back, but considerable uncertainty remains regarding when and how the economy will recover following the pandemic-shock. Government plans to increase spending on public services, including health and local government, will depend on the performance of the economy and pandemic-related developments. Uncertain economic prospects and the deepening living cost crisis has led to mounting concerns there may be a surge in homelessness in 2022.

### **Trends in homelessness** **Statutory homelessness**

In 2020/21, the initial pandemic year, total eligible homelessness applications fell back by 8%, from 306,000 in 2019/20 to 282,000. This came about wholly because of a 20% reduction in those classed as threatened with homelessness. Applicants owed the relief duty (because they are currently experiencing homelessness, rather than threatened with it) continued to increase in 2020/21 – up by 7% year-on-year and 23% over two years.

The number of households deemed unintentionally homeless and in priority need at the Main Duty decision stage totalled 39,210 in 2020/21, around the same as the year prior, but a substantial reduction on the 57,000 households owed Main Duty in the year prior to the Homelessness Reduction Act coming into force. This reflects that a much higher proportion of those seeking help are assisted at an early stage under prevention or relief duties.

Most local authorities (two thirds) responding in our survey reported an increase in the overall number of households seeking homelessness assistance in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20. The majority (51%) also reported having undertaken more homelessness prevention in the pandemic year. These results are in some tension with the administrative statistics presented above and may in part be explained by activity in relation to the Everyone In initiative not being comprehensively captured in official statistics. Reports of increased prevention activity may reflect work undertaken prior to the 56 day window specified by the legal framework and/or be reflective of the intensity rather than quantum of prevention work local authorities were engaged in during the pandemic.

The bulk of those assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness in 2020/21 (67%) were single adults. Nevertheless, the reduction in households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness in the initial pandemic year, is entirely reflective of a drop in family homelessness: the number of couples with children fell by 33% and single parent by 19%. Single adult households, by contrast, slightly increased – by 3%. These trends reflect the disproportionate protection given to families by evictions restrictions, given their greater likelihood of occupying self-contained rented accommodation as compared to single

person households. Conversely, the increase in single person homeless households in 2020/21 reflects their greater likelihood of being accommodated informally by family or friends and the pressures on such sofa-surfing type arrangements during the pandemic.

Reflecting these same pandemic-related drivers, the mix of 'immediate reasons for homelessness' changed substantially in 2020/21. Family/friend exclusions were up by 17%, so too those made homeless due to domestic abuse. These were more than counterbalanced by the substantially reduced numbers of private renters (down 37%) and social renters (down 31%) whose tenancy had ended for some reason.

Temporary accommodation placements rose 4% in the year to March 2021, standing at 95,000, continuing a decade-long trend which has seen overall placement levels almost double compared to their 2010 low just above 50,000. While the bulk of temporary accommodation placements involve self-contained units, Bed and Breakfast hotel placements increased sharply (by 37%) in 2020/21. Though mainly used for childless households, at 31 March 2021, 4,000 households with children were residing in Bed and Breakfast hotels (24% of all households in such accommodation). Stakeholders reported that unprecedented demand for temporary accommodation during the pandemic has led to longer stays. There were also anxieties that an official focus on the substantial and rising numbers in temporary accommodation, including families with children, has been crowded out as a policy priority by the Government's focus on rough sleeping.

Turning to the outcomes achieved for households owed prevention or relief duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act, a substantial proportion involved social rented housing. Indeed,

the number of new social rental tenancies facilitated via prevention and relief activity (14,760 relief cases, and a proportion of the 20,180 prevention cases resolved by securing existing or new socially rented accommodation) was certainly not far short of the number enabled through Main Duty decisions (18,280) – and it could have been greater. A significant proportion of prevention and relief cases were resolved by supported housing being offered or re-secured (having been at risk). While the Act requires all such accommodation to be available for at least six months, this housing outcome nevertheless encompasses a very wide range of types of accommodation, from secure tenancies in self-contained supported accommodation models, to placements in hostel-type congregate accommodation in which residents have very little security of tenure.

In the case of outcomes for households owed the main rehousing duty (i.e. those for whom prevention and relief efforts have failed and who are deemed to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need), the vast majority (77%) were offered a tenancy, usually in the social rented sector (albeit that higher use was made of privately rented tenancies in London).

It should also be noted that substantial numbers of (mainly single) homeless applicants still reached the end of the Homelessness Reduction Act system without having secured settled accommodation, or even having had such accommodation offered to them. In 2020/21, around 22,000 homeless households were deemed as either not in priority need or intentionally homeless, and therefore not owed the main rehousing duty. This is in addition to the households who exit the system at earlier stages without having been assisted to secure settled accommodation, including the 36,000 households for whom the relief duty is ended without having been helped into new accommodation or referred

for a Main Duty assessment because they lose contact etc.

Almost four fifths (78%) of local authority survey respondents reported that access to private rented tenancies for homeless households had become more challenging in 2020/21 as compared to the year prior. Key here was the role of the evictions moratorium in available lets, but also a perceived increase in landlord exits from the sector as well as intensified selectivity on the part of landlords in choosing tenants. Increased market buoyancy and higher rents appears to have cancelled out any initial gains associated with the rebasing of Local Housing Allowance rates in early 2020.

Well over half of local authorities also reported access to social rented tenancies for homeless households also becoming harder in 2020/21, linked to a slowing of vacant property turnarounds since the onset of the pandemic and lower turnover linked to evictions protections. Reflecting longer-standing concerns, a large majority of local authorities reported that affordability or financial capability checks by housing providers make accessing social housing difficult for homeless households in their area. Housing association reluctance to accommodate those with more complex needs was also a widespread concern. While some stakeholders were highly critical of what they perceived as providers' abnegation of their social mission, others were understanding of these practices in the context of prevailing social security policy and challenges accessing and funding appropriate floating support.

Access to supported accommodation for homeless households during 2020/21 was seen to have deteriorated by a lower proportion of local authorities (47%), but against a backdrop of pre-existing insufficient supply. Beyond issues of access, stakeholders highlighted concerns regarding the quality of some

supported accommodation. Especially urgent issues were emphasized in relation to the provision of very poor quality 'exempt accommodation' in some areas, with little if any support in place, run by private companies with complex governance arrangements and subject to minimal scrutiny and oversight due to gaps in the relevant regulatory frameworks.<sup>2</sup>

### Core homelessness

The concept of 'core homelessness' captures some of the most severe and immediate forms of homelessness, including people sleeping rough, staying in places not intended as residential accommodation (e.g. cars, tents, boats, sheds, etc.), living in homeless hostels, refuges and shelters, placed in unsuitable temporary accommodation (e.g. Bed and Breakfast hotels, Out of Area Placements, etc.), and sofa surfing (i.e., staying with non-family, on a short-term basis, in overcrowded conditions).

Pre-COVID-19, core homelessness was on a gradually rising trajectory, up 14% between 2012 and 2019, with the largest increases being for unsuitable temporary accommodation (194%) and rough sleeping (85%). In 2020, however, the number of core homeless households in England was about 203,400, down somewhat (5%) from 213,200 in 2019. This is primarily attributable to the Everyone In initiative, with clear reductions in rough sleeping (down nearly 4,800 or 33%) and sofa surfing (down 13,300 or 11%), but partially offset by an increase in hostels, etc. (up nearly 7,700 or 18%) because of the additional emergency accommodation introduced in response to the pandemic. London remains the most important hotspot for core homelessness, albeit that the

gap with other regions has narrowed noticeably as rates in London have fallen in recent years.

Looking ahead, our predictions indicate an increase in core homelessness from 2021, assuming no significant amendment to existing housing, homelessness and social security policies.<sup>3</sup> Overall core homelessness in 2024 is projected to be one-third higher than in 2019 under this scenario, with the largest rises anticipated in sofa surfing and rough sleeping, and especially steep rises predicted in London. These predictions closely align with key stakeholder expectations that homelessness will rise, potentially very substantially, in 2022. Looking further ahead under this baseline scenario, we predict continued albeit slower rises in core homelessness to 2041.

Modelling a range of alternative future policy scenarios demonstrates that increases in core homelessness at this scale and pace could be avoided. In particular, very substantial reductions in rough sleeping could be achieved by 2024, the end point for the current Government's target to end rough sleeping. Particularly impactful here would be a package of welfare benefit policies aimed at sharply reducing destitution (reinstating the £20 uplift in Universal Credit allowances, ending the 5-week wait, stopping debt deductions, reducing rates of Personal Independence Payment assessment fails, and lifting the Benefit Cap). Social housing lettings quotas targeting core homeless households, a focus on reducing evictions and scaling up Housing First would also contribute to reducing rough sleeping on this timescale. With all of these policies in place, rough sleeping in 2024 would

be reduced by 63%, from 17,824 to 6,568. Substantial progress on this timescale could also be made by reducing unsuitable accommodation use as a component of core homelessness, in particular via raising and indexing Local Housing Allowance, maximising prevention, introduction of rehousing quotas for core homeless households, and welfare measures.

In the longer term, the largest projected impact on reducing core homelessness would result from raising the Local Housing Allowance, rehousing quotas, consistent large-scale application of Housing First accompanied by appropriate rehabilitation provision and a reduction of traditional hostel accommodation, the welfare benefit measures, and to a more moderate degree maximised prevention and raising of total and social housing supply. A successful 'levelling up' of economic performance across the English regions (as operationalised in our forecasting model) would also contribute to the reduction of core homelessness in the long run.

A comprehensive and appropriately phased programme of the recommended measures is shown to be capable of reducing core homelessness by 30% in 2031 and 34% in 2041, compared with what will eventuate without any change in policies, with greater proportionate reductions predicted in London. This scenario would see core homeless held at around the level of 2019. Rough sleeping would be reduced against baseline trends by 66%, unsuitable temporary accommodation by 80%, hostels and sofa surfing by 17%. This scenario would see overall homeless applications and total

temporary accommodation both down by more than three-quarters, releasing significant cost savings to local authorities which could be redirected into even more effective prevention and post-tenancy support.

### Economic, policy and COVID-19 impacts on homelessness

The economic disruption created by COVID-19 occurred after more than a decade of weak economic growth following the Global Financial Crisis and associated austerity policies reducing public spending and social security benefits. While relative poverty rates (after housing costs) remained largely unchanged since 2007/08,<sup>4</sup> in the ten years to 2019/20, the child poverty rate increased by 4 percentage points to 31%, and for larger families (with three plus children) grew by 12 percentage points to 47%,<sup>5</sup> with trends likely linked to specific welfare changes (the Benefit Cap and two child limit) disproportionately impacting these groups. Poverty also became increasingly skewed towards households with someone in work. 'Deep poverty' (referring to households falling below a more severe 50% of median income threshold) also rose significantly in the years prior to the pandemic.

COVID-19 sent shockwaves through public finances, with pandemic-related spending on health, public services and mitigation measures seeing the annual deficit climb to £323.9 billion in 2020/21, or 15% of Gross Domestic Product,<sup>6</sup> reversing the ten year downward trend in borrowing. The Government plans to boost public spending over the current years, in particular on health but also local government, while also bringing public borrowing down below pre-pandemic

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed account of these, see *ibid*. See also St Basil's (2021) *Young People In: A report on young people who were assisted by the Everyone In programme across the West Midlands during the first national lockdown*. Online: St Basils. <https://stbasils.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Young-People-In-St-Basils-Deep-Dive-report-FINAL-pdf.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> It should also be underlined that, in the case of Local Housing Allowance, we are not actually following the Government's apparent policy of cash freeze, because this would be demonstrably unsustainable in the medium to longer term in the sense that it would see core homelessness rise exponentially in the short term. We instead index Local Housing Allowance rates with CPI.

<sup>4</sup> Department for Works and Pensions (2021) *Households below average income: for financial years ending 1995 to 2020*. London: DWP <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-for-financial-years-ending-1995-to-2020>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>6</sup> Office for National Statistics (2021) *UK government debt and deficit: June 2021 (27 October)*. London: ONS <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicspending/bulletins/ukgovernmentdebtanddeficitforeurostatmaast/june2021>

forecasts. These plans depend, however, on economic prospects that remain highly uncertain in the context of the continuing pandemic and the impacts of Brexit.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was pivotal in containing the rise in unemployment during the pandemic to date, ultimately running to September 2021 and supporting 11.7 million employees. Almost a million workers were still on furlough when the scheme ended.<sup>7</sup> Despite these measures, the pandemic saw huge growth in people of working age claiming state benefits, to 8.5 million people in February 2021 compared to 6.2 million in February 2020. Universal Credit claims alone stood at 4.96 million in November 2021, almost double their pre-pandemic level.

The £20 uplift in the Universal Credit weekly allowance boosted claimant income during the pandemic, though was not extended to legacy benefits (e.g Jobseekers Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance), and ended in October 2021 affecting 3.6 million households. While Local Housing Allowance rates were rebased at 30% of market rents in spring 2020, the refreeze from April 2021 will compound pressure on household budgets as rents rise. Some households did not benefit from the £20 supplement or Local Housing Allowance uplift in full because their benefits or child tax credits were capped. In line with overall claimant trends, the numbers of households subject to the Benefit Cap increased by 77% from March 2020 to 133,255 April 2021, with the rise being most pronounced in London (91%) and the South East (90%).

7 HM Revenue & Customs (2021) *Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics: 4 November 2021*. London: HMRC. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-4-november-2021>

8 Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2021) £65 million support package for vulnerable renters, 23 October 2021: press release. DLUHC: Online. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/65-million-support-package-for-vulnerable-renters>

Local authorities have seen increases in discretionary funds available to assist those hit hard by the pandemic, including a £40 million boost to the Discretionary Housing Payments grant for England and Wales, increasing the overall budget to £180 million in 2020/21. Around two thirds of the Discretionary Housing Payment budget continued to be spent on assisting households adversely affected by welfare reforms, particularly the 'Bedroom Tax' and the Benefit Cap, easing the risk of homelessness. The DHP budget fell back to £139.5 million in 2021/22, but in October 2021 an additional £65 million was announced to support households at risk of eviction or homelessness.<sup>8</sup>

Delivery of affordable homes rose steadily from 2016, albeit consistently falling short of Government and independent estimates of need, until the pandemic stalled delivery in 2020/21. Arguably more important are policy-driven changes in the composition of the affordable homes new build pipeline, with just 11% of those delivered in 2020/21 for social rent, down from 65% in 2011/12. The Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26 will continue a strong emphasis on the provision of Affordable Rent homes and government-assisted home ownership options, widely acknowledged as within reach for few low income households. Only a fifth (22%) of local authorities responding to this year's survey were satisfied that new affordable housing supply is sufficient to meet the needs of homeless households and other people in housing need in their area, and only 8% in London.

High demand for social housing combined with the decline in the numbers of lettings has further

intensified challenges in accessing such accommodation. In 2019/20, there were 149,000 lettings to households new to the social rented sector, 47,000 fewer than in 2011/12. The share of all lettings to new social tenants allocated to statutory homeless households in the nine years to 2019/20 inclusive, however increased from 20% to 26%, though the actual numbers remained broadly static, averaging 39,000 per annum.

Larger numbers of families and low-income households live in the private rented sector than at any time since the Global Financial Crisis. The sector's changing size and configuration has led to greater policy interest in its regulation<sup>9</sup> but progress in effecting change remains erratic at best, with plans to end 'no-fault' evictions further delayed until 2022. The widening gap between Local Housing Allowance rates and private rents in the eight years prior to 2020/21 deepened affordability problems for lower income private renters.<sup>10</sup> It also contributed to the growth in overcrowding in the sector,<sup>11</sup> a factor linked to the transmission at least of COVID-19<sup>12</sup> and greater domestic conflict and abuse.<sup>13</sup> The pandemic has also seen an increase in arrears in the sector, to 7% of households in April-May 2021, 3 percentage points more than in 2019/20.

Protections introduced during the pandemic have prevented widespread eviction across the private and socially rented sectors. Landlord claims in 2020/21 (21,166) were down 79% on 2019/20, with orders for possession (8,114), warrants (5,340) and bailiff repossessions (784) all down on the previous year by 90% or more. Figures for all stages of the eviction process increased significantly in July-September 2021 in the first quarter following the end of the eviction ban, most noticeably in London and the South East. Although evictions remain down on pre-pandemic levels, there are mounting concerns that eviction could rise sharply in the coming months, depending on landlord behaviour as well as court capacity.

In the context of COVID-19-related economic and wider policy changes, homelessness policy itself has been radically impacted by the pandemic. A key and immediate focus was the Everyone In initiative, via which 37,430 people sleeping rough, at risk of doing so, or in communal shelters were accommodated in hotel or similar accommodation by January 2021. Everyone In (and allied infection control measures in homeless settings) were estimated to have avoided 21,092 infections, 1,164 hospital admissions and 338 intensive care admissions and 266 deaths among this cohort in the early phase of the pandemic.<sup>14</sup> The initiative was a central driver of

9 Whitehead, C. & Williams, P. (2018) *Assessing the evidence on rent control from an international perspective*, London: LSE. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/business/consulting/assets/documents/assessing-the-evidence-on-rent-control-from-an-international-perspective.pdf>

10 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee (2021) *Protecting the homeless and the private rented sector: MHCLG's response to Covid-19*. London: House of Commons. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmcomloc/1329/132902.htm>

11 Clair, A. (2021) 'The effect of local housing allowance reductions on overcrowding in the private rented sector in England', *International Journal of Housing Policy*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19491247.2021.1964253>

12 Barker, N. (2020) The housing pandemic: four graphs showing the link between COVID-19 deaths and the housing crisis. *Inside Housing*. 29th May. Online: Inside Housing. <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/insight/insight/the-housing-pandemic-four-graphs-showing-the-link-between-covid-19-deaths-and-the-housing-crisis-66562>

13 Chandan, J. S., Taylor, J., Bradbury-Jones, C., Nirantharakumar, K., Kane, E., & Bandyopadhyay, S. (2020). 'COVID-19: a public health approach to manage domestic violence is needed'. *The Lancet Public Health*, 5(6), e309. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(20\)30112-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(20)30112-2)

14 Lewer, D., Braithwaite, I., Bullock, M., Eyre, M. T., White, P. J., Aldridge, R.W., Story, A. & Hayward, A.C. (2021), 'COVID-19 among people experiencing homelessness in England: a modelling study', *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*, 8(12), 1181-1191. DOI:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-2600\(20\)30396-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-2600(20)30396-9)

reductions in enumerated levels of rough sleeping (down 37% in Autumn 2020 compared to the year prior, with further reductions indicated by national data in January 2021) and reduced use of dormitory-style night shelter accommodation, and is also credited with improved partnership working between the homelessness and health sectors.

Key limitations of Everyone In include variations in the nature, extent and quality of responses across local authority areas, with reliance upon poor quality accommodation used with insufficient support provision an issue in some. The emergency response also appears to have been less effective for specific groups, including women and young people who are reported to have avoided or been exposed to particular risks within the mixed hotel provision. While non-UK nationals with No Recourse to Public Funds or other restricted eligibility for statutory support and sleeping rough were initially explicitly included in the Everyone In response, this group have subsequently been especially vulnerable to inconsistent treatment.<sup>15</sup> Subsequent case law has clarified that local authorities retain the power to accommodate those with No Recourse to Public Funds while the COVID-19 public health emergency is ongoing,<sup>16</sup> but fewer than a fifth of local authorities reported that statutory and/or commissioned services were accommodating all those with No Recourse to Public Funds and rough sleeping or at risk of doing (at Summer 2021). There are acute concerns about future prospects for this cohort beyond the pandemic, given that the legal powers to accommodate only

apply in the context of a public health emergency. More positively, however, some stakeholders emphasised that those initially deemed to have restricted eligibility for state support were in fact entitled to support following a full consideration and review of their circumstances.

Government data suggests that by January 2021, 26,130 people or 70% of those helped under Everyone In had been transitioned from hotels and other premises into longer term accommodation, defined as tenancies of at least six months or supported housing. Accessing move-on accommodation appears to have been particularly challenging for those with complex needs (9 out of 10 local authorities described this as 'difficult'), due to a dearth of appropriate supported accommodation options. Unsurprisingly, particular difficulties have also been faced securing move-on options for those with No Recourse to Public Funds, albeit that EEA nationals were identified as more easily supported to a resolution than those navigating the asylum system. In this context, local authorities' abilities to assess eligibility and provide access to specialist support and advice was seen to be incredibly important. Move-on for those with low or medium support needs has been a less acute challenge, with direct lets into social housing, private rented sector access, and mainstream temporary accommodation placements used in some areas. There are concerns, however, regarding the sustainability of private rented sector placements and the quality and appropriateness of temporary accommodation placements.

A key resource in this area has been the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme,<sup>17</sup> providing capital and revenue funding for move-on accommodation for rough sleepers, with a presumption in favour of self-contained options.<sup>18</sup> While the fund was welcomed by key stakeholders, frustrations surrounded the transitional nature of the move-on accommodation funded (expected to be two years in most cases) and the limited scale of the programme relative to demand in some areas. The programme's initial design and administration received intense criticism, in particular in relation to bidding timescales and requirements to spend funds within tight timetables. Indeed, this latter requirement was seen to force a reliance on market acquisitions that risk overheating already tight local housing markets.

Tackling rough sleeping was a very high policy priority pre-pandemic, reflected in Government investment in the Rough Sleeping Initiative and the Housing First regional pilot programme in 2018. Subsequent to these developments, the 2019 Johnson Government committed to ending rough sleeping by 2024 (accelerating the timetable announced by the previous Government). The pandemic is seen to have radically accelerated initial gains against the target, and very substantial increases in Rough Sleeping Initiative funding committed to by the Government are seen as a very welcome enabler of further progress. But stakeholders identified a range of barriers likely to inhibit achievement, including the absence of an updated strategy, no clear definition of what 'ending' means in this context, a lack of performance measurement and monitoring, and the persistence of

policies that restrict non-UK nationals access to statutory support (including but not limited to No Recourse to Public Funds restrictions). Stakeholders were also clear that further progress on rough sleeping requires attention to preventing it in the first place, as well as securing sustainable move-on options for those affected, both seen as weaknesses in current Government policy.

More positively, initial evaluation outputs indicate promising results from the regional Housing First Pilots for the more than 500 people accommodated to date. Tenants report being highly satisfied with the programme, with the greatest benefit identified as having secured their own housing, but additional gains in relation to stabilising or reducing harmful behaviours, improved health and health service engagement, and re-establishing relationships with friends and family, including children. This being said, the numbers recruited are short of target reflecting challenges associated with the regional scale of the pilots and the pandemic.

Access to housing for those admitted to the programme is a key concern, with additional delivery challenges including difficulties sustaining low caseloads, recruiting appropriate staff, and challenges accessing supports for tenants, in particular mental health support. The lack of clarity regarding whether pilot funding will be extended as a result of the 2021 Comprehensive Spending Review has raised serious concerns regarding the adequacy of arrangements beyond the pilot end date. Beyond the regional pilots, Housing First-type services are reportedly in operation in a majority of local authority areas in England (59%),

15 The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (2021) *A New Way of Working: Ending Rough Sleeping Together: Final Report*. Online: The Kerslake Commission. <https://www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/KRSC-Final-Report-2021.pdf>; National Audit Office (2021) *Investigation into the Housing of Rough Sleepers during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. HC 1075. Online: NAO. <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Investigation-into-the-housing-of-rough-sleepers-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf>

16 See: <https://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/news/accommodating-rough-sleepers>

17 RSAP evolved out of the 2020/21 Next Steps Accommodation Programme which funded continued Everyone In emergency provision during 2020/21. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/next-steps-accommodation-programme-guidance-and-proposal-templates>. The programme is administered separately within and outside of London.

18 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021) *Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2021-24: Prospectus, guidance and proposal form for the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2021-24*. Online: DLUHC & MHCLG. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-accommodation-programme-2021-24>

although there are questions about the extent to which schemes that don't adhere to Housing First principles are capable of achieving the outcomes delivered by 'high fidelity' approaches.

Pulling back from this plethora of politics and funding programmes targeting rough sleeping, this Monitor also covers the third full year of operation of the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017). Stakeholder assessment of the Act and its implementation in the recent period were positive, with particular strengths highlighted including the reorientation it has prompted towards a culture of personalised support rather than entitlement testing. The emphasis within the legislative framework on preventative interventions was also seen as a key strength, albeit that the pandemic is acknowledged to have forced a particular focus on crisis responses. On the other hand, the pandemic context is seen to have substantially accelerated the Act's aim of enhancing the support available to single homeless households. New provisions according automatic 'priority need' status to households homeless as a result of domestic abuse were strongly welcomed, and anticipated to contribute to increased demand from this group in the future.

This overall positive assessment of the Homelessness Reduction Act was tempered by the view that funding remained insufficient, with the pandemic and Government emphasis on multiple short-term funding streams on homelessness seen to have intensified pre-existing workforce challenges. Difficulties recruiting appropriately skilled staff were reported, alongside low morale and high absence rates in some areas linked to the very stressful and high pressure period negotiated by staff since early 2020. In addition, key stakeholders acknowledged various

ways in which the Homelessness Reduction Act does not go far enough in expanding the legal duties upon local authorities and other stakeholders in responding to homelessness. Key issues included the continuing lack of entitlements to temporary accommodation and settled housing for particular groups, and the weakness of the duties on wider public authorities to 'refer' where someone is threatened with homelessness, rather than cooperate more fully in addressing their need. More broadly, it was recognised that wider Government action on homelessness is needed, beyond the parameters of the Act, to effectively prevent homelessness, including via housing supply, access and regulatory reform and poverty reduction efforts.<sup>19</sup>

### Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to have extremely significant impacts on homelessness and homelessness policy during 2021 and into 2022. The focus has shifted in the most recent year from the largely successful initial emergency accommodation response targeting people sleeping rough or at risk of doing so, to securing move-on options for those assisted. Progress in this respect has been variable across the country and between groups, with acute challenges remaining as regards assisting those with No Recourse to Public Funds. But there is no doubt that these efforts have assisted a very significant number of single people facing crisis into more stable accommodation options.

The key questions going forward concern whether reductions in rough sleeping and reliance upon night shelters will be sustained, improved upon or reversed in the coming period, with our analysis indicating clearly that measures currently in place are insufficient to achieve the

Government's objective of ending rough sleeping by 2024. Equally important, though notably absent in recent policy trends, is the extent to which ongoing pressures responding to wider statutory homelessness will be addressed going forward. Since the onset of the pandemic, local authorities have seen continued rises in temporary accommodation use, and the absence of any dramatic falls in key measures of statutory homelessness demand. With welfare mitigations and evictions protections introduced early in the pandemic now ended, and the housing context continuing to be challenging, there is an understandable and acute concern about an expected surge in homelessness from 2022, a concern reinforced by our own projections analysis.

Reinforcing a long-term theme in the Homelessness Monitors series and a key lesson from the pandemic-period so far, it is also clear that upward trends in homelessness over the coming years are not inevitable. The 2023 monitor will provide an opportunity to review the extent to which opportunities to avoid this eventuality are grasped during the coming year.

<sup>19</sup> Fitzpatrick, S., Mackie, P. & Wood, J. (2019) *Homelessness prevention in the UK: Policy briefing*. Online: UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence. <https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Homelessness-Prevention-in-the-UK-Policy-Brief-July-2019-final.pdf>

# Introduction

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

This study provides an independent analysis of the impact on homelessness from recent economic and policy developments in England. It considers both the consequences of the post-2007 economic and housing market recession, and the subsequent recovery, and also the impact of policy changes implemented under the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government (2010-2015), and the post May 2015 Conservative Governments under Prime Ministers David Cameron, Theresa May and Boris Johnson.

This tenth annual report provides an account of how homelessness stands in England in 2021 (or as close to 2021 as data availability will allow), and analyses key trends in the period running up to 2021. This year's report focuses in particular on two key themes: first, the homelessness impacts associated with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and second, rough sleeping and responses to it, which have been a major Government policy priority before and during the pandemic. Updating and building upon analysis initially presented in last year's Homelessness Monitor England, we also project homelessness trends in England into the future under various

policy scenarios, including analysis of the scenarios under which most progress might be made in pursuing the Government's target to end rough sleeping by 2024.

Readers who would like a fuller account of the recent history of homelessness in England should consult with the previous Homelessness Monitors for England, which are available on Crisis's website.<sup>20</sup> Parallel Homelessness Monitors were published in Autumn/Winter 2021 covering developments in Scotland and Wales.

### 1.2 Scope of report

There remains considerable debate on the most appropriate definition of homelessness, with stakeholders often disagreeing on where the boundary should lie between 'homelessness' and other forms of housing need.<sup>21</sup> In order for this report to be as comprehensive and inclusive as possible, we adopt a range of definitions or 'perspectives' on homelessness, considering the impacts of relevant policy and economic changes on the following (partially overlapping) groups:

- People sleeping rough.
- 'Statutorily homeless households':

that is, households who seek or receive housing assistance from local authorities (LAs) on grounds of being currently or imminently without accommodation.

- People experiencing 'core homelessness':<sup>22</sup> this refers to households who are currently experiencing the most acute forms of homelessness. It includes people in the following situations: rough sleeping; sleeping in cars, tents and public transport, unlicensed squatting, or occupation of non-residential buildings; staying in hostels, refuges and shelters; living in 'unsuitable' temporary accommodation (TA) (e.g., Bed and Breakfast (B&B)); sofa-surfing (i.e., staying with non-family, on a short-term basis, in overcrowded conditions).

### 1.3 Research methods

We employ five main methods in this longitudinal study:

- First, relevant literature, legal and policy documents are reviewed each year.
- Second, we undertake annual interviews with a sample of key informants from the statutory and voluntary sectors across England. The current sample of 22 key informants includes representatives of homelessness service providers, as well as other key stakeholders with a national overview of relevant areas of policy and practice, including housing, health, social security, and domestic abuse. These participants were interviewed in the autumn/winter of 2021. See Appendix 1 for the basic topic guide used to structure these interviews, though note that this guide was tailored for each interviewee.
- Third, we undertake detailed statistical analysis on a) relevant economic and social trends in England; and b) the scale, nature and trends in homelessness amongst the sub-groups noted above.
- Fourth, for the sixth Homelessness Monitor report in a row we have conducted a bespoke online survey of England's 309 local authorities (LAs) (in summer/autumn 2021). The main aim of this particular survey was to understand how the housing, social security, labour market and other COVID-19 related policy responses were impacting on homelessness trends and responses at local level. In all, 155 (50%) of LAs in England responded to the survey. Response rates varied across broad regions, from a high of 63% in the North to a low of 24% in the Midlands. Note that, in order to achieve this high survey response rate, amid the ongoing challenges associated with the pandemic, a lengthier time window for responses was allowed than we would normally offer (from early August to early November 2021). This was taken into account in our analysis of survey responses. See Appendix 2 for details.
- Fifth, for the second time in the Homelessness Monitor England series, we incorporate a statistical modelling exercise which both estimates 'core' forms of homelessness, and projects trends in these forms of homelessness into the future. See Appendix 3 for technical details.

<sup>20</sup> See: <http://www.crisis.org.uk/pages/homelessnessmonitor.html>

<sup>21</sup> 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>

<sup>22</sup> 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](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237582/crisis_homelessness_projections_2017.pdf)

#### 1.4 Causation and homelessness

All of the Homelessness Monitors are underpinned by a conceptual framework on the causation of homelessness that has been used to inform our interpretation of the likely impacts of economic and policy change.<sup>23</sup>

Theoretical, historical and international perspectives indicate that the causation of homelessness is multi-dimensional, with no single 'trigger' that is either 'necessary' or 'sufficient' for it to occur. Individual, interpersonal, and structural factors all play a role – and interact with each other – and the balance of causes differs over time, across countries, and between demographic groups.

With respect to the main structural factors, international comparative research, and the experience of previous UK recessions, suggests that housing market trends and policies have the most direct impact on levels of homelessness, with the influence of labour-market change more likely to be lagged and diffuse, and strongly mediated by welfare arrangements and other contextual factors. The central role that poverty plays in shaping homelessness risks in the UK is also now well established.<sup>24</sup>

The individual vulnerabilities, support needs, and 'risk taking' behaviours implicated in some people's homelessness are themselves often, though not always, also rooted in the pressures associated with poverty and other forms of structural disadvantage. At the same time, the 'anchor' social relationships which can act as a primary 'buffer' to homelessness, can be put under considerable strain by stressful financial circumstances. Thus, deteriorating economic conditions in England could also be expected

to generate more 'individual' and 'interpersonal' vulnerabilities to homelessness over time, with any improvement in such conditions tending to have the reverse effect.

The COVID-19 pandemic provides an additional and unprecedented dynamic highly relevant to homelessness causation and responses. The pandemic itself and associated responses have had wide ranging homelessness-related impacts, with key mechanisms here including the direct effect of the public health emergency on individual, household and organisational (e.g., LA and landlord) behaviour and choices, consequences for the economy, and impacts on Government policy in relation to welfare, housing and homelessness. These mechanisms have affected households in varying circumstances differently, with complex and sometimes countervailing impacts on homelessness all of which are explored further in this report.

#### 1.5 Structure of report

The structure of this year's *Homelessness Monitor* report is as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the wider context for homelessness, including economic, poverty and labour market trends, housing market developments, and social security policy changes, all of which have been heavily impacted by responses to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter 3 shifts focus to homelessness-specific policies and practices at national and local level, including in direct response to the pandemic. This chapter also reviews data associated with the COVID-19 prompted homelessness initiatives, specifically the Everyone In initiative, led by the Government and implemented by local authorities and their voluntary sector partners.

Chapter 4 provides a fully updated analysis of the available statistical data on the current scale of and recent trends in homelessness in England. This analysis is substantially based on the operation of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017, in force from 1st April 2018, and also presents key data sources on levels of rough sleeping. Chapter 5 provides estimates of the current scale of core homelessness in England, and projects trends in these forms of homelessness into the future. All of these chapters are informed by the insights derived from our in-depth interviews with key informants conducted in 2021, and from the statistical and qualitative information gleaned from this year's online survey of LAs. In Chapter 6 we summarise the main findings of this year's report.

Each edition of the Monitor adopts a particular theme. This year, for obvious reasons, the Monitor adopts a particular focus on rough sleeping, a key Government policy priority pre-pandemic in the light of the Government target to end rough sleeping by 2024, as well as a major focus of the emergency responses to COVID-19.

<sup>23</sup> For a more detailed account of this conceptual framework please consult with Chapter 2 in the first Homelessness Monitor: Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G. & Wilcox, S. (2011) *The Homelessness Monitor: Tracking the Impacts of Policy and Economic Change in England 2011-2013*. London: Crisis.

<sup>24</sup> Bramley, B. & Fitzpatrick, S. (2018) 'Homelessness in the UK: who is most at risk?', *Housing Studies*, 33:1, 96-116.

# Socio-economic context

## 2. The wider socio-economic context

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter places homelessness within the wider social, economic and housing context, focusing on trends over two main periods. First, those occurring since the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and the aftermath of a decade of austerity, and second, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated policy responses since March 2020. Section 2.2 reviews recent economic, labour market and poverty trends. Section 2.3 looks at policies to bolster household incomes and limit unemployment during the pandemic. Section 2.4 looks at the unfolding housing situation, including temporary measures to limit eviction during the pandemic.

### 2.2 The wider economic context

#### The economy and labour market

The global disruption created by COVID-19 occurred when the UK was struggling to absorb the impact of Brexit.<sup>25</sup> It also came on the back of more than a decade of weak economic growth following the GFC and subsequent under-investment,<sup>26</sup> low productivity growth<sup>27</sup> and Government austerity policies.<sup>28</sup> Having spent much of the year in some form of lockdown, the UK saw gross domestic product (GDP) fall 9.8% in 2020.<sup>29</sup> This was much steeper than for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development area (4.9%).<sup>30</sup>

25 Bloom, N., Bunn, P., Chen, S., Mizen, P., Smietanka, P., Thwaites, G. & Young, G. (2018) *Brexit and uncertainty: insights from the decision maker panel*. London: Bank of England. <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/working-paper/2019/brexit-and-uncertainty-insights-from-the-decision-maker-panel>

26 Bailey, A. (2021) *Getting over covid - speech given by Andrew Bailey, Governor of the Bank of England*, London: Bank of England. <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/speech/2021/march/andrew-bailey-speech-at-the-resolution-foundation>

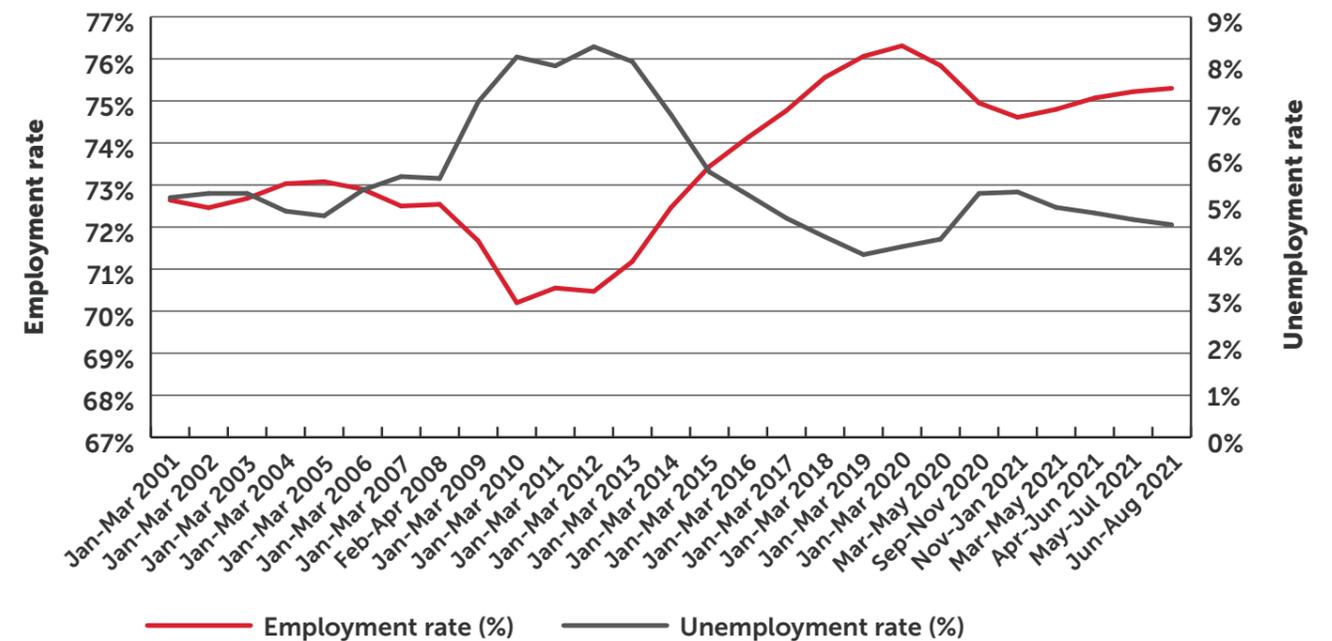
27 Centre for Macroeconomics (2020) *The UK productivity puzzle*. CMS, London: Centre for Macroeconomics. <https://cfmsurvey.org/surveys/uk-productivity-puzzle>

28 Torsten Bell, B., Dhingra, S., Machin, S., McCurdy, C., Overman, H., Thwaites, G., Tomlinson, D & Valero, A. (2021) *The UK's decisive decade- the launch report of the economy 2030 inquiry*. London: Resolution Foundation and LSE. <https://economy2030.resolutionfoundation.org/reports/the-uks-decisive-decade/>

29 Office for National Statistics (2021) *GDP monthly estimate, UK: August 2021*. London: ONS. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/bulletins/gdpmonthlyestimateuk/august2021>

30 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2021) *Quarterly National Accounts data tables - on-line*. OECD: Online. <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?QueryName=350&QueryType=View&Lang=en>

Figure 2.1: Seasonally adjusted UK employment & unemployment rates for 16-64 year olds, 2001-2021



Source: Labour Force Survey Summary: People by economic activity for those aged 16 and over and those aged from 16 to 64 (seasonally adjusted)

During the 2010s, employment rates increased significantly, reaching 76% in 2019, over 3% higher than in 2008 (see figure 2.1). Despite this, wage growth remained weak, with real wages only returning to 2008 levels at the end of 2019,<sup>31</sup> albeit the introduction of the National Living Wage in 2016 improved wages for low paid employees aged 25 and over – extended to people aged 23 or over from April 2021.

The 2010s also saw an increase in non-standard and precarious work,<sup>32</sup> linked to the expansion of the gig economy. Between 2009/10 and 2019/20 the

numbers of self-employed people in England, most of whom were sole traders, increased from 3.3 million to 4.3 million,<sup>33</sup> which accounted for a third of all employment growth during this period. Up to a quarter of those who entered solo self-employment during the 2010s may have done so as a way out of unemployment and being entirely dependent on benefits.<sup>34</sup> The growth in self-employment and other forms of precarious work have exacerbated poverty amongst those of working age, the key risk factor for homelessness.<sup>35</sup>

31 Office for National Statistics (2021) *Average weekly earnings in Great Britain: April 2021- estimates of growth in earnings for employees before tax and other deductions from pay*. London: ONS. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/averageweeklyearningsingreatbritain/april2021>

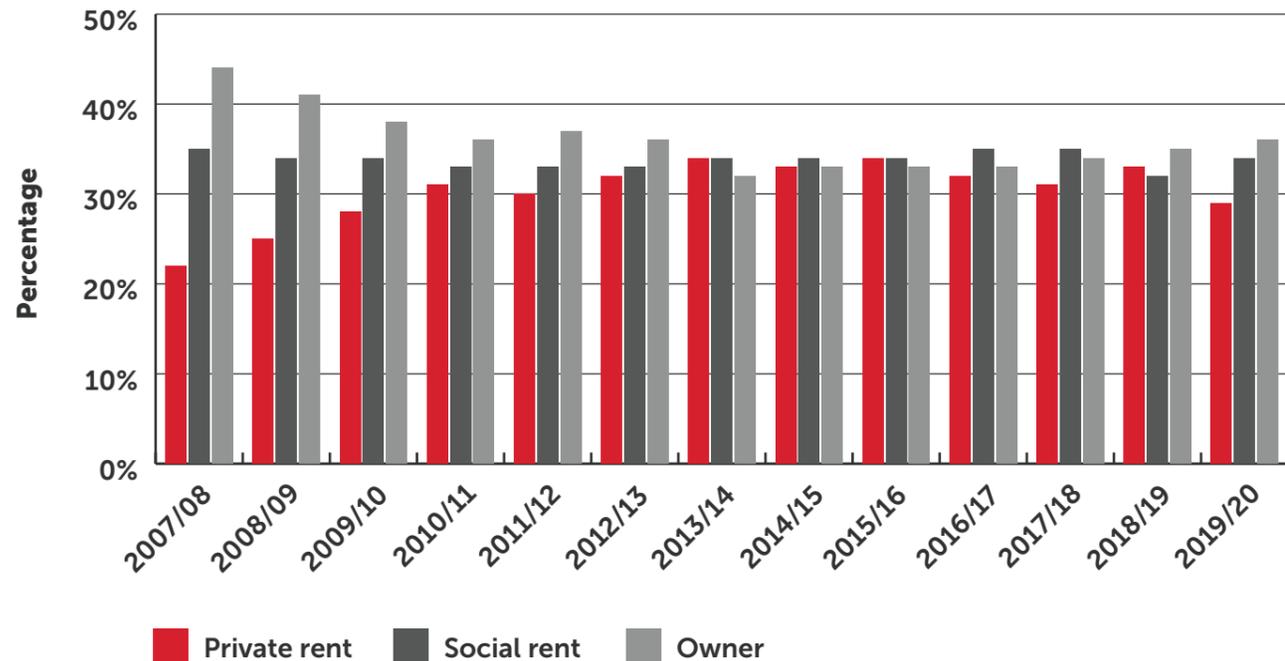
32 Torsten Bell, B., Dhingra, S., Machin, S., McCurdy, C., Overman, H., Thwaites, G., Tomlinson, D & Valero, A. (2021) *The UK's decisive decade- the launch report of the economy 2030 inquiry*. London: Resolution Foundation and LSE. <https://economy2030.resolutionfoundation.org/reports/the-uks-decisive-decade/>

33 Office for National Statistics (2021) *Annual Population Survey*, data accessed via NOMIS, November 2021.

34 Giupponi, G. & Xu, X. (2020) *What does the rise of self-employment tell us about the UK labour market?* London: IFS <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/15182>

35 Bramley, G. & Fitzpatrick (2018) Homelessness in the UK: who is most at risk? *Housing Studies*, 33:1, 96-116. DOI: 10.1080/02673037.2017.1344957

**Figure 2.2: Relative annual after housing cost poverty rates by tenure in the UK, 2007/8 to 2019/20**



Source: DWP (2021) Households Below Average Income –Stat Xplore

Notes: Figures based on CPI-adjusted inflation and thus not consistent with published prior to 2014/15. Figures for 2018/19 should be treated with caution as they appear to have been affected by sampling variability

### Relative poverty

Income poverty is typically reported on a relative basis. This is the share of people that live in a household with a disposable income below 60% of the median income for all people that live in a household, after adjusting for household composition. In 2019/20, around 18% of the UK population were in poverty before housing costs and 22% were in poverty after housing costs (AHC). While both rates had remained largely unchanged since 2007/08<sup>36</sup> important changes in the composition of people in AHC poverty occurred.

The proportion of people that live within each tenure that experience in AHC poverty continues to vary

substantially. In 2019/20, 46% of all social renters, 34% of all private renters, 15% of outright owners and 11% of home buyers were in AHC poverty. On the other hand, the numbers of all people in AHC poverty living in each of the main tenures has become more evenly spread (see figure 2.2). This largely reflects changes in the tenure balance and the growth in private renting, the tenure with the highest average housing costs. This has exposed growing numbers of working households in the lower half of the income distribution, especially those with children, to the risk of AHC poverty.

<sup>36</sup> Department for Works and Pensions (2021) *Households below average income: for financial years ending 1995 to 2020*. London: DWP <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-for-financial-years-ending-1995-to-2020>

In the ten years to 2019/20, the AHC child poverty rate increased by 4% to 31%, but for larger families with three or more children it grew by 12% to 47%.<sup>37</sup> This suggests that the Benefit Cap (see below) and the exclusion of third and subsequent children born after April 2017 from Child Tax Credit and Universal Credit (UC) claims have all had a detrimental impact on poverty.

AHC poverty also became increasingly skewed towards households with someone in work. In 2019/20, some 61% of working age adults and 76% of children that were in AHC poverty lived in a working household compared to 52% and 57% respectively in 2009/10. This trend was most concentrated amongst families reliant on one earner that rented their home and was most acute for larger families that rented privately.

### Deep poverty and destitution

Figure 2.3 shows how far individuals in AHC poverty fall below the poverty line. In 2018/19, some 4.5 million people experienced deep poverty and were living on an income equivalent to at least 50% below the AHC relative poverty threshold, up from 3.9 million in 2014/15.<sup>38</sup> This was equal to 7% of the population and 31% of all those in AHC poverty.

Closely linked to deep poverty is the issue of destitution, defined as living on an extremely low or no income and lacking essentials, which was rising sharply prior to the pandemic. Between 2017 and 2019, the estimated

numbers of people in the UK that were destitute increased by 54% to 2.4 million people, including 550,000 children.<sup>39</sup> Those without paid work, a settled home of their own, migrants, and single adults, especially those under the age of 25 years, were at most risk of destitution.

The pandemic has had some impact on the profile of the destitute population, with some increase in families, lone parents and multi-adult households plus private renters and homeowners experiencing destitution.<sup>40</sup> The profile of people referred to foodbanks has also changed slightly, with more private renters, migrants and couples with children using them than before the pandemic.<sup>41</sup>

The retrenchment of social security since 2010, and specifically changes implemented since 2016, has further impoverished people already in poverty and has contributed to rising child poverty, deep poverty and destitution.<sup>42</sup> By 2019/20, the basic UC rate for single adults aged 25 or above was equal to less than half of the comparable relative poverty threshold. For a couple with two young children, it was equal to two-thirds of the poverty line.<sup>43</sup> The growing gap between support for housing costs and actual housing costs has also widened the gap between disposable income and the poverty line for many, especially private renters.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Social Metrics Commission (2020) *Measuring poverty 2020*. London: SMC <https://socialmetricscommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Measuring-Poverty-2020-Web.pdf>

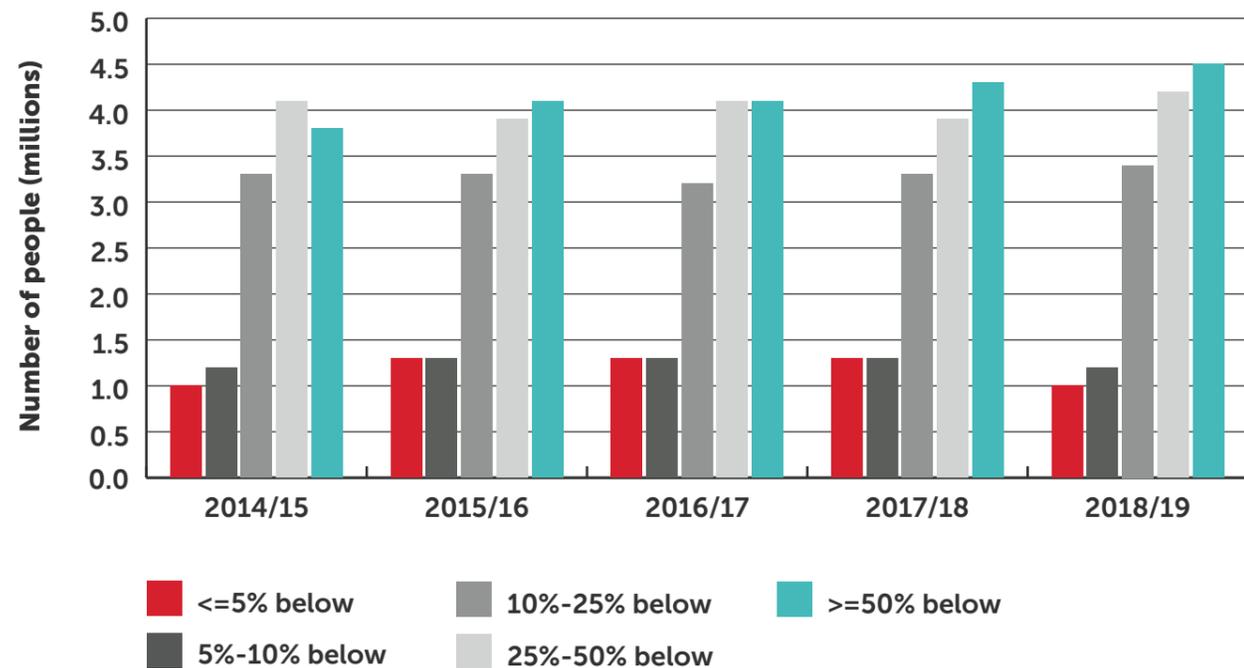
<sup>39</sup> Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., Blenkinsopp, J., Wood, J., Sosenko, F., Littlewood, M., Johnsen, S., Watts, B., Treanor, M. and McIntyre, J. (2020) *Destitution in the UK 2020*. Project Report. York: JRF <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/destitution-uk-2020>

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Bramley, G., Treanor, M., Sosenko, F., & Littlewood, M. (2021). *State of Hunger: Building the evidence on poverty, destitution, and food insecurity in the UK*. Online: The Trussell Trust. <https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/05/State-of-Hunger-2021-Report-Final.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> The All Party Parliamentary Group on Health In All Policies (2021) *Five years on: the health effects of the 2016 welfare reform and Work act on children and disabled people*. London: [https://debbieabrahams.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/210221\\_HIAP-A4-Report-Debbie-Abrahams.pdf](https://debbieabrahams.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/210221_HIAP-A4-Report-Debbie-Abrahams.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Vizard, P. and Hills, J (2021) *The Conservative Governments' record on social policy from May 2015 to pre-COVID 2020*. London: LSE [https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spdo/SPDO\\_overview\\_paper\\_summary.pdf](https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spdo/SPDO_overview_paper_summary.pdf)

**Figure 2.3: Estimated number of people at different distances below the poverty line, UK**

Source: Social Metrics Commission (2020) Measuring poverty 2020, - accompanying tables (2.1) derived from FRS and HBAI dataset (1998/99–2018/19).

### The pandemic and economic prospects

COVID-19 sent shockwaves through public finances as the Government sought to mitigate the collapse in economic activity caused by the pandemic and associated lockdowns. This included the introduction of policies to help people remain in employment and to limit the shock to household incomes, which are discussed later in this chapter.

Pandemic related spending on health, other public services and measures to assist households and businesses stay afloat saw the annual deficit - or net borrowing - climb to £323.9

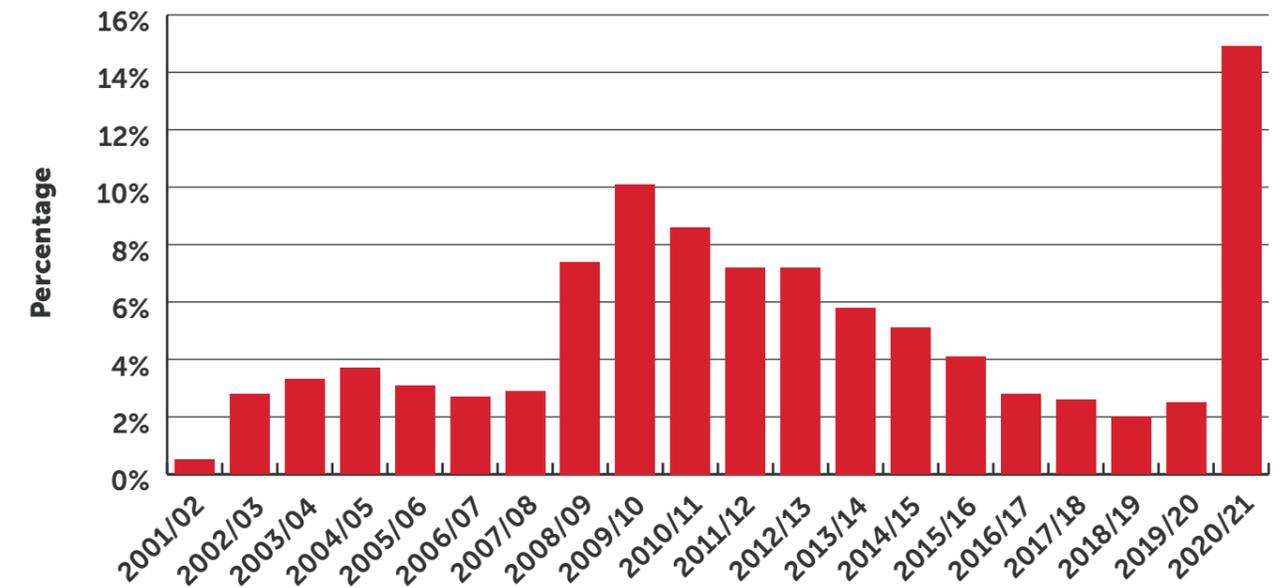
billion in 2020/21, or 15% of GDP,<sup>44</sup> reversing the ten year downward trend in borrowing (see figure 2.4). Similarly, total public debt, which measures borrowing accumulated over time, increased to £2.2 trillion or £86,000 per household. This equated to 103.6% of GDP, outstripping levels seen in the aftermath of the GFC, which peaked at 84.9% in 2014/15.<sup>45</sup>

Strong economic growth in the spring and summer of 2021 saw net borrowing falling faster than the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) had predicted. Building on this, and the tax rises unveiled in March, the Autumn 2021 Budget and Spending Review<sup>46</sup>

44 Office for National Statistics (2021) *UK government debt and deficit: June 2021 (27 October)* London: ONS <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicspending/bulletins/ukgovernmentdebtanddeficitforeurostatmaast/june2021>

45 Ibid.

46 HM Treasury (2021) *Autumn budget and spending review 2021 a stronger economy for the British people*. London: HMSO [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1029974/Budget\\_AB2021\\_Web\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1029974/Budget_AB2021_Web_Accessible.pdf)

**Figure 2.4: Public sector net borrowing as a % of Gross Domestic Product (PSNB)**

Source: ONS (October 2021) UK government debt and deficit: June 2021

set out plans to boost public spending while also bringing public borrowing down below pre-pandemic forecasts. These suggest departmental spending will grow by an average of 3.8% in real terms in each of the three years to 2024/25. The Department of Health and Social Care, will be the main beneficiary, reflecting the 1.25% Health and Social Care (H&SC) Levy to be added to National Insurance from April 2022. Local government spending will also increase, but as the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) report, the real level of spending by 2024-25 will remain significantly lower than in 2010.<sup>47</sup>

The OBR expect GDP to grow by 6.5% in 2021 and by 6% in 2022<sup>48</sup> but

as the IFS has cautioned, sustained economic recovery is not secure.<sup>49</sup> Much may depend on whether the Bank of England raises interest rates in response to rising inflation, which OBR predict could peak at 5% in 2022. It may also depend on what happens to exports and the labour market and the extent to which labour shortages in some occupations and supply chain blockages are overcome. Longer term, the OBR has also cautioned that the scarring effects of Brexit and COVID-19 will dampen economic growth for many years.<sup>50</sup>

The OBR expect taxation will rise from 33.5% in 2019/20 to 36.2% of GDP by 2026-27, the highest since the start of

47 Institute for Fiscal Studies (2021) *Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021*. London: IFS <https://ifs.org.uk/budget-2021>

48 Office for Budget Responsibility (2021) *Economic and fiscal outlook – October 2021*. London: OBR <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-october-2021/>

49 Nabarro, B. (2021) *UK economic outlook: the future isn't what it used to be*. London: IFS <https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/2-UK-economic-outlook-the-future-isn%E2%80%99t-what-it-used-to-be-.pdf>

50 Office for Budget Responsibility (2021) *Economic and fiscal outlook – October 2021*. London: OBR <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-october-2021/>

the 1950s.<sup>51</sup> It also expects minimal real household income growth prior to 2026-27, due to stagnating gross earnings and a squeeze on net wages due to taxation measures such as the H&SC levy and the planned four year freeze on income tax thresholds. With limited scope to raise taxes further, new fiscal rules designed to help lower public borrowing could see spending plans cut back if economic growth is lower than OBR have forecast and/or inflation pressures increase the cost of servicing public debt.

### 2.3 Measures to sustain household incomes

This section explores measures taken to protect the financial security of households during the pandemic, including the furlough scheme and related measures, temporary modifications to social security and funds to support local authorities make discretionary payments.

#### Furlough and self-employment schemes

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme were pivotal in containing the rise in unemployment during the pandemic in comparison to the GFC (see figure 2.1). Initially designed to operate during the first

lockdown from March to June 2020, both schemes were extended as the pandemic rolled on, only ending on 30 September 2021.

The two schemes required unprecedented levels of public spending. A cumulative total of 11.7 million employees were furloughed on at least one occasion<sup>52</sup> at a cost of £70 billion.<sup>53</sup> People working in hospitality and other public-facing services were most likely to be furloughed, although many in construction sector were also furloughed.<sup>54</sup> A further 2.9 million people claimed Self-Employed Income Support Scheme at a cost of £28.1 billion.<sup>55</sup> Self-Employed Income Support Scheme was not well targeted.<sup>56</sup> Around 1.5 million self-employed people that lost income due to the pandemic were excluded from the scheme<sup>57</sup> while payments were overly generous for some of those able to claim it.<sup>58</sup>

The numbers of furloughed workers in England peaked at 4.7 million in July 2020 but steadily declined after January 2021 as the economy re-opened,<sup>59</sup> with most seemingly returning to their original employer.<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, 965,000 workers in England were still on furlough when

the scheme ended.<sup>61</sup> Younger workers were hardest hit in terms of furlough and loss of work in the first year of the crisis, but by summer 2021 older workers were the most likely to be out of work or on furlough.<sup>62</sup> People from ethnic minorities were also much more likely to lose their job initially, but by March 2021 the employment gap between ethnic minorities and the white population had returned to pre-pandemic levels.<sup>63</sup>

Furloughed workers across the UK in September 2021 were mostly in lower paid work. Around 51% earned up to £15,000, 64% earned up to £20,000 and 81% earned up to £30,000.<sup>64</sup> By way of comparison, the median full time wage for employees in England in April 2021 was £31,490 and the bottom quintile wage was £21,482.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, the National Living Wage for a thirty-five hour week was £16,216, indicating many of those still furloughed when the scheme ended did not work full-time.

With the closure of both schemes, the OBR expect the UK unemployment rate to rise from 4.5% in Q2 of 2021 to 5.2% by Q4 of 2021, before falling back to 4.5% by the end of 2022.<sup>66</sup> This is in the middle of the forecasts reviewed by HM Treasury.<sup>67</sup> In contrast, the Bank of England expects the unemployment rate to hold steady for the next few months, before resuming a downwards path towards pre-pandemic rates.<sup>68</sup>

These differing perspectives highlight that the pace and nature of the labour market recovery remains very uncertain.

#### Income related social security

Lower paid workers were not only more likely to be furloughed, which could involve a pay cut of 20%, but were also more likely to have their hours cut or be made redundant. As a result, they contributed substantially to the huge growth in people of working age claiming state benefits during the pandemic, reversing the downward trend that occurred after the launch of UC in 2013.

Benefit combination statistics count each person that claims one or more state benefits. Figure 2.5 shows that 8.5 million people in England claimed state benefits in February 2021 compared to 6.2 million in February 2020. It also shows that this increase has been driven by people claiming UC.

More up-to-date UC caseload figures indicate much of this increase occurred during the first lockdown. Between February and June 2020, the numbers of working age people in England claiming UC increased by 90% to 4.7 million. Those claiming Job Seekers Allowance, a non-means tested benefit payable to unemployed person with sufficient national insurance contributions, also increased by 88% to 258,928. By

51 Ibid.

52 HM Revenue & Customs (2021) *Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics: 4 November 2021*. London: HMRC. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-4-november-2021>

53 Francis-Devine, B., Powell, A. & Clark, H. (2021) *Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: statistics*. November 2021. London: House of Commons Library, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9152/>

54 Ibid.

55 Seely, A. (2021) *Coronavirus: Self-Employment Income Support Scheme*. 30 November. London: House of Commons Library, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8879/>

56 Cribb, J., Delestre, I., & Johnson, P. (2021) *Who is excluded from the Government's Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and what could the Government do about it?* London: IFS <https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/BN316-Who-is-excluded-from-SEISS.pdf>

57 Cominetti, N., Henehan, K., Slaughter, H. & Thwaites, G (2021) *Long Covid in the labour market: the impact on the labour market of COVID-19 a year into the crisis, and how to secure a strong recovery*. London: Resolution Foundation. <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/02/Long-covid-in-the-labour-market.pdf>

58 Ibid.

59 HM Revenue & Customs (2021) *Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics: 4 November 2021*. London: HMRC. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-4-november-2021>

60 HM Revenue & Customs (2021) *CJRS statistics: secondary analysis of ended furloughs: 22 October*. London: HMRC. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-secondary-analysis>

61 HM Revenue & Customs (2021) *Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics: 4 November 2021*. London: HMRC. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-4-november-2021>

62 Henehan, K., Gustafsson, M., Cominetti, N., Handscomb, K., Judge, L., Leslie, J. & Try, L. (2021) *An intergenerational audit for the UK*. London: Resolution Foundation. [https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/10/An-intergenerational-audit-for-the-UK\\_2021.pdf](https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/10/An-intergenerational-audit-for-the-UK_2021.pdf)

63 Johnson, P. (2021) *COVID has shown that inequality is about more than jobs or earnings*, London: IFS <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/15821>

64 HM Revenue & Customs (2021) *Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics: 4 November 2021*. London: HMRC. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-4-november-2021>

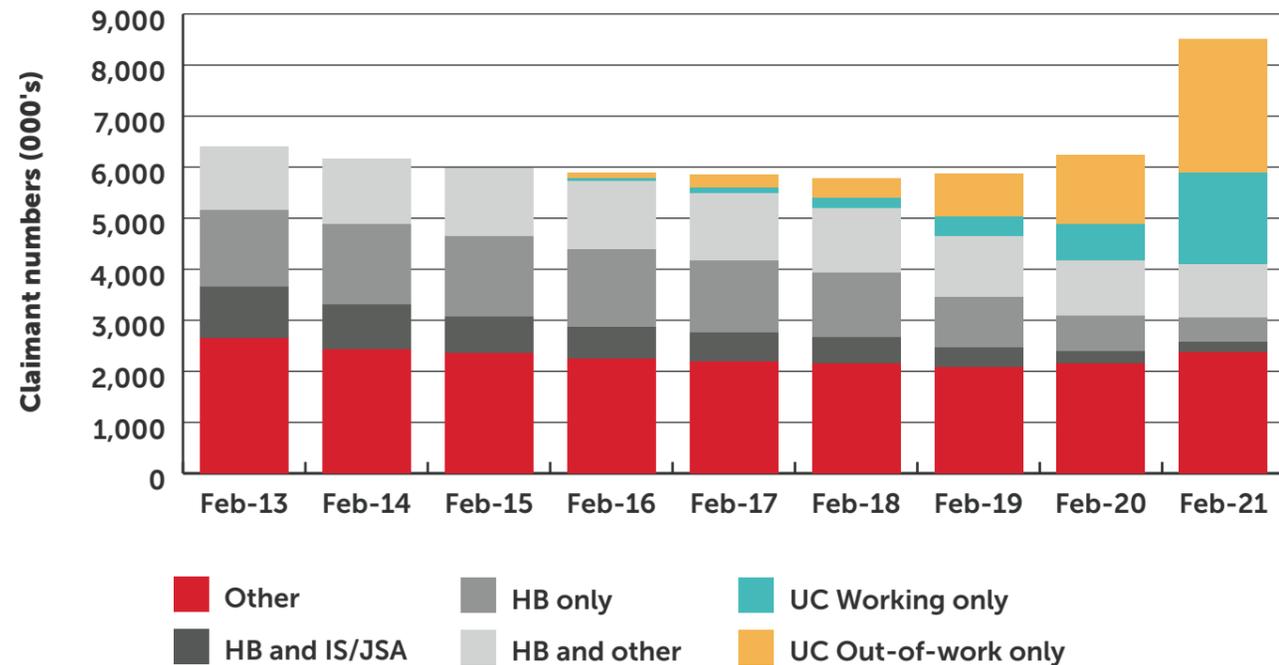
65 Office for National Statistics (2021) *Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings: resident data accessed via NOMIS*, October 2021.

66 Office for Budget Responsibility (2021) *Economic and fiscal outlook – October 2021*. London: OBR. <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-october-2021/>

67 HM Treasury (2021) *Forecasts for the UK economy: a comparison of independent forecasts*. London: UK Government [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1017850/Forecomp\\_September\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1017850/Forecomp_September_2021.pdf)

68 Bank of England (2021) *Monetary policy report: August 2021*. London: BoE <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy-report/2021/august-2021>

**Figure 2.5: Working age claimants in England by social security benefits claimed, February 2013-2021**



Source: DWP (2021) Benefit Combinations (Working Age) statistics accessed via Stat Xplore October 2021.

Notes: 'Other' includes benefits such as Employment and Support Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Personal Independence Payments and so on. The 'other category' includes people who receive only one of these 'other' benefits plus people that receive several state benefits. These statistics exclude child benefit and tax credits.

March 2021, the combined caseload had increased by a further 9% to 5.4 million. While numbers then began to fall, the combined caseload still stood at 5.2 million in August 2021. Caseload figures, unlike the benefit combination figures, double count the people in receipt of both Job Seekers Allowance and UC. Looking at Universal Credit claims alone, there were 4.96 million people claiming UC in November 2021, almost double the pre-pandemic level.

Relative to those already claiming UC when the pandemic struck, a disproportionately high proportion of new UC claimants were in work.

This was driven mainly by the large numbers of workers that saw their earnings fall. However, temporary adjustments to social security also increased the numbers of people in work that were eligible to claim UC. First, the £20 uplift to UC and the rebasing of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to the 30th percentile of market rents pushed UC further up the income distribution. Second, the suspension of the 'Minimum Income Floor' rule increased the numbers of self-employed people earning less than the National Minimum Wage that were eligible for UC.<sup>69</sup>

69 Cominetti, N., Henehan, K., Slaughter, H. & Thwaites, G (2021) *Long Covid in the labour market: The impact on the labour market of COVID-19 a year into the crisis, and how to secure a strong recovery*. London: Resolution Foundation. <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/long-covid-in-the-labour-market/>

Since April 2021, the numbers of UC claimants without work have fallen but the numbers in work have increased.<sup>70</sup> This indicates that re-entering work has not always enabled people to exit UC and the associated poverty trap, whereby much of their extra income from earnings is eaten up by income tax, national insurance and the tapering of benefit income.<sup>71</sup>

For low income households, the loss of income has been compounded by higher spending on food and energy and the extra costs of educating and entertaining children at home.<sup>72</sup> The inability to use coping strategies during lockdown periods, such as visiting relatives for meals or buying clothes in charity shops, has further added to income pressures.<sup>73</sup> Many have therefore run down any savings, increased borrowing and fallen into consumer debt.<sup>74</sup>

For those claiming UC for the first time during the pandemic, the financial shock of moving onto UC was also compounded by the five week wait for first payment. While UC advances are available, repayment conditions can leave people with insufficient income to live on.<sup>75</sup> This situation improved somewhat in April 2021, when the period for recovering UC advances

was permanently extended from twelve to twenty-four months, and the maximum deduction was reduced from 30% to 25% of the standard UC allowance.

The £20 uplift was not extended to those claiming Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance and other 'legacy benefits', most of which were sick or disabled people and carers. This decision was subject to judicial review in November 2021, but the outcome is not yet known.<sup>76</sup>

The end of £20 uplift in October 2021 affected 3.6 million households in England. However, benefit changes put in place in December 2021 have eased this loss, but only for those in work.<sup>77</sup> First, for households that contain a child or a person with limited work capability, the monthly work allowance before UC starts to be withdrawn was raised from £293 to £335 for those who get help with their housing costs and from £515 to £557 for others. Second, the UC 'taper' was lowered from 63p to 55p of every £1 earned.

As these changes have extended UC entitlement further up the earnings distribution, up to 330,000 extra households have become eligible for UC.<sup>78</sup> Working households will benefit

70 Department for Work and Pensions (2021) *People on Universal Credit by month, in or not in employment and region/country*, accessed by Stat-Xplore, November 2021.

71 McNeil C. and Parkes, H. (2021) *No Longer 'Managing' the rise of working poverty and fixing Britain's broken social settlement*. London: Institute for Public Policy Research. <https://www.ippr.org/files/2021-05/no-longer-managing-may21.pdf>

72 Handscomb, K. & Judge, L. (2020) *Caught in a (Covid) trap*. London: Resolution Foundation. <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/11/Caught-in-a-Covid-trap.pdf>

73 Ibid.

74 Earwaker, R. & Bestwick, M. (2021) *Dragged down by debt: Millions of low-income households pulled under by arrears while living costs rise*. York: JRF. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/dragged-down-debt-millions-low-income-households-pulled-under-arrears-while-living-costs-rise>

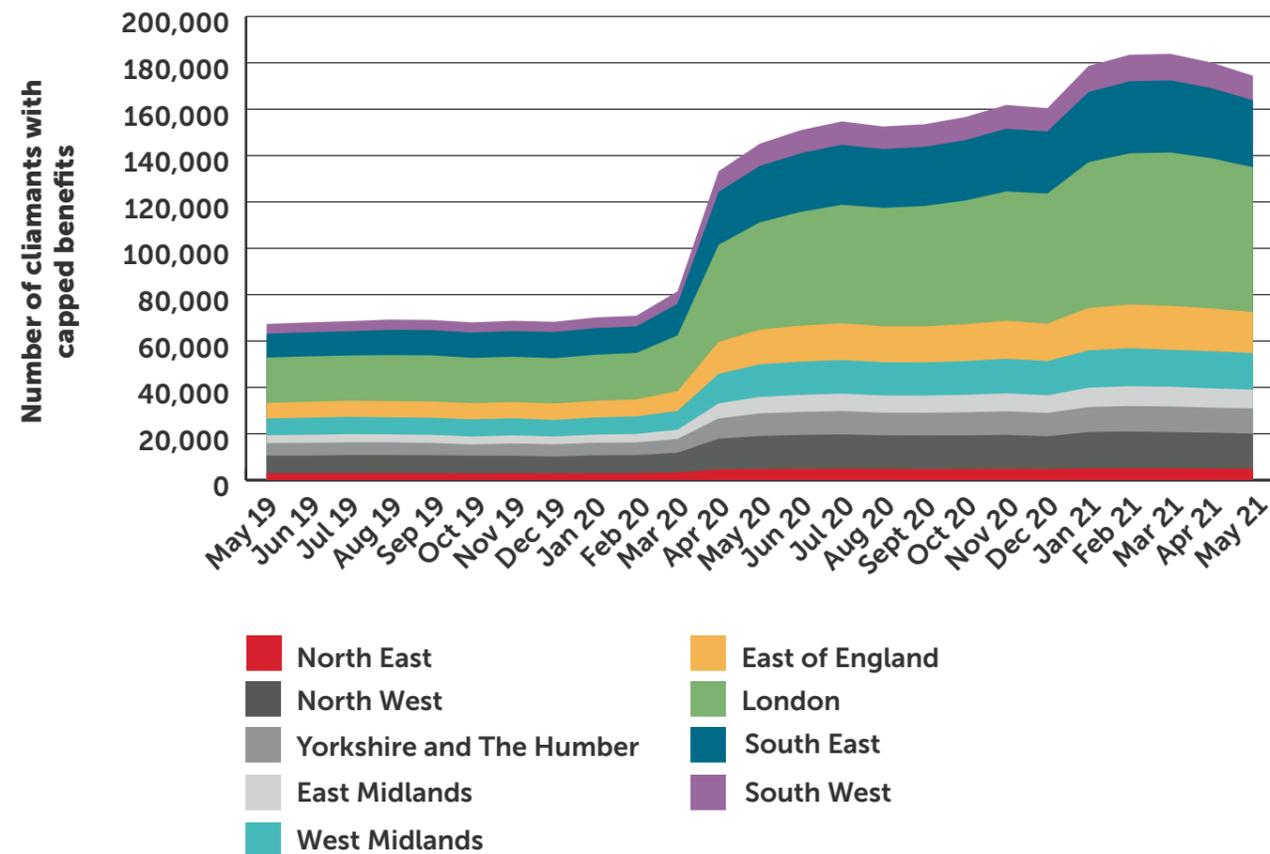
75 House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee (2020) *Universal Credit: the wait for a first payment. Third Report of Session 2019-21*. London: House of Commons. <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/3069/documents/28787/default/>

76 Pring, J. (2021) *Universal credit uplift failure was 'unfair, unjustified and discriminatory - court hears'*. Online: Disability News Service. <https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/?s=legacy+benefits+court+action>

77 HM Treasury (2021) *Autumn budget and spending review 2021 a stronger economy for the British people*. London: HMSO. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1029974/Budget\\_AB2021\\_Web\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1029974/Budget_AB2021_Web_Accessible.pdf)

78 Brewer, M., Handscomb, K., & Try, L. (2021) *Taper Cut: analysis of the Autumn Budget changes to Universal Credit*. London: Resolution Foundation. <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/11/Taper-cut.pdf>

**Figure 2.6: Numbers of capped households in England (Universal Credit and legacy benefits/ child tax credits) GB**



Source: DWP Stat Xplore UC benefit cap and HB benefit cap point in time caseload data

by an average of £1,000<sup>79</sup> but there is wide variation around this annual average. Moreover, higher 'take-home' incomes will mean a loss of Council Tax Reduction for some. The value of the gain will be impacted by the increase in national insurance rates in 2022.

#### The Benefit Cap and sanctions

Some households missed out on some, or all, of the £20 supplement or LHA uplift because their benefits or child tax credits were already capped or the temporary uplifts took them above the Benefit Cap. Figure

2.6 illustrates that the numbers of households in England subject to the cap increased by 77% from 81,446 in March to 133,255 April 2021, with the rise being most pronounced in London (91%) and the South East (90%). The proportion of households whose benefit was restricted by over £50 per week due to the cap also increased from 39% to 43%.

The numbers of households affected by the cap increased steadily during the pandemic until January 2021, when there was acceleration in the increase. This was when the

<sup>79</sup> Department for Work and Pensions (2021) *Thousands of low earners to benefit from income boost today - press release*. London: DWP <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-of-low-earners-to-benefit-from-income-boost-today>

nine month grace period ended for those claiming UC at the start of the pandemic and who had worked previously. A total of 154,766 out of the 174,460 households subject to the Benefit Cap in May 2021 were in receipt of UC. Most of these households had two and more commonly three or more children, indicating that the Benefit Cap is contributing to the widening' poverty gap experienced by large families relative to other households. In addition, over a third lived in London.

Benefit sanctions and claimant commitments for people making a new benefit claim were suspended during the first lockdown. This moratorium began to be phased out from July 2020, but new sanctions remained low, with just 5,490 new UC sanctions imposed across Great Britain from July 2020 to May 2021. However, there were 8,687 new sanctions in June and 15,929 in July, most of which were for failing to attend an interview following the resumption of face-to-face interviews in April 2021.<sup>80</sup> This brought the total number of people sanctioned in Great Britain to 18,161 in August 2021, compared to 6,875 in August 2020 and 32,637 August 2019.

The moratorium did not extend to those who were already sanctioned before the lockdown. Some people therefore saw their benefit sanctioned for much of the pandemic. Estimates suggest 2,700 people sanctioned in January 2021 had experienced a

reduction in their benefit for the whole of the pandemic up until to this point.<sup>81</sup>

#### Discretionary support

Local authorities received various additional financial allocations to help them support people hard hit by the pandemic, mostly on a discretionary basis. This saw the DHP grant for England and Wales increase from just under £140 million in 2019/20 to £180 million in 2020/21.

In 2020/21, around two-thirds (63%) of DHP expenditure was related to welfare reforms. DHP expenditure therefore continues to play an important role in assisting households, especially in the social rented sector, to overcome gaps in the financial support they receive towards their housing costs due to the operation of the 'bedroom tax' and the Benefit Cap, and the LHA, easing their risk of arrears, eviction and the risk of homelessness. On the other hand, DHPs are not always reaching households, especially in the private rented sector, in need of additional support with their housing costs.<sup>82</sup>

In 2020/21, around 8% of councils, mainly London Councils, topped up their DHPs. In contrast, 25% of councils spent less than 85% of their allocation.<sup>83</sup> This has further fuelled criticism that the formula for allocating this fund, and its devolved administration, have reduced its effectiveness in addressing unmet need and providing a cushion against the risk of homelessness.<sup>84</sup> The

<sup>80</sup> Department for Work and Pensions (2021) *Benefit sanctions statistics to July 2021 (experimental)*: 16 November 2021. London: DWP <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/benefit-sanctions-statistics-to-july-2021-experimental>

<sup>81</sup> Webster, D. (2021) *Child Poverty Action Group Briefing - Benefit Sanctions Statistics May 2021*. Glasgow: Glows University. <https://cpag.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/briefing/david-webster-university-glasgow-briefings-benefit-sanctions>

<sup>82</sup> Judge, L. (2021) *Getting ahead on falling behind: Tackling the UK's building arrears crisis*. London: Resolution Foundation. <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/getting-ahead-on-falling-behind/>

<sup>83</sup> Department for Work and Pensions (2021) *Use of Discretionary Housing Payments: analysis of end-of-year returns from local authorities, data for April 2020 to March 2021*. London: DWP <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/use-of-discretionary-housing-payments-financial-year-2020-to-2021>

<sup>84</sup> Wilson, W. & Loft, P. (2020) *Discretionary Housing Payments*. London: House of Commons Library. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06899/SN06899.pdf>; Apps, P. (2021) *Research reveals wide variations in use of crisis housing funding*. Coventry: Inside Housing, <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/research-reveals-wide-variations-in-use-of-crisis-housing-funding-69280>

usefulness of the fund during the pandemic has also been questioned because it was not available to households that incurred rent arrears as a result of the pandemic but were not in receipt of UC or Housing Benefit (HB).<sup>85</sup>

The DHP budget fell back to £139.5 million in 2021/22, but in October 2021 the Government announced £65 million to support households at risk of eviction or homelessness.<sup>86</sup> This one-off allocation will top up the Homelessness Prevention Grant.

#### 2.4 Housing market and policy developments

This section looks at the delivery of housing, especially affordable housing, as well as issues surrounding access to, and the affordability of housing, including temporary measures to restrict evictions and repossessions during the pandemic.

##### Housing delivery

In 2017, the Government pledged to increasing housing supply to 300,000 per year by the mid-2020s,<sup>87</sup> a commitment later reiterated by the current Government in 2021.<sup>88</sup> Consistent with these pledges, a range of housing and planning measures<sup>89</sup> have been pursued. These have helped to increase the annual numbers of housing completions from 124,640 in 2014/15, to 175,330 in 2019/20.<sup>90</sup> Nonetheless, the delivery of homes has remained well below

the Government's ambitions as well as independent estimates, the most widely quoted of which suggests an additional 340,000 homes are required each year.<sup>91</sup>

Housing completions dipped for the first time in five years to 155,950 in 2020/21 due to the suspension of construction during the first lockdown, but housing starts, and completions have recovered strongly since then. In the first six months of 2021 there were 89,640 housing starts, over 10,000 more than in the same period in 2019.

Figure 2.7 shows that the numbers of affordable homes delivered in the five year period from 2016-2021 were steadily rising until 2020/21 when the pandemic stalled delivery. Regardless, the numbers of homes delivered in the five years to 2015/16 (243,129) and the five years to 2020/21 (257,439) were similar, with the difference mainly accounted for by the upswing in shared ownership and other forms of low cost home ownership.

Figure 2.7 also shows that the composition of affordable homes delivered has changed radically. In 2020/21, just 11% of all affordable homes delivered were for social rent, down from 65% in 2011/12. Just 31,580 social rented homes were built in the five years to 2020/21, well below the 450,000 independently assessed to have been needed.<sup>92</sup>

85 Judge, L. (2021) *Getting ahead on falling behind: Tackling the UK's building arrears crisis*. London: Resolution Foundation. <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/getting-ahead-on-falling-behind/>

86 Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2021) *£65 million support package for vulnerable renters, 23 October 2021*: press release. Online: DLUHC. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/65-million-support-package-for-vulnerable-renters>

87 HM Treasury (2017) *Autumn Budget 2017- Building the homes the country needs*. London: HM Treasury. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-the-homes-the-country-needs-autumn-budget-2017-brief>

88 Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2021) *Planning for the future*. London: DLUHC. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future/planning-for-the-future>

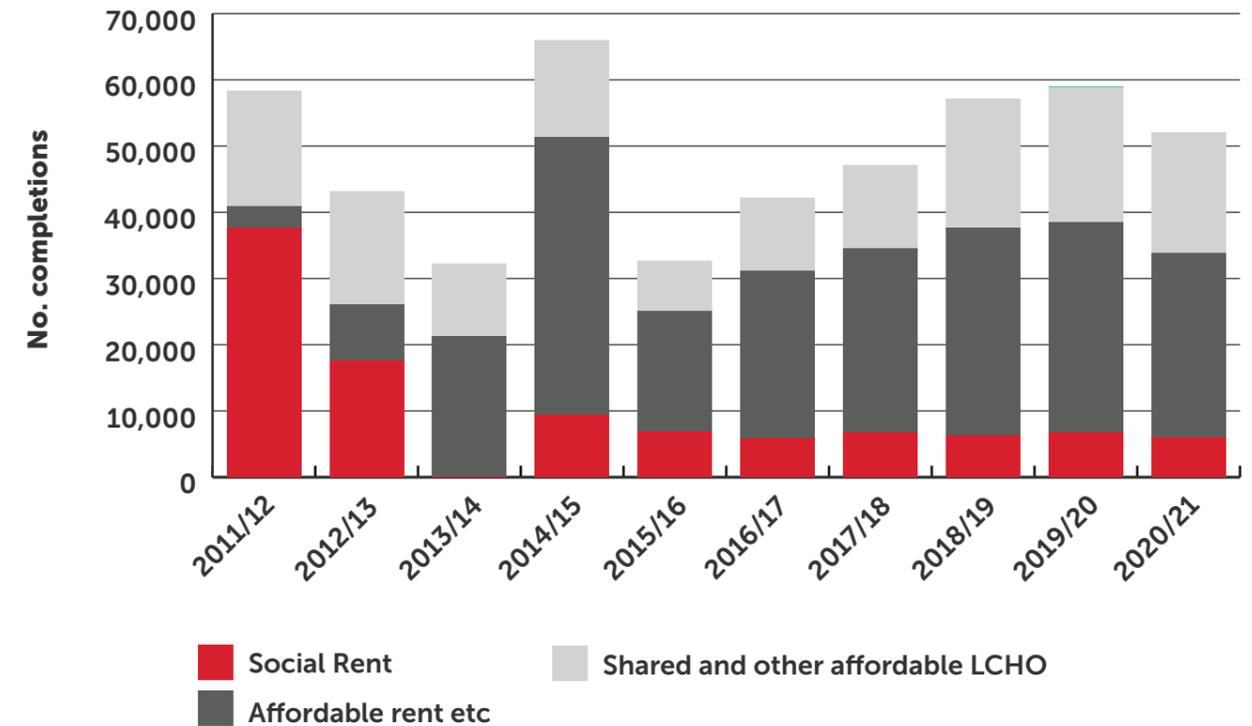
89 Wilson, W. (2021) *Stimulating housing supply - Government initiatives (England)*. London: House of Commons Library. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06416/SN06416.pdf>

90 Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2021) *Live tables on housing supply*. London: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-house-building>

91 Bramley, G. (2019) *Housing Supply Requirements across Great Britain for low income households and homeless people: Research for Crisis and the National Housing Federation; Main Technical Report*. Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University. <https://doi.org/10.17861/bramley.2019.04>

92 Ibid.

Figure 2.7: Affordable homes delivered by tenure, 2011/12 to 2020/21



Source: DLUHC Live Tables on Affordable Housing Supply, Table 1000: Additional affordable homes provided by tenure, England

New affordable provision is now dominated by homes let at Affordable Rent levels, with LA survey respondents clear that these are far from affordable for many households:

**“new build... when available is at ‘affordable’ rates difficult for those working to afford.”**  
(LA respondent, the South)

**“Affordable housing is not affordable for those working but on a low income.”**  
(LA respondent, the Midlands)

The following two London-based key informants illustrated the trade-offs faced by social housing developers within the context of current

Government policy, from starkly opposing perspectives:

**“Housing Associations in Central London are basically cashing in on the capital that they’ve got, and they’re building unaffordable accommodation now. They’re building shared ownership accommodation, market rent, outright sale, intermediate accommodation, which is rents that 80 % are market rents. Homeless people can’t afford them... It’s difficult place for councils in Central London.”**  
(Statutory sector key informant)

**“We can build five affordable rented homes for one social renter... that’s the root of the dilemma. Do we help one family or do we help five families, even if the rent is a bit higher? That’s the moral maze issue... The reality in developing is you take the poisoned chalice of the Government’s policies and try to make it work.”**

(Housing sector key informant)

The Autumn 2021 Budget reaffirmed that £11.5 billion out of the £24 billion housing settlement had been assigned to the five-year Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) 2021-26. In September 2021, the first £8.6 billion of this AHP was allocated, of which £5.2 billion is administered by Homes England and £3.46 billion by the Greater London Authority (GLA).

Consistent with recent trends, most of the 90,000 affordable homes supported by Homes England is to be for affordable rent, shared ownership and other low cost home ownership, with grant funding for social rented housing limited to areas of ‘high affordability challenge’ or social rented developments where the grant level is on par with those for affordable rents.<sup>93</sup> In contrast, 17,000 out of the 29,500 affordable homes supported

by GLA will be for social rent and most London Councils will be involved in building new social rented homes.<sup>94</sup>

Some large development orientated housing associations did not participate in the AHP 2021-26. Some may have been deterred by the requirement to grant tenants of non-council rented homes funded through the AHP the right to convert their tenancy into shared ownership.<sup>95</sup> However, others opted to prioritise investment in their existing housing stock.<sup>96</sup>

Meeting the twin challenges of improving the safety of multi-storey residential blocks (in the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire) and making rapid progress to decarbonise social housing stock will require very substantial levels of investment. The G15 group of housing associations collectively expect to spend £3.6 billion on building safety works in the next few years.<sup>97</sup> Likewise, it has been estimated that it could cost £104bn to retrofit all social housing in the UK to zero carbon standards.<sup>98</sup> The implications for rents and new supply are unclear in the absence of clear Government plans on how the costs of achieving zero carbon will be met. These challenges, and their implications for responses to homelessness, were clearly articulated by this key informant:

**“The long-term solution to homelessness is housing-led, more homes at social rents, but it’s so difficult to do that with the grant available at the moment, and the costs of buying land, costs of building homes. It’s very difficult to make all that stack up. A lot of housing associations are trying to build, but they’ve got other pressures; fire safety, zero carbon, and because you try to keep the rents down. So there’s loads of issues that make it quite difficult for housing associations to make a big impact.”**

(Housing sector key informant)

More immediately, there are plans to replace the S106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy with a single Infrastructure Levy that would be charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold.<sup>99</sup> Although the Government has said that any levy would be set locally, there remains much concern that these proposals will curb new affordable housing.<sup>100</sup> There are also concerns that plans to use S106 to support the national rollout of First Home, the Government’s new flagship policy to support the building of homes for first time buyers, will displace ‘genuinely’ affordable homes.<sup>101</sup>

Reflecting the challenging context outlined in this section, only a fifth (22%) of LAs responding to this year’s survey were satisfied that new affordable housing supply is sufficient

to meet the needs of homeless households and other people in housing need in their area, ranging from fewer than 8% in London to a high of 33% in the north of England. The key barriers identified included limited access to grant funding, alongside the limited availability and affordability of land:

**“There is a lack of available grant funding for building affordable housing. With the cost of land and building in [name of borough], without significant grant funding then building affordable housing is not viable.”**

(LA respondent, London)

**“National housing policy [is the key barrier]. There doesn’t seem to be any appetite nationally to support the development of social or genuinely affordable accommodation. Locally, the council is trying to develop social and affordable housing and is having some, limited, success, however local planning priorities also have some adverse impact here.”**

(LA respondent, the North)

Several respondents indicated that S106 was ineffective in enabling development of sufficient affordable homes, while several others suggested that First Homes was likely to further impede access:

93 Homes England (2021) *Affordable Homes Programme 2021 to 2026 - Capital Funding Guide*. Online: Homes England. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/capital-funding-guide/4-housing-for-rent>

94 Greater London Authority (2021) *AH 21-26 programme allocations*. London: GLA. <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/homes-londoners-affordable-homes-programmes/homes-londoners-affordable-homes-programme-2021-2026#acc-i-64316>

95 Winckworth Sherwood. (2021) *Shared ownership reform: question over viability*. London: Winckworth Sherwood. <https://wslaw.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/USE-shared-ownership-reform-question-over-viability-COMPRESSED.pdf>

96 Williams, S. (2021) *Focus on stock investment soars 85% among housing providers*. Online: Social Housing. <https://www.socialhousing.co.uk/news/news/focus-on-stock-investment-soars-85-among-housing-providers-72432>

97 Inside Housing (2021) *Budget 2021: Sector responds to Rishi Sunak’s announcements*. 24 June. Online: Inside Housing. <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/budget-2021-sector-responds-to-rishi-sunaks-announcements-7309>

98 Inside Housing (2020) *Cost of retrofitting all social homes in the UK to zero carbon to top £100bn, exclusive research reveals*. 23 November. Online: Inside Housing. <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/cost-of-retrofitting-all-social-homes-in-the-uk-to-zero-carbon-to-top-100bn-exclusive-research-reveals-68674>

99 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2020) *White Paper: Planning for the Future*. London: MHCLG. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/958420/MHCLG-Planning-Consultation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/958420/MHCLG-Planning-Consultation.pdf)

100 Wilson, W. & Barton, C. (2021) *What is affordable housing?* London: House of Commons Library. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7747/>

101 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee (2021) *The future of the planning system in England*. London: UK Parliament <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5802/cmselect/cmcomloc/38/3802.htm>

**Viability is the main issue, likely to be made worse with the provision of First Homes.**  
(LA respondent, the South)

Many also noted a mismatch between the form of affordable housing available and the nature of demand, even in local authorities where supply was thought relatively plentiful:

**New build supply is increasing, particularly brownfield sites which are smaller flatted accommodation, but there is insufficient supply of larger family homes.**  
(LA respondent, the South)

**The vast majority of our homeless households are single people and there is few or no new affordable housing supply being built that meet this resident need.**  
(LA respondent, the North)

**The housing market and access to homeownership**

Figure 2.8 shows that average house prices rose steadily from 2012 until the first lockdown, when the suspension of the housing market saw house prices stall and transactions plummet. Thereafter, transactions picked up and house prices forged ahead. By August 2021, the average house price had

reached £281,000, almost 10% higher than a year earlier.<sup>102</sup>

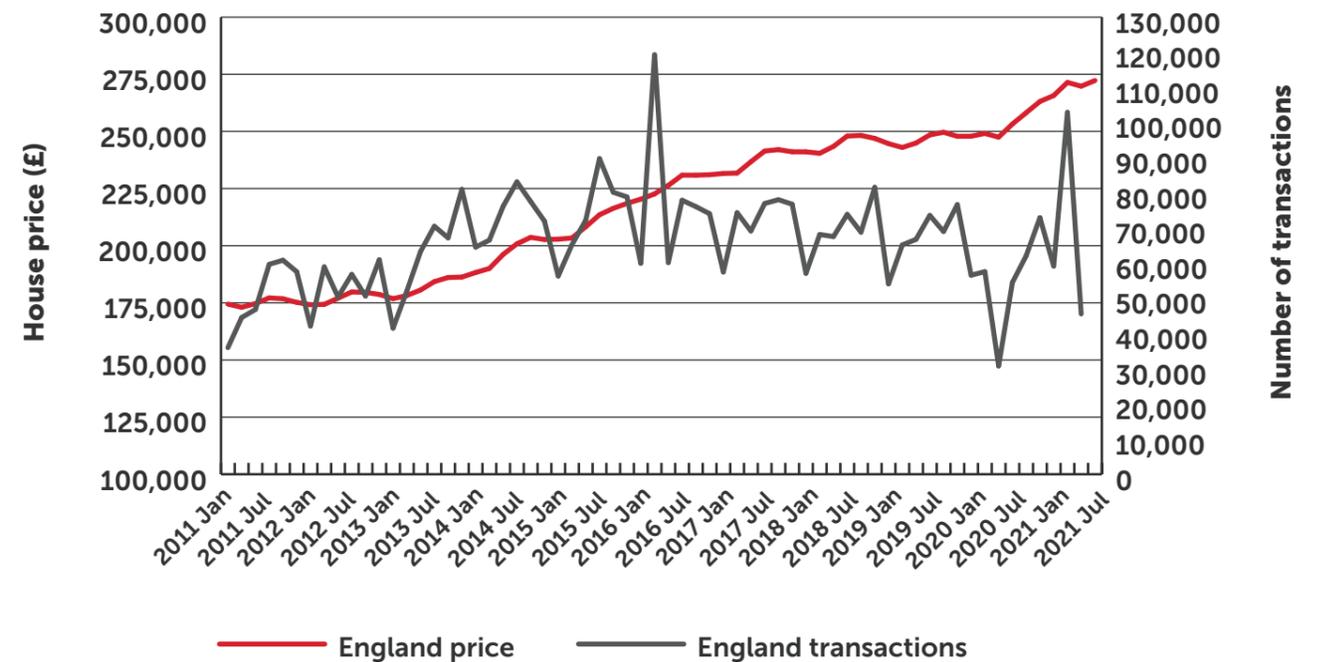
The current boom has been driven by the limited housing supply coming to the market,<sup>103</sup> higher household savings, ultra-low mortgage interest rates and more consumers seeking more spacious homes with gardens in less densely populated areas.<sup>104</sup> The stamp duty holiday from July 2020 to September 2021 that saw nil rate band rise from £125,000 to £500,000 was also a catalyst, particularly for 'next steppers' upsizing their home.<sup>105</sup>

Access to home ownership has become progressively more difficult in the last 25 years due to household incomes lagging house prices and by lenders adopting more stringent mortgage lending models since the GFC.<sup>106</sup> In 2020, the median house price was over 10 times the median gross wage. Buying a first home has therefore become increasingly the preserve of more affluent and dual earner households. This is in spite of regional variations in house price to earnings ratios (see figure 2.9). In 2020, first time buyers in England had an average gross income of £53,000, ranging from £39,000 in the North East to £86,000 in London.<sup>107</sup>

The Government's Mortgage Guarantee Scheme contributed to the return of high 'loan to value' mortgage products in Spring 2021, which had largely disappeared at the start of the pandemic.<sup>108</sup> The OBR also expect house price inflation to slow in

- 102 Office for National Statistics (2021) *UK House Price Index: August 2021*. London: ONS <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/housepriceindex/august2021>
- 103 Savills (2021) *UK Housing Market Update - November 2021*. Cardiff: Savills. [https://www.savills.co.uk/research\\_articles/229130/321055-0](https://www.savills.co.uk/research_articles/229130/321055-0)
- 104 Judge, L., Shah K. & Odamtten, F. (2021) *The Resolution Foundation housing outlook: Q3 2021*. London: Resolution Foundation. <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/08/Housing-Outlook-Q3-2021.pdf>
- 105 Ibid.
- 106 Stephens, M., O'Brien, P. & Earley, A. (2021) *Resilience in the housing system: the mortgage and housebuilding industries from the global financial crisis to COVID-19*. Glasgow: CaCHE. <https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Resilience-in-the-housing-system-interim-report.pdf>
- 107 Office for National Statistics (2021) *House Price Index: annual tables 20 to 39*. Online: ONS. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/datasets/housepriceindexannualtables2039>
- 108 Croxson, K. & Bracke, P. (2020) *Stay at home, move house, remortgage? Home loans during the Covid*. London: Financial Conduct Authority. <https://www.fca.org.uk/insight/stay-home-move-house-remortgage-home-loans-during-covid-crisis>

**Figure 2.8: Average nominal house prices and transactions for England, January 2011 to August 2021**



Source: ONS UK House Price Index: to August 2021

2022-24. However, a corresponding improvement in affordability for first time buyers seems unlikely due to stagnating living standards and the prospect of rising interest rates.

As discussed in last year's Monitor,<sup>109</sup> various protections were introduced at the start of the pandemic to minimise the repossession of mortgaged properties held by homeowners or private landlords. The mitigating effects of these measures have been clear. Just 323 possession orders were issued in England in 2020/21, compared to 15,152 in 2019/20 and 123,463 in 2008 at the time of the GFC.<sup>110</sup>

- 109 Fitzpatrick, S., Watts, B., Pawson H., Bramley, G., Wood, J., Stephen, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2021) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2021*. London: Crisis. <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244703/crisis-england-monitor-executive-summary-2021.pdf>
- 110 Ministry of Justice (2021) *Mortgage and Landlord Possession Statistics Quarterly - Table 8*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mortgage-and-landlord-possession-statistics-april-to-june-2021>
- 111 UK Finance (2021) *Arrears and possessions, Q2 2021*. London: UK Finance. <https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/data-and-research/data/mortgages/arrears-and-possession>
- 112 Ibid.

The numbers of mortgaged owners in arrears has remained broadly static since 2018, fluctuating between 74,000 and 76,000, other than for a reported small and short lived spike at the start of the pandemic.<sup>111</sup> According to the Household Resilience Survey, only 2% of mortgage holders were in arrears in April-May 2021, down from 6% in June-July 2020. With the UK Finance expecting little growth in repossessions,<sup>112</sup> homelessness cases attributable to mortgage repossessions are likely to remain low for some time.

**Private rented sector**

The numbers of households renting privately in England fell from 4.7

**Figure 2.9 Affordability of median house price & private rent relative to median wage by region, 2020**



Sources: ONS ASHE Gross earnings; ONS house price index (Regulated Mortgage Survey) and ONS private rental market summary statistics in England: April 2020 to March 2021

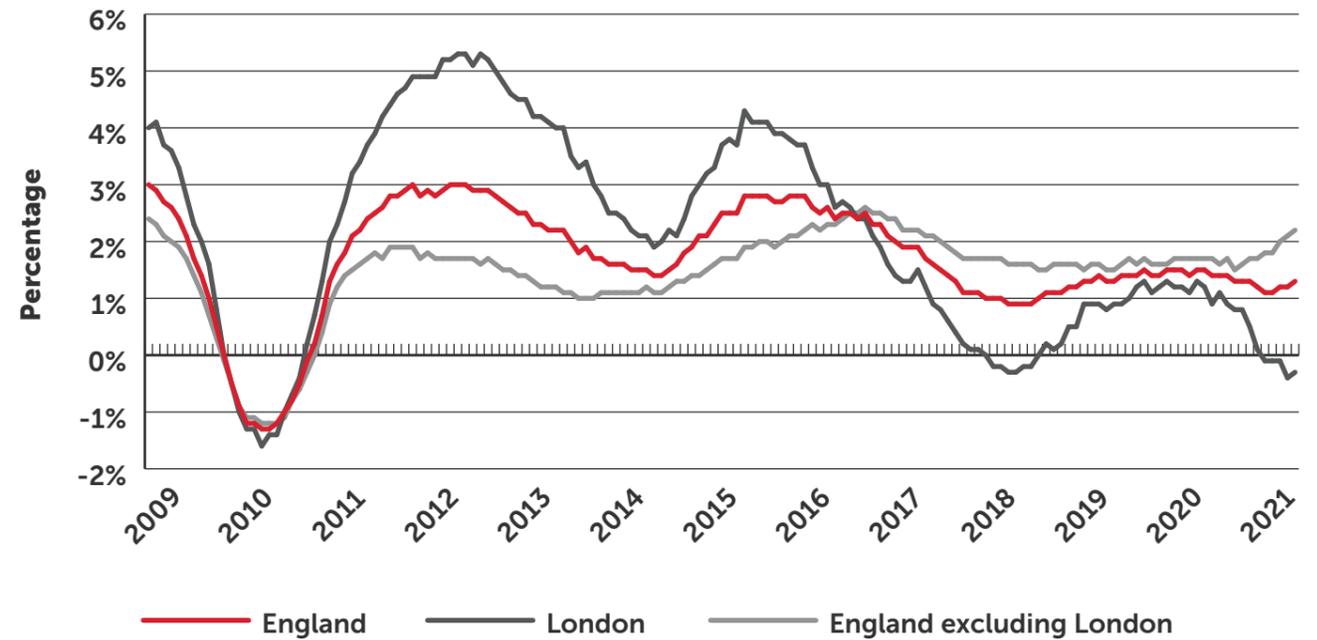
million in 2016/17 to 4.4 million in 2019/20.<sup>113</sup> Even so, higher numbers of families and low income households live in the sector than at any time since the GFC. In 2019/20, 1.6 million households with children were living in the private rented sector, equivalent to 24% of all such households, up from 14% in 2008/09. Likewise, almost a million households in the private

rented sector were in AHC poverty. This equated to 4.3 million people, 835,400 more than in 2008/09.<sup>114</sup>

The changing size and configuration of private renters has led to greater policy interest in the sector and its regulation<sup>115</sup> but progress in effecting change remains slow. The Renters' Reform Bill, which is expected to

113 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021) *English Housing Survey: Private rented sector, 2019/20*. London: MHCLG. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-private-rented-sector>  
 114 Department for Works and Pensions (2021) *Households below average income: for financial years ending 1995 to 2020*. London: DWP. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-for-financial-years-ending-1995-to-2020>  
 115 Whitehead, C. & Williams, P. (2018) *Assessing the evidence on rent control from an international perspective*. London: LSE. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/business/consulting/assets/documents/assessing-the-evidence-on-rent-control-from-an-international-perspective.pdf>

**Figure 2.10: Change in private rents over 12 months for England, January 2009 to September 2021**



Source: ONS index of Private Housing Rental Prices (another graph this does not cut and paste fully)

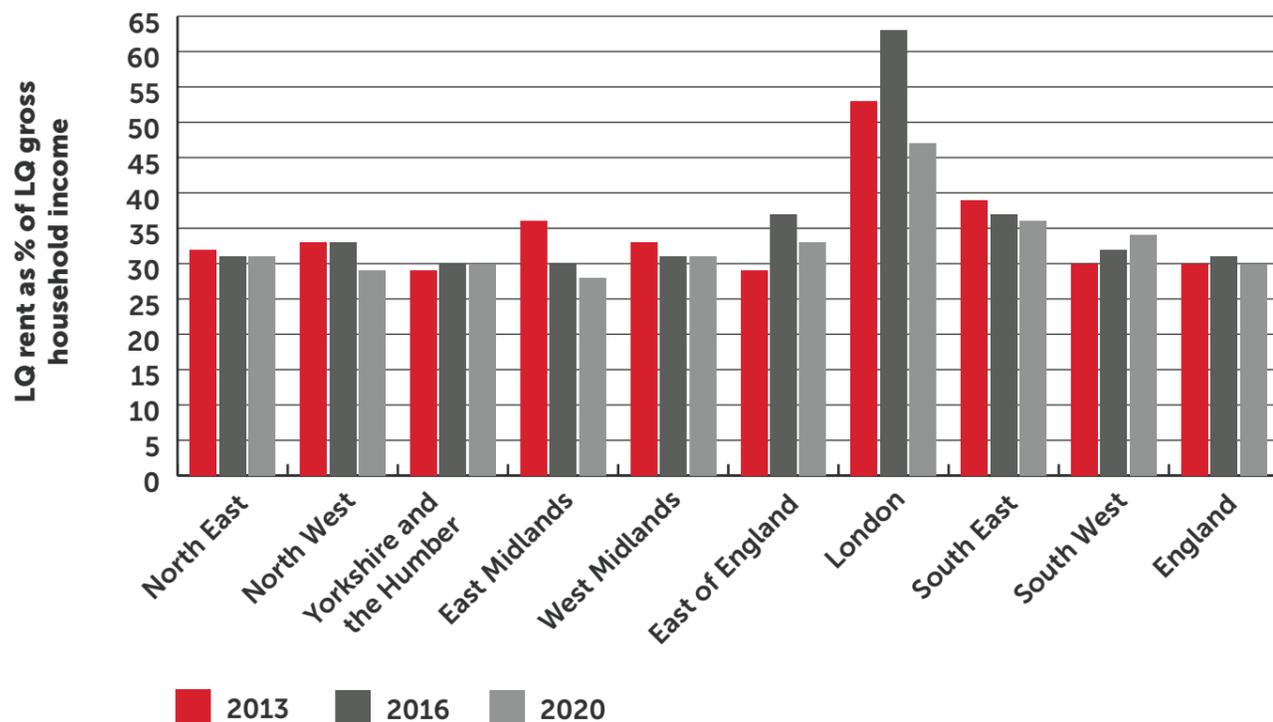
end 'no-fault' evictions and set out measures to drive up standards and achieve a more equitable balance between tenant and landlord interests, has been further delayed until at least 2022.

The ONS private rent index,<sup>116</sup> while experimental, indicates that between 2009 and 2020, private rents grew in cash terms by 19%. Much of this growth occurred during 2009-2016, after which rental growth slowed, especially in London (see Figure 2.10). Since Spring 2021, renewed demand has seen private rents begin to rise slightly more sharply, other than in London where demand remains subdued.

Figure 2.9 shows that people on median earnings could expect to spend 28% of their wage on a median private rent in 2020, rising to 45% for those living in London. In terms of the risk of homelessness, however, the affordability of private rents for lower income households is a more useful measure. Figure 2.11 therefore summarises lower quartile rents to lower quartile income ratios for households that rent privately.<sup>117</sup> While rents became slightly more affordable in the seven years to 2020, particularly in London, lower income private renters could typically expect to spend at least 30% of their gross household income on rent, well above the 25% gross income benchmark that

116 Office for National Statistics (2021) *Index of Private Housing Rental Prices, UK: Sept 2021*. London: ONS <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/indexofprivatehousingrentalprices/november2021>  
 117 Office for National Statistics (2021) *Private rental affordability, England: 2012 to 2020*. London: ONS <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/privaterentalaffordabilityengland/2012to2020>

**Figure 2.11: Lower quartile private rent to lower quartile private renter household income by region, 2013 to 2020**



Source: ONS (2021) PRS affordability tables derived from the Family Resources Survey (income) and the Private Rental Market Statistics (rents)

both Bramley<sup>118</sup> and Meen<sup>119</sup> found to be closely associated with a marked increase in financial stress for lower income renters.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) estimate that up to 965,000 private renters were likely to be paying rents they could not afford in October 2021.<sup>120</sup> This included 624,000 households that were spending over 30% of their net income on rents<sup>121</sup>

- 118 Bramley, G. (2012) 'Affordability, poverty and housing need: triangulating measures and standards', *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 27(2), 133–51. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10901-011-9255-4>
- 119 Meen, G. (2018) *How Should Housing Affordability Be Measured?* Glasgow: CaCHE. [http://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/R2018\\_02\\_01\\_How\\_to\\_measure\\_affordability.pdf](http://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/R2018_02_01_How_to_measure_affordability.pdf)
- 120 Elliott, I. & Earwaker, R. (2021) *Renters on low incomes face a policy black hole: homes for social rent are the answer*. York: JRF. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/renters-low-incomes-face-policy-black-hole-homes-social-rent-are-answer>
- 121 As a rule of thumb, 30% net income is understood to equate with 25% of gross incomes.
- 122 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee (2021) *Protecting the homeless and the private rented sector: MHCLG's response to Covid-19*. London: House of Commons. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmcomloc/1329/132902.htm>
- 123 Clair, A. (2021) 'The effect of local housing allowance reductions on overcrowding in the private rented sector in England', *International Journal of Housing Policy*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19491247.2021.1964253>

and 526,000 households that had their housing costs subsidised through the social security system.

The widening gap between LHA rates and private rents in the eight years prior to 2020/21 deepened affordability problems for lower income private renters.<sup>122</sup> It also contributed to the growth in overcrowding in the sector,<sup>123</sup> a factor linked to the transmission of

COVID-19<sup>124</sup> and greater domestic conflict and abuse.<sup>125</sup> Local authorities identified the rebasing of the LHA to the 30th percentile of local market rents in April 2020 as an important measure in preventing and minimising homelessness during the pandemic.<sup>126</sup> The return to the freezing of LHA rates in cash terms from 2021/22<sup>127</sup> may very well have the reverse effect (see also chapter 4).

The precarious employment position of many lower income private renters made them vulnerable to a drop in income and thus rent arrears. The Household Resilience Survey suggests that the share of private renters in arrears has gradually increased, presumably as savings and other resources were exhausted. It estimated that 7% of households were in arrears in April-May 2021, compared to 3% in 2019/20. It also reported that 4% of private renters said they risked being evicted in the next six months.<sup>128</sup>

### Social and affordable rented housing

In March 2021, the social rented stock in England stood at 4.2 million. In 2020/21 around 8% of the social rented stock was let on an affordable rent basis, most of which were owned by housing associations. The average

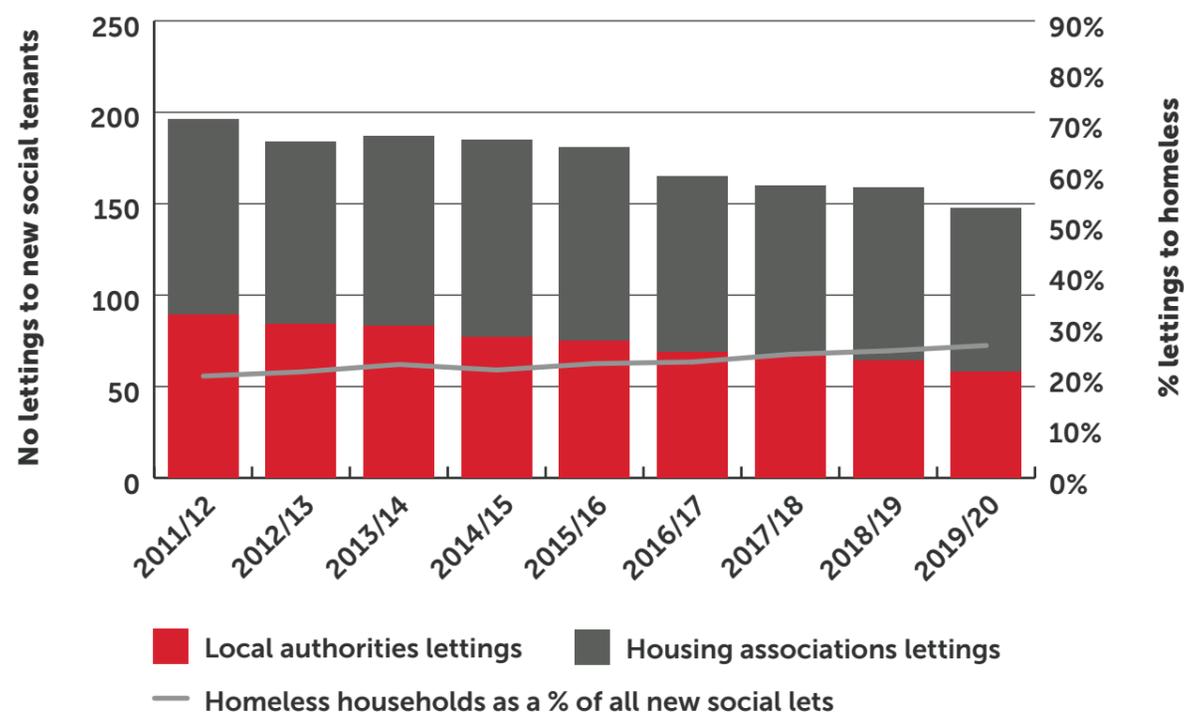
affordable rent is around 32% more expensive than the average gross rent for other housing association properties, although this gap rises to 64% in the Greater London Region.<sup>129</sup>

In 2020, there were 1.15 million households on LA housing registers,<sup>130</sup> representing 6% of all households in England. The high demand for social housing combined with the decline in the numbers of lettings has seen access to social rented housing become increasingly difficult. In 2019/20, there were 149,000 lettings to households new to the social rented sector, 47,000 fewer than in 2011/12. These lettings were mostly general needs homes let on a social or affordable rent (see figure 2.12).

In the decade to 2011/12 there was a marked fall in the share of social lettings allocated to statutory homeless households.<sup>131</sup> In contrast, the share of all lettings to new social tenants allocated to statutory homeless households increased in the nine years to 2019/20 inclusive from 20% to 26%. However, the actual numbers of lettings remained broadly static, averaging 39,000 per annum, in spite of the change in the definition of statutory homelessness from April 2018 to include households accepted

- 124 Barker, N. (2020) *The housing pandemic: four graphs showing the link between COVID-19 deaths and the housing crisis*. Inside Housing. 29th May. Online: Inside Housing. <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/insight/insight/the-housing-pandemic-four-graphs-showing-the-link-between-covid-19-deaths-and-the-housing-crisis-66562>
- 125 Chandan, J. S., Taylor, J., Bradbury-Jones, C., Nirantharakumar, K., Kane, E., & Bandyopadhyay, S. (2020). 'COVID-19: a public health approach to manage domestic violence is needed,' *The Lancet Public Health*, 5(6), e309. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(20\)30112-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(20)30112-2)
- 126 Fitzpatrick, S., Watts, B., Pawson H., Bramley, G., Wood, J., Stephen, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2021) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2021*. London: Crisis. <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244703/crisis-england-monitor-executive-summary-2021.pdf>
- 127 HM Treasury (2021) *Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 – policy costings*. London: HMSO [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1029980/Policy\\_Costings\\_Document\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1029980/Policy_Costings_Document_FINAL.pdf)
- 128 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2021) *Household Resilience Study, Wave 3*. London: DLUHC. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-resilience-study-wave-3>
- 129 Regulator of Social Housing (2021) *Registered provider social housing in England – stock and rents 2020-2021*. Leeds: RSH. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/registered-provider-social-housing-stock-and-rents-in-england-2019-to-2020>
- 130 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2021) *Live Table 600: Numbers of households on local authorities' housing waiting lists 1,3, by district: England, 31 March 1997-2020*. Online: DLUHC. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-rents-lettings-and-tenancies>
- 131 Fitzpatrick, S., Watts, B., Pawson H., Bramley, G., Wood, J., Stephen, M., & Blenkinsopp, J. (2021) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2021*. London: Crisis. <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244703/crisis-england-monitor-executive-summary-2021.pdf>

**Figure 2.12: Lettings to new social tenants and % made to homeless households, 2011/12 to 2019/20**



Source: UK Housing Review 2019, Tables 95, 97 and 99

as homeless by a LA and granted a prevention, relief or main duty. In the three years to 2019/20 local authorities and housing associations let similar numbers of homes to homeless households, albeit local authorities continued to allocate a slightly higher share of lettings to homeless households (29%) than housing associations (24%).

Several key informants were of the view that there was a case to increase the proportion of lets to homeless households, albeit acknowledging the acute trade-offs and challenges faced in this area:

**“there is interest among some [housing associations to increase the proportion of lets to homeless households [but]... there is also the understanding that it would be challenging because of the other groups that housing associations house, and they’re not going to go away... [there are also other] barriers [to] doing so [in relation to] the welfare system and availability of... and funding for support.”**  
(Housing sector key informant)

**“I can’t understand why the proportion is so low... There is a downside... [to allocating a higher proportion of social homes to homeless households], because if you house a homeless household, you don’t house someone else... [but] it seems to me... [that] we should be housing people who haven’t got a home first of all... You’d think that would be at the centre of everyone’s values, really, as a social landlord.”**

(Housing sector key informant)

The share of social tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit, or its UC equivalent, fell by 10% to 56% during 2011/12 to 2019/20.<sup>132</sup> This is broadly consistent with the increase in the proportion of social rented tenants who are in work from 33% to 45% over this period. However, there are concerns that the interaction between welfare reforms, and the use of affordability assessments by housing associations has also increased the exclusion of vulnerable households from housing association homes<sup>133</sup> (see also chapter 4).

Despite the rise in the numbers of social renters that are in work, 1.3 million households in the social rented sector were in the bottom 40% of the income distribution and spent

over 30% of their gross income on rent excluding service charges. This equated to 33% of all households in the social rented sector, which was higher than the comparable figure for households in the private rented sector (27%). This has led the Affordable Housing Commission<sup>134</sup> to call for the development of a sustainable rent settlement for the social rented sector and the ending of affordable rents.

The Household Resilience Survey reports that the proportions of social renters in rent arrears remained largely unchanged throughout the pandemic at around 13%<sup>135</sup> and only slightly higher than in 2019/20.<sup>136</sup> This contrasts with developments in the private rented sector noted above. It also seems at odds with HouseMark reports<sup>137</sup> that between March and December 2020 total arrears in the social rented sector climbed by £300 million to £1 billion. In retrospect, the increase in total arrears may have been a temporary issue, possibly linked to technical arrears amongst social tenants making a new claim for UC or those transferring onto UC from tax credits. Whatever the reason, in October 2021, the Regulator for Social Housing<sup>138</sup> advised that while current tenant arrears in the sector increased to 4% at the start of the pandemic, they were now largely at pre-pandemic levels.

132 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2021) *English Housing Survey- Social rented sector, 2019/20*. London: MHCLG <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey#2019-to-2020>

133 Preece, J., Hickman, P. & Pattison, B. (2020) ‘The affordability of “affordable” housing in England: conditionality and exclusion in a context of welfare reform’, *Housing Studies*, 35:7, 1214-1238. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/02673037.2019.1653448>

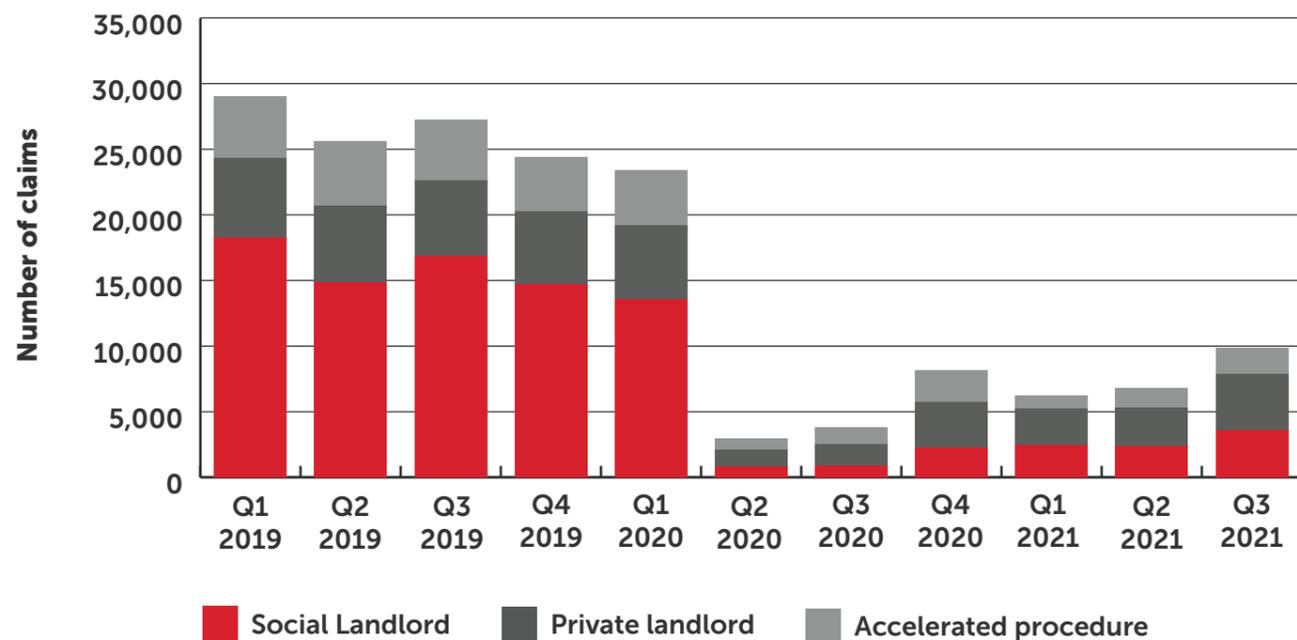
134 Affordable Housing Commission (2020) *Making Housing Affordable After Covid-19*. London: AHC <https://www.affordablehousingcommission.org/news/2020/7/16/making-housing-affordable-after-covid-19-a-follow-up-report-from-the-affordable-housing-commission>

135 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2021) *Household Resilience Study, Wave 3*. London: DLUHC. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-resilience-study-wave-3>

136 Ibid.

137 HouseMark (2021) *COVID-19 impact data reveals arrears levels have reached record high at more than £1 billion* – press release. <https://www.housemark.co.uk/news/housemark-covid-19-impact-data-reveals-arrears-levels-have-reached-record-high-at-more-than-1-billion/>

138 Regulator of Social Housing (2021) *Sector risk profile 2021*. Leeds: RSH. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sector-risk-profiles>

**Figure 2.13: Landlord possession claims for England, first quarter 2019 to third quarter 2021**

Source: Ministry of Justice, Mortgage and Landlord Possession Statistics Quarterly, Table 8

### Protection from eviction

Several provisions were put in place during the pandemic to limit the threat of eviction for social and private tenants.

Landlords had to give tenants three, later extended to six months' notice prior to starting legal proceedings, other than for cases involving antisocial and other egregious behaviour. The notice period was wound down from June to October 2021, when it reverted to pre-pandemic levels. Evictions were halted until 21 September 2020, when new procedures were introduced to accompany the resumption of possession proceedings. These required landlords to supply Courts

with information about the impact of the pandemic on a tenant they were seeking to evict. Although this procedure ran until November 2021, it was of doubtful value due to the lack of discretion judges have in rent arrears cases.<sup>139</sup> Finally, bailiff enforced evictions were suspended from November 2020 to 31 May 2021 for most cases.

These provisions prevented widespread evictions, albeit some illegal evictions persisted.<sup>140</sup> Figure 2.13 shows that landlords submitted 2,951 claims for possession in the second quarter of 2020, down from 25,569 a year earlier. Altogether, there were 21,166 landlord claims in 2020/21, 79% fewer than in 2019/20. Orders for

<sup>139</sup> Bureau of Investigative Journalism (2021) *Evicted in less than 10 minutes: courts fail tenants broken by pandemic*. Online: BIJ. <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2021-09-23/evicted-in-less-than-10-minutes-courts-fail-tenants-broken-by-pandemic>

<sup>140</sup> Marsh, S. & Walker, A. (2020) *Tens of thousands made homeless despite UK ban on evictions during pandemic*. *The Guardian*. 8th November. Online: [The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/nov/08/tens-thousands-homeless-despite-uk-ban-evictions-covid-pandemic). <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/nov/08/tens-thousands-homeless-despite-uk-ban-evictions-covid-pandemic>

possession (8,114), warrants (5,340) and bailiff repossessions (784) also decreased by 90%, 90% and 97% respectively.

Prior to the pandemic, over 60% of claims, orders and warrants for rents cases involved social landlords. The remaining cases were more or less evenly split between private landlords and accelerated cases,<sup>141</sup> with the majority of accelerated cases believed to comprise of Section 21 'no fault' eviction notices served by private landlords. In contrast, just 30% of claims in 2020/21 were made social landlords, mostly for egregious behaviour. For instance, 27% of evictions by housing associations in 2020/21 were for rent arrears, compared to an average of 75% in each of the preceding five years.<sup>142</sup>

Figures for all stages of the eviction process increased significantly in July-September 2021, the first quarter following the end of the eviction ban. For instance, figure 2.13 shows there was an increase in landlord claims for possession in Q3 of 2021, albeit claims for possession remained well down on figures for the same quarter in 2019. Seven out of the 10 local authorities with the highest rate of landlord possession claims during this quarter were London boroughs. This was not unexpected, as London Boroughs tended to have relatively high possession claim rates prior to the pandemic. Of greater concern was the sharp rise in bailiff repossessions

in London and the South East. In Q3 of 2021 there were 1,302 'bailiff repossessions in London, just 28% below the number in Q3 of 2019 (1,807).

Between Q2 and Q3 of 2021, the numbers of bailiff repossessions increased from 1,559 to 4,688, which was equal to 65% of all bailiff repossession in Q3 of 2019 (7,175). Most of these repossessions (70%) involved private landlord or accelerated cases. This lends support to mounting concerns that the numbers of private renters facing eviction could rise sharply in the coming months.

The level of forthcoming evictions will be contingent on court capacity. In July-September 2021, the median time to process a rent eviction case from claim to repossession was 68 weeks compared to 19 weeks prior the pandemic.<sup>143</sup> LSE has surmised that a doubling of cases could double processing time.<sup>144</sup> It would also further weaken the financial resilience of landlords.<sup>145</sup>

The numbers of cases that Courts will have to process will depend on whether lenders<sup>146</sup> and social landlords<sup>147</sup> continue to honour commitments to exercise forbearance and avoid bringing eviction action for rent arrears. It will also depend on whether policy measures are put in place to reduce evictions and allow arrears to unwind in a way that minimises the negative consequences

<sup>141</sup> Accelerated cases are where landlords seek possession of a property let on an assured shorthold tenancy where there is no dispute over the facts of the case and the only claim is for possession.

<sup>142</sup> Regulator of Social Housing (2021) *Private registered provider social housing stock and rents in England 2020 to 2021 – additional tables*. London: RSH. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-registered-provider-social-housing-stock-and-rents-in-england-2020-to-2021>

<sup>143</sup> Ministry of Justice (2021) *Mortgage and Landlord Possession Statistics Quarterly – Table 8*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mortgage-and-landlord-possession-statistics-april-to-june-2021>

<sup>144</sup> Whitehead, C., Scanlon, K., Edge, A., Holman, N., Rotolo, M. & Blanc, F. (2021) *Homelessness and rough sleeping in the time of covid*. London: LSE. <https://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/publications/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-in-the-time-of-covid-19/>

<sup>145</sup> National Residential Landlords Association (2021) *Covid-19 and the rental market-one year on*. London: NRLA. <https://www.nrla.org.uk/research/deep-insight/covid-rental-market-one-year-on>

<sup>146</sup> UK Finance (2021) *Arrears and possessions, Q2 2021*. London: UK Finance. <https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/data-and-research/data/mortgages/arrears-and-possession>

<sup>147</sup> National Housing Federation (2021) *Housing associations' statement on evictions and support for residents*. London: NHF. <https://www.housing.org.uk/news-and-blogs/news/housing-associations-evictions-statement/>

for tenants and landlords.<sup>148</sup> Without such measures, there is a strong risk that the resulting loss of credit-worthiness for tenants and the loss of income and confidence amongst private landlords will scar individuals and the private rented sector for years to come.<sup>149</sup>

### 2.5 Key points

- The UK saw GDP fall 9.8% in 2020, a much steeper decline than seen in OECD countries overall. Following strong economic growth in the spring and summer of 2021, the OBR expect GDP to continue to bounce back in 2022, but considerable uncertainty nevertheless remains regarding when and how the economy will recover following the pandemic-shock.
- Government plans to increase spending on public services suggest that departmental budgets will grow by 3.8% a year in real terms to 2024/25, with the Department of Health and Social care a primary beneficiary. Local government spending is also set to increase, albeit that the real level of spending by 2024/25 will remain well below 2010 levels. These intended boosts to public spending will depend on trends in inflation as well as pandemic-related developments.
- After initial dramatic growth in early 2020, the numbers claiming out of work benefits increased at a slower rate until March 2021. While numbers then began to fall, Universal Credit claims alone stood at 4.96 million in November August 2021, almost around double their pre-pandemic level. The £20 uplift in the Universal Credit weekly allowance boosted claimant income during the pandemic, though was not extended to legacy benefits, and ended in October 2021 affecting 3.6 million households. The refreezing of LHA rates from April 2021 has also put pressure on claimant household budgets in the context of rising rents.
- The Government acted swiftly to protect jobs and household incomes, primarily through the furlough scheme: a cumulative total of 11.7 million employees were furloughed on at least one occasion at a cost of £70 billion. The numbers on furlough steadily declined after January 2021 (having peaked at 4.7 million in mid-2020), but almost a million workers were on furlough when the scheme ended in September 2021.
- While overall poverty rates remained largely stable in the ten years to 2019/20, child poverty (AHC) increased (by 4% to 31%) and poverty among larger families by 12% to 47% linked to specific welfare reforms including the Benefit Cap and the 'two child' limit on Child Tax Credit and UC claims. Poverty also became increasingly skewed towards households with someone in work. 'Deep poverty' and destitution were also on upward trajectories prior to the onset of the pandemic.
- There has been a long-term decline in new social lettings, with the 2019/20 total (149,000) 47,000 fewer than in 2011/12. While the share of all lettings to new social tenants allocated to statutory homeless households increased in the nine years to 2019/20 (from 20% to 26%), the actual numbers of lettings to this group remained broadly static, averaging 39,000 per annum.
- Housing delivery consistently falls short of levels understood to be needed by the Government and according to independent estimates, and was further stalled by the pandemic. The AHP remains heavily focuses on supporting the delivery of 'Affordable Rent', generally seen to be unaffordable for many low income households. Just 11% of all affordable homes delivered were for social rent in 2020/21, down from 65% in 2011/12. Social landlords are under increasing pressure to invest in their existing stock to meet health and safety obligations and deliver on the zero-carbon commitments, but the implications of this for rents and new supply are unclear in the absence of clear Government plans on how the costs will be met.
- An estimated 7% of households in the private rented sector were in arrears. In April-May 2021, 4 percentage points more than in 2019/20. Arrears levels in the social rented sector are higher (c.13%) but various data sources indicate that they have either remained more stable during the pandemic or returned to pre-pandemic levels following an initial spike.
- Protections introduced during the pandemic prevented widespread evictions, with the overall landlord claims 79% down on the pre-pandemic year and possession order and warrants down 90%. Levels of evictions proceedings increased significantly following the end of the eviction ban, but remained well down on pre-pandemic levels. There are mounting concerns that the numbers of private renters facing eviction could rise sharply in the coming months, and this will depend on both landlord behaviour as well as court capacity.

148 Judge, L. (2021) *Getting ahead on falling behind: Tackling the UK's building arrears crisis*. London: Resolution Foundation. <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/getting-ahead-on-falling-behind/>

149 Whitehead, C., Scanlon, K., Edge, A., Holman, N., Rotolo, M. & Blanc, F. (2021) *Homelessness and rough sleeping in the time of covid*. London: LSE. <https://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/publications/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-in-the-time-of-covid-19/>

# Homelessness policies

## 3. Homelessness policies

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the evolution and impact of homelessness policies in 2021, with a particular focus on responses to rough sleeping. First, Section 3.2 considers the impact and limitations of the Everyone In response to rough sleeping, before Section 3.3 explores the extent to which those accommodated under this initiative have been supported to access more settled housing. Third, the chapter considers wider and longer-standing Government policy relating to rough sleeping, including funding programmes, the Rough Sleeping Strategy and the 2024 'ending rough sleeping target' (Section 3.4). Section 3.5 considers the evolution of Housing First responses to homelessness, before Section 3.6 zooms out to consider the performance and efficacy of the HRA during 2021. This final section sets the context for our deep dive into statutory homelessness trends in Chapter 4.

### 3.2 The impact of Everyone In

It is now well documented that the COVID-19 pandemic prompted a radical and rapid nation-wide shift in responses to some of the most extreme forms of homelessness.<sup>150</sup> Under the Everyone In initiative launched in the initial stages of the pandemic, local authorities sought to move all those sleeping rough and in communal shelters into a safe place, ideally in self-contained accommodation. In February 2021, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) released data outlining the scale of activity associated with Everyone In up to January 2021, and this remains the most up to date data available on Everyone In activity at the time of writing. A total of 37,430 people are logged as having been helped by Everyone In by this point.<sup>151</sup> As shown in Figure 3.1,<sup>152</sup> some 14,610 people were being accommodated in hotels and other forms of temporary provision in early May 2020, falling to 9,660 in December 2020, before rising

**Figure 3.1: 'People sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough' provided with emergency accommodation in response to COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021**



Source: DLUHC Coronavirus emergency accommodation surveys, May 2020 and Jan 2021.

Note: figures for June, July, August 2020 interpolated.

again to 11,200 people in January 2021. These data provide a valuable additional perspective on the numbers experiencing rough sleeping or at risk of it over the course of the initiative, numbers that far exceed those captured by traditionally relied upon point in time rough sleeper counts and estimates discussed in Chapter 4.<sup>153</sup>

#### Positive outcomes

The Everyone In response has received highly positive evaluation from a number of sources, and according to stakeholders involved in this study. First, in terms of infection control and the prevention of deaths, a University College London Collaborative Centre for Inclusion Health study published in *The Lancet* (Respiratory Medicine)

estimated the impacts of preventative measures targeting the rough sleeping population in the early phase of the pandemic, including provision of specialist hotel accommodation (i.e. Everyone In) and infection control measures in homeless settings like hostels. The authors estimate that these measures avoided 21,092 infections, 1,164 hospital admissions and 338 intensive care admissions and 266 deaths among this cohort.<sup>154</sup> This assessment of Everyone In as a life-saving intervention was strongly echoed by key informants:

**“[in] March 2020... we were genuinely really worried about large numbers of people**

150 Fitzpatrick, S., Watts, B., Pawson H., Bramley, G., Wood, J., Stephen, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2021) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2021*. London: Crisis. <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244703/crisis-england-monitor-executive-summary-2021.pdf>

151 See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-emergency-accommodation-survey-data-january-2021>

152 The statistics graphed in Figure 4.18 represent the situation on 15 May in London and 7 May elsewhere - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-rough-sleeper-accommodation-survey-data-may-2020>

153 House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (2021) *COVID-19: housing people sleeping rough*. Forty-Ninth Report of Session 2019–21. Online: House of Commons.

154 Lewer, D., Braithwaite, I., Bullock, M., Eyre, M. T., White, P. J., Aldridge, R.W., Story, A. & Hayward, A.C. (2021) 'COVID-19 among people experiencing homelessness in England: a modelling study', *The Lancet: Respiratory Medicine*, 8(12), 1181-1191. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-2600\(20\)30396-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-2600(20)30396-9)

**...dying, there's no sugar-coating it... [about] what terrible scenarios might unfold. Absolutely, credit to Louise Casey and to the sector... to the Secretary of State and the Government.... Colleagues and local authorities, GLA and elsewhere... work from the front line and middle management people was phenomenal... It is a phenomenal thing... [and] did save quite a few people's lives."** (Voluntary sector key informant)

Second, Everyone In is also judged to have been the central driver of 2020/21 reductions in some of the most acute forms of homelessness, not least rough sleeping (see chapters 4 and 5):

**"we've... seen... positive progress [on rough sleeping]... if you just look at the pure numbers, there has been a huge impact [of the Everyone In initiative].... it's had an absolutely seismic impact in terms of the effect on rough sleeping."** (Statutory sector key informant)

As shown in Figure 3.2, the number of rough sleepers, according to LA

counts and estimates,<sup>155</sup> was 37% lower in Autumn 2020<sup>156</sup> than at the same time the previous year. Moreover, the number fell further by January 2021 according to new statistics published by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), although this data point is not strictly comparable to the regular autumn counts.<sup>157</sup>

London specific CHAIN data<sup>158</sup> also show a pronounced downward trend in rough sleeping, with the Q1 2021/22 figure 39% lower than the same quarter a year earlier. In the latest quarter, however, this direction of travel was reversed with rough sleeping beginning to trend upwards in Q2 2020/21, albeit remaining well below pre-pandemic levels. A London-based key informant attributed this directly to the 'ramping down' of the Everyone In initiative and associated funding:

**"we have seen is obviously a shift, probably from April onwards in terms of once Everyone In was ramping down... Prior to that... local authorities were taking any single homeless person who was presenting and putting their individuals into self-contained accommodation. That... has understandably, given the funding, stopped from many local authorities,**

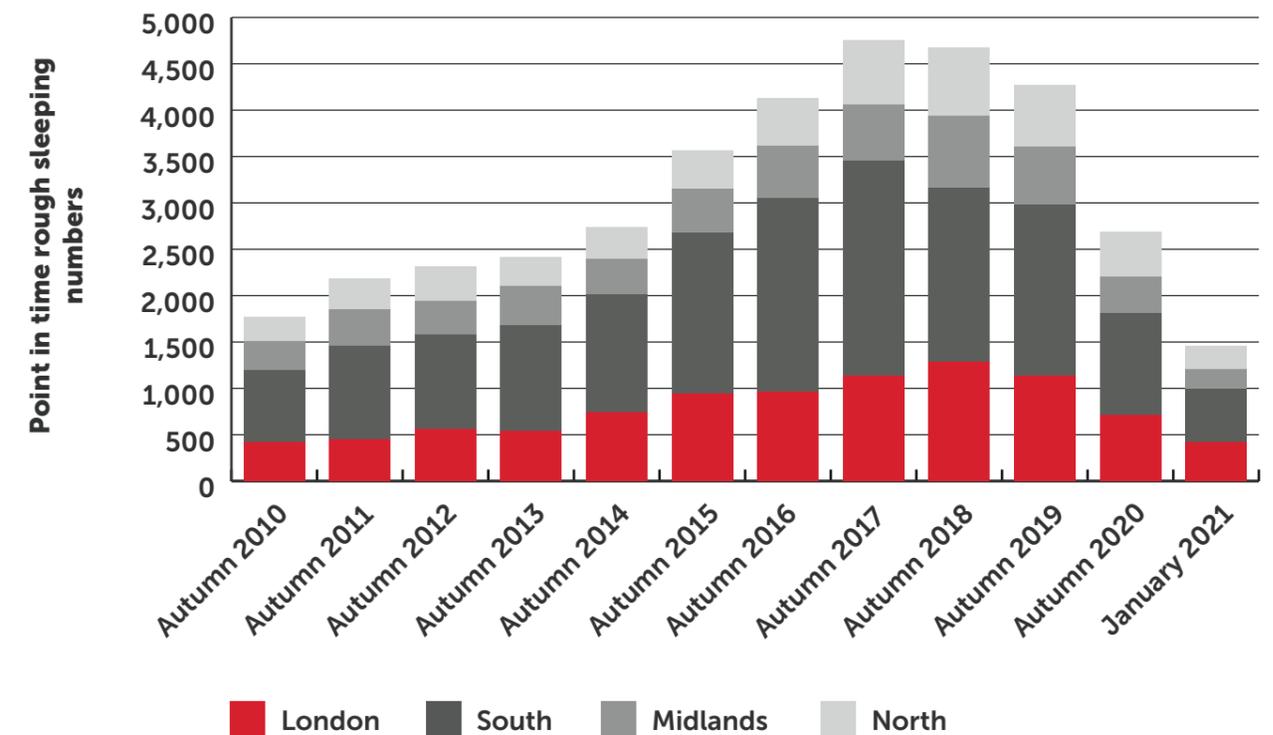
155 As further explained in Chapter 5, which offers an alternative means of enumerated past and projecting future levels of rough sleeping, these official statistics almost certainly under-estimate the true scale of the issue, but nevertheless are recognised to have considerably utility as the official measure and as a means to track trends over time.

156 Note that LAs are expected to undertake counts and estimation procedures on a date of their choosing in October and November of each year.

157 The January figure was not independently verified and some of the change may be attributable to the time of year of data collection (with January returns not available for previous years).

158 The Greater London Authority's CHAIN statistics (managed by St Mungo's) represent a particularly robust and comprehensive source of rough sleeper direct monitoring (as opposed to survey-informed modelling) data in the UK. It should be emphasised that the CHAIN metrics are different from, and not directly comparable with, the annually published Government rough sleeping statistics. Nor are they comparable with the rough sleeper component of core homelessness measure (see Chapter 5). Unlike these latter sources, CHAIN statistics reflect the number of people enumerated as exposed to rough sleeping over a time period, not at a single point in time. They draw on contacts with individuals by outreach teams who engage directly with rough sleepers nightly on the street.

**Figure 3.2: Local authority rough sleeping estimates**



Source: DLUHC statistics

**which has meant we're... seeing a slight rise in the number of people we are seeing rough sleeping in London."** (Statutory sector key informant)

Everyone In has also reduced the numbers staying in dormitory-style night shelter accommodation, the decanting of which was a core focus of the initiative. The 2021 Homelessness Monitor England found that more than half of LAs reported use of at least some homelessness accommodation with shared/bedroom/sleeping arrangements pre-

pandemic.<sup>159</sup> By comparison, Housing Justice report only two shelters nationally operating communal or dormitory style accommodation during winter 2020/21.<sup>160</sup> Housing Justice also charts a 68% decrease in bed spaces available within shelters between the pre- and post-pandemic winters, from 2,519 in 2019/20 to just 840 in 2020/21, with most of these operating on a fully self-contained or individual room with shared facilities basis, rather than communally.

Key informants were overwhelmingly positive about this shift away from communal provision:

159 Fitzpatrick, S., Watts, B., Pawson H., Bramley, G., Wood, J., Stephen, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2021) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2021*. London: Crisis. <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244703/crisis-england-monitor-executive-summary-2021.pdf>

160 Hough, J. & Rice, B. (2021) *A New Season For Night Shelters: Research Report*. Online: Housing Justice. <https://housingjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ANewSeason-Spreads-LR.pdf>

**“we’d like to not go back to dormitory-style night shelters, if we can avoid it... people much prefer to be in a single room... It’s better for them in terms of their mental health, well-being, often their physical health.”**

(Voluntary sector key informant)

Some key informants were emphatic that the reliance upon such accommodation was inexcusable on public health, amongst other, grounds, even prior to the pandemic:

**“we find the highest rates of TB [tuberculosis] detection... in ... provision, where people are in a shared airspace... tuberculous... influenza... every airborne pathogen, but way beyond that. A lot of people don’t want to come in because they’re profoundly unsafe and undignified places... and for those that do come in, it comes with risk... That’s risk that’s two-way... a lot of the volunteers were ticking every box under the sun in terms of clinical vulnerabilities for COVID... that was a wholly inappropriate place for your average retiree to be spending their free time.”**

(Health sector key informant)

Shelter providers by and large received praise for their *“agility”* (Voluntary sector key informant) shift towards new ways of working<sup>161</sup> and the Homelessness Winter Transformation Fund<sup>162</sup> providing grants to faith and community groups was seen as an extremely important and “really effective” (Voluntary sector key informant) facilitator of this:

**“providers have fundamentally changed what they’re doing... the Transformation Fund... is facilitating some of that... around the funding for faith and charity organisations to provide self-contained accommodation in replacement of communal shelters... [It’s a] fantastic bit of funding. It’s small... but I think it’s doing some really fantastic things.”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

Communal night shelter provision, however, seems highly likely to re-emerge to some extent given the absence of clear Government guidance to the contrary<sup>163</sup> and an eagerness on the part of a small number of providers to return to ‘shared air’ operating models:

**“one big provider... looks like they’re moving back [to providing communal shelters]... they think that people with a high level of need benefit more from the**

**engagement of a congregate shelter. They also have misgivings about people being behind a door, and what can go on there.”**

(Independent key informant)

**“There is a lot of back and forth, at the moment in terms of with one organisation, who would like to reopen... a communal, rotating model, which ourselves, and understandably... public health professionals are very concerned about that.... We shouldn’t need to do that.”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

While most key informants were highly critical of some providers’ intent to re-open communal provision, some believed that they may be a necessary albeit regrettable component of winter provision, in particular as a response to those with No Recourse to Public funds.

A third positive impact associated with Everyone In is the improved joint working practices it engendered across the public sector and other relevant partners:

**“There was far more joined up working and a ‘can do’ attitude from partners across the whole county”**

(LA respondent, the Midlands)

**“The focus on rough sleeping during Everyone In helped improve our partnership working with wider voluntary,**

**community and business groups as there was more buy in due to the high profile rough sleeping was given.”**

(LA respondent, London)

The *“biggest success”* (Voluntary sector key informant) in this regard was identified as enhanced collaboration with primary care and public health professionals at both operational and strategic levels:<sup>164</sup>

**“the area where we saw the most progress was in health outreach and joint working with the health system. Some really practical things.... around longer-term prescribing, flexible opioid replacement... that practical approach... to mak[ing] sure that people are able to isolate, able to be safe from COVID.”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

**“We’ve lived for years with this utter disconnect... The absolute separation of [homelessness responses and] health and social care has really damaged opportunities for people who are marginalised... Within four weeks of Everyone In... [we] managed to put in place... a... telephone triage and outreach testing service that was completely dependent on non-clinical professionals being able to engage with people, spot symptoms, spot concerns and notify us.... They were**

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Homeless Link (2020) *Homelessness Winter Transformation Fund Launches*. Online: Homeless Link. <https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2020/oct/20/homelessness-winter-transformation-fund-launches>; Homeless Link (2021) *Homelessness Winter Transformation Fund 2021/22 is announced*. Online: Homeless Link. <https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2021/apr/07/homelessness-winter-transformation-fund-202122-is-announced>

<sup>163</sup> Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities & Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021) *COVID-19: provision of night shelters: Operating principles for commissioners and providers of night shelters for people experiencing rough sleeping*. Online: DLUHC & MHCLG. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-provision-of-night-shelters>.

<sup>164</sup> The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (2021) *A New Way of Working: Ending Rough Sleeping Together: Final Report*. Online: The Kerslake Commission. <https://www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/KRSC-Final-Report-2021.pdf>

**absolutely brilliant at it and it worked because of them.”**  
(Health sector key informant)

Concerns were raised, however, about the comprehensiveness and sustainability of these gains. Key informants described “a legacy of intent” (Voluntary sector key informant) to cement improvements, but noted that wider pressures and the ‘subsidence’ (Voluntary sector key informant) of the public health emergency might undermine them. The need to establish systemic or governance-level mechanisms to ensure that homelessness is “embedded on the health agenda... because otherwise there’s a risk that it will fall off as we go to a version of act normal” (Voluntary sector key informant). Mental health responses for those experiencing homelessness specifically were not seen to have improved significantly during the pandemic,<sup>165</sup> reflecting long term challenges in mainstream provision:

**“where it never really got a huge amount of traction was the mental health response, which was always extremely minimal. We don’t have a workforce of psychiatrists and psychologists, who we can just kickstart in a crisis... the scale of need around mental health and the really desperate situation in terms of provision and waiting lists is only getting worse because of COVID.”**  
(Statutory sector key informant)

165 See also St Basil’s (2021) *Young People In: A report on young people who were assisted by the Everyone In programme across the West Midlands during the first national lockdown*. Online: St Basils. <https://stbasils.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Young-People-In-St-Basils-Deep-Dive-report-FINAL-pdf>

### Limitations

Despite these highly significant positive impacts, approaching two years on from its inception, the limitations of the Everyone In initiative have also become clear. First, while key informants were keen to emphasise the transformative impact of self-contained and high-quality commercial hotel accommodation, in combination with support, used to accommodate those sleeping rough in some areas, others raised concerns about the quality of some accommodation used, so too the sufficiency of support provided:

**“People were getting their own room, a nice bed, en suite, three meals a day, treated like a human being. Staff were brilliant... it was tremendous... it encouraged individuals to think, well, maybe I will enter a programme, or maybe I will do a script... just that hopefulness and the potential that actually, gosh, maybe life could be [different].”**  
(Voluntary sector key informant)

**“providing the accommodation was quite difficult ... [given] a lack of capacity in the support services and just the amount of support and intervention that any one individual needed.”**  
(Statutory sector key informant)

**“At the beginning... the hotels were staffed... but...there was no support going in, or hardly any... hence you’ve got an awful lot of people... crashing**

**and burning and leaving... saying, ‘I can’t handle it in here,’ and going back to the streets.”**  
(Statutory sector key informant)

Particular problems were identified where high numbers of individuals with complex needs were placed in hotels in other local authorities without sufficient support or the knowledge of the ‘host’ area.<sup>166</sup>

Second, variation in the nature, extent and quality of responses emerged as a key theme among key informants, so too in the findings of key reports evaluating the Government’s response to rough sleeping during the pandemic.<sup>167</sup> According to the Kerslake Commission, these contributing factors included the capacity, of and resources available in, different local authorities, and the strength or weakness of partnerships with other relevant agencies. The absence of ‘business as usual’ services for young people at risk of rough sleeping in smaller and/or more rural areas, emerged as a specific issue as breakdowns in shared living situations became a particular important trigger of homelessness for young people during the pandemic.<sup>168</sup> Local leadership and buy in was an additional driver of variation, so too the increasingly ‘muddied line’ from Central Government as time went on regarding the status of the Everyone In initiative.<sup>169</sup>

166 Ibid.

167 The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (2021) *A New Way of Working: Ending Rough Sleeping Together: Final Report*. Online: The Kerslake Commission. <https://www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/KRSC-Final-Report-2021.pdf>; House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (2021) *COVID-19: housing people sleeping rough*. Forty-Ninth Report of Session 2019–21. Online: House of Commons.

168 St Basil’s (2021) *Young People In: A report on young people who were assisted by the Everyone In programme across the West Midlands during the first national lockdown*. Online: St Basils. <https://stbasils.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Young-People-In-St-Basils-Deep-Dive-report-FINAL-pdf>

169 See also: Health, L. (2021) *Government tells councils to close ‘Everyone In’ hotels as a condition of rough-sleeper funding*. Inside Housing. 6 July. Online: Inside Housing. <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/government-tells-councils-to-close-everyone-in-hotels-as-a-condition-of-rough-sleeper-funding-71426>; and, Williams, J. (2020) *‘The numbers on the streets are going to rocket’: Homeless people put up in hotels amid pandemic to be kicked out as government quietly scraps scheme*. Manchester Evening News. 14 May. Online: MEN. <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/the-numbers-streets-going-rocket-18254318>

**“It just became hugely varied, from one area to the next; very much dependent on the local politics of authorities. Some areas of London are still sustaining high numbers of people in emergency hotel accommodation and going hell for leather to try and scale other housing options. Some have been absolutely brutal in... making sure that services can’t be provided in their patch.”**  
(Health sector key informant)

**“what... became the most difficult thing was... [the] very muddied line... from central Government about when Everybody In ended... that was really problematic because it meant that things looked very different in different parts of the country... our [services] started to report that they were seeing people who had been turned away... [and that] has escalated since we came out with the national lockdown in late spring [2021].”**  
(Voluntary sector key informant)

Third, while non-UK nationals with No Recourse to Public Funds or other restricted eligibility for statutory support (NRPF/other RE) and sleeping rough were initially explicitly included in the Everyone In response, this group have subsequently been especially vulnerable to inconsistent treatment<sup>170</sup> following a shift in Government messaging, restating status quo restrictions.<sup>171</sup> Subsequent case law (the Ncube case)<sup>172</sup> clarified that local authorities retain the power to accommodate those with NRPF while the COVID-19 public health emergency is ongoing.<sup>173</sup> In this context, and with central Government communication regarding expectations of LAs on this matter described as “ambiguous” (Voluntary sector key informant) and “very fudged” (Independent key informant),<sup>174</sup> highly varied responses to this group have persisted. In LAs where homelessness among people with NRPF was recorded as being a relevant issue, only 18% reported that statutory and/or commissioned services were accommodating all those with NRPF and rough sleeping or at risk of doing at Summer 2021, with 44% reporting that only some of this group are now being accommodated. The most frequently mentioned factors influencing whether someone with NRPF is accommodated including: timing (with ‘new’ cases deprioritised relative to those already

accommodated in some areas); whether a resolution to their status is possible or expected; vulnerability; engagement with advice and support; and availability of Everyone In-type accommodation:

**“We are continuing to accommodate... NRPF individuals... accommodated under Everyone In who are engaging with Immigration Advice and trying to resolve their situation... [If] it becomes clear that they have no chance of resolving their immigration status, or have had a negative decision... we would have to give them notice and work to move them into voluntary provision such as with the local... Winter Night Shelter. We are not accommodating new individuals with NRPF who we have come across after the end of Everyone In.”**  
(LA respondent, London)

**“Everyone is picked up initially, but no other statutory agency with responsibility is helping, so we have**

170 The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (2021) *A New Way of Working: Ending Rough Sleeping Together: Final Report*. Online: The Kerslake Commission. <https://www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/KRSC-Final-Report-2021.pdf>; National Audit Office (2021) *Investigation into the Housing of Rough Sleepers during the COVID-19 Pandemic. HC 1075*. Online: NAO. <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Investigation-into-the-housing-of-rough-sleepers-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf>

171 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2020) *Coronavirus (COVID-19): Letter Sent on 28 May 2020 to Councils about Accommodating Rough Sleepers*. Online: MHCLG. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-letter-sent-on-28-may-2020-to-councils-about-accommodating-rough-sleepers>

172 Ncube, R (on the application of) v Brighton and Hove City Council [2021] EWHC 578 (11 March 2021). A judicial review is also underway concerning whether failure to accommodate people sleeping rough during Covid-19 is automatically a breach of the rough sleeper’s rights under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. See <https://www.outertemple.com/permission-granted-in-covid-19-homelessness-judicial-review/>

173 NRPF Network (2021) *High Court rules councils can accommodate rough sleepers with no recourse to public funds during the Covid-19 pandemic*. Online: NRPF. <https://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/news/accommodating-rough-sleepers>

174 See also House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (2021) *COVID-19: housing people sleeping rough*. Forty-Ninth Report of Session 2019–21. Online: House of Commons.

**had to end a couple of the placements we have made as we can’t provide indefinite accommodation to those that have zero chance of obtaining other accommodation.”**  
(LA respondent, the South)

**“We have retained one of our temporary hotels from the Everyone In scheme, and people with NRPF are eligible for places within this scheme. Places are limited and we only offer to those sleeping rough, or at risk of sleeping rough. This includes our rough sleeping population who do have access to public funds. As a result, we cannot accommodate all NRPF customers and have a small number accommodated at any one time.”**  
(LA respondent, the North)

Even in areas continuing to accommodate this group, there are concerns about future prospects beyond pandemic, given that the legal powers clarified in the Ncube case only apply in the context of a public health emergency. The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee has called on DLUHC to provide clear guidance to local authorities on these matters.<sup>175</sup> In December 2021, in response to the spread of the new Omicron variant,

the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, Eddie Hughes, wrote to local authorities, giving guidance on how non-UK nationals with restricted eligibility for statutory support and facing homelessness could be assisted. LAs were asked to ensure that they ‘exhaust all options within the law’ to support this group, including conducting “a full and proper assessment of each individual’s circumstances and need and considering in full what discretionary powers [LAs] have to support and/or accommodate them”. The letter specified that while this “does not mean that accommodation could be offered on a long-term basis or that this cohort could, for example, be placed into a supported housing”, “time-limited, emergency support” would be possible within LAs powers.<sup>176</sup> Next year’s Homelessness Monitor will be able to assess the impact of this and subsequent Government communications on responses to this group.

Fourth and finally, several reports evaluating the Everyone In have highlighted other groups for whom the response has worked less well, including women and young people who are reported to have avoided or been exposed to particular risks within the mixed hotel provision often used, including exposure to exploitation, criminality and/or substance use, a point emphasised by this key informant in relation to women’s experiences:<sup>177</sup>

**“it was... [a] bit of a panic; let’s put everyone in. No one really thought about the**

175 Ibid.

176 Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (2021) *Protect and Vaccinate – Rough Sleeping Response to the New Variant*. DLUHC. Online: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1042801/Letter\\_from\\_Minister\\_Eddie\\_Hughes\\_on\\_Protect\\_and\\_Vaccinate\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1042801/Letter_from_Minister_Eddie_Hughes_on_Protect_and_Vaccinate_.pdf) pp. 2–3

177 St Basil’s (2021) *Young People In: A report on young people who were assisted by the Everyone In programme across the West Midlands during the first national lockdown*. Online: St Basils. <https://stbasils.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Young-People-In-St-Basils-Deep-Dive-report-FINAL.pdf>; The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (2021) *A New Way of Working: Ending Rough Sleeping Together: Final Report*. Online: The Kerslake Commission. <https://www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/KRSC-Final-Report-2021.pdf>

gender and so lots of women and men were just forced into hotels together... it was pretty unsafe, to be honest. I know of quite a few slightly hair-raising stories... There was limited... thought gone into thinking about their safety within these generic hotel spaces.”

(Voluntary sector key informant)

Key informants in this study also emphasised that the Everyone In response had been less effective for a group of individuals with long histories of sleeping rough and with especially complex needs.

“[some people] never came in, and there were some that came in and fell out very quickly... that’s mainly because of substance misuse and mental health, and/or fear in the system... hotel accommodation was not going to cut it... you would need to have such intensive wrap-around support.”

(Voluntary sector key informant)

“there are areas... we need to do more work on, particularly thinking about things around long-term rough sleepers, people living on the streets, entrenched, that area for whom Everyone In, while it was an amazing initiative... If someone has complex needs or might be entrenched, they’re

going to need a more intensive, long-term intervention.”

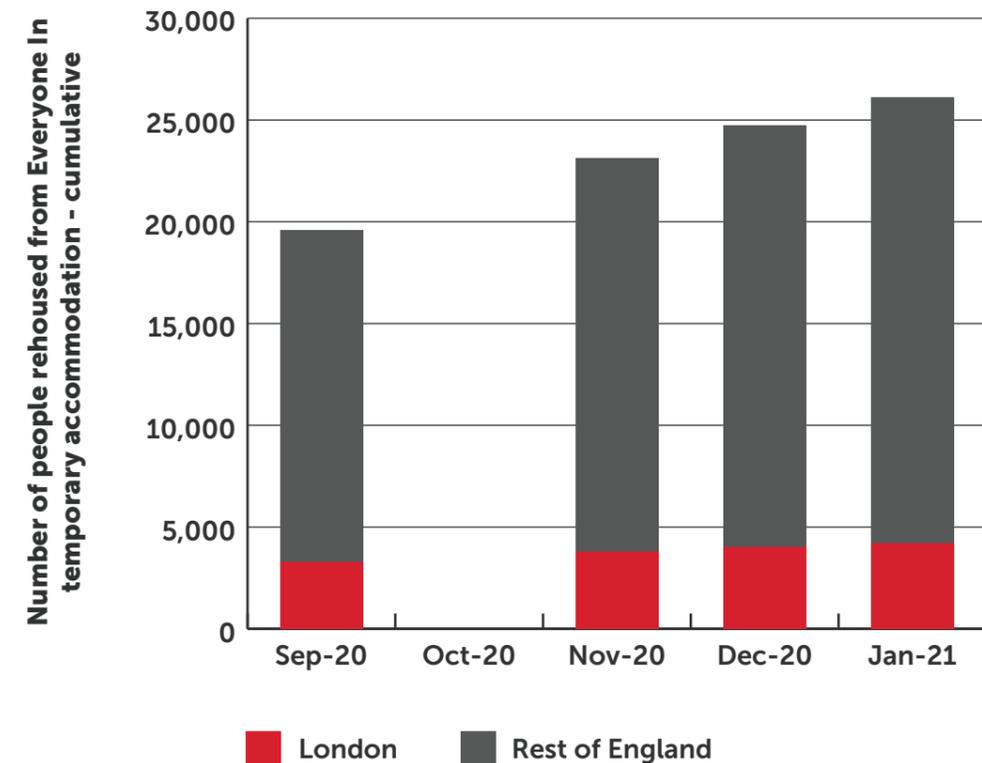
(Statutory sector key informant)

### 3.3 Re-housing those accommodated under Everyone In

Approaching two years on from the initial crisis response, a key metric for understanding the success or otherwise of Everyone In concerns local authorities’ ability to move those accommodated on to more appropriate and settled accommodation. Two key data sources speak to this question. According to the March 2021 MHCLG data release cited above,<sup>178</sup> by January 2021, 26,130 people (4,200 in London and 21,930 elsewhere) had been transitioned from hotels and other Everyone In premises into longer term accommodation, defined as tenancies of at least six months or supported housing. Taking the 37,430 figure quoted above as the total number of people helped by Everyone In would imply that 70% of all Everyone In placements had been helped as such, but data limitations suggest caution in that deduction.

An alternative source of estimates on move-on outcomes comes from a Freedom of Information request conducted in by Shelter February 2021.<sup>179</sup> Based on responses from 234 LAs (74%), Shelter estimate, that 23% of those accommodated under Everyone In have subsequently moved into ‘settled accommodation’ available for at least six months, and a further 18% into supported accommodation, suggesting that 41% have moved on to ‘longer term accommodation’ as defined in the MHCLG release. Of the remaining cohort, 22% were estimated to have still been in emergency accommodation, 23% no longer being

**Figure 3.3: People transitioned from Everyone In temporary placements into settled accommodation or supported housing, September 2020-January 2021 - cumulative**



Source: MHCLG Coronavirus emergency accommodation survey, Jan 2021.

accommodated without move-on accommodation or with a destination unknown, and 5% were estimated to have reconnected with friends or family. Outcomes are unknown or ‘other’ for an estimated 9% of those accommodated. The reasons driving disjuncture between these findings and MHCLGs own data are not clear, but may reflect missing data from authorities that did not respond to Shelter’s Freedom of Information and/or how ‘unknown’ outcomes have been categorised. Key informants expressed frustration regarding the incompleteness of both these cited data sources (which cover only up to early 2021).

Responses to our LA survey indicate that the ease or difficulty of accessing move-on accommodation for the Everyone In has varied by group (see table A2.8, appendix 2). This appears to have been especially, and indeed acutely, challenging in the case of those with complex needs, with nine out of 10 LAs describing this as ‘difficult’, and only 3% ‘easy’. This is seen to reflect a pre-existing dearth of appropriate accommodation options for this group:

“We had a problem before the pandemic. We continue to have a problem which is... the supported housing wasn’t there, wasn’t available. There

178 MHCLG (2021) Coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency accommodation survey data: January 2021 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/964646/EmergencyAccommodation\\_Jan21.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964646/EmergencyAccommodation_Jan21.xlsx)

179 Shelter (2021) *Everyone In: Where are they now? The Need for a Roadmap out of Street Homelessness in England*. Online: Shelter. [https://assets.ctfassets.net/6sxvmndn0s/7BtKmhvyB8Xygax9A2hhHP/2fde1c08424fe9f482792d22ed5469a0/Shelter\\_Everyone\\_In\\_Where\\_Are\\_They\\_Now.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/6sxvmndn0s/7BtKmhvyB8Xygax9A2hhHP/2fde1c08424fe9f482792d22ed5469a0/Shelter_Everyone_In_Where_Are_They_Now.pdf)

**wasn't enough of it, and that's why people are sitting on the streets or in [other] projects... waiting to get into supported housing."**

(Voluntary sector key informant)

**"Those with complex needs are difficult to move-on because there is a lack of supported accommodation for high needs individuals."**

(LA respondent, London)

A number of LA respondents explained that housing associations in their area were reluctant or unwilling to accommodate people within this group:

**"RSLs are reluctant to take anyone with complex history or previous issues."**

(LA respondent, the Midlands)

**"The Registered Providers were unwilling to offer direct lets to everyone that we accommodated under 'everyone in' as they usually had rent arrears/ASB issues."**

(LA respondent, the North)

These challenges of securing move-on options for people with more complex needs was seen to have been compounded by a lack of timely access to wider support services, including adult social care, mental health services, and substance misuse support.

The vast majority (82%) of areas accommodating individuals with NRPF reported accessing move-on accommodation as 'difficult' for

this group, something which key informants also described as "very very challenging" (Statutory sector key informant) and "the biggest challenge" (Voluntary sector key informant).

These pressures are especially acute in London, where 50% of those accommodated under Everyone In at the beginning of last winter reported to have NRPF:<sup>180</sup>

**"There are no housing options for people with NRPF."**

(LA respondent, London)

**"No recourse not possible to move on - still in Temporary accommodation."**

(LA respondent, London)

A key theme, however, was that the overarching group of non-UK nationals with restricted eligibility for statutory support' are highly varied in terms of their underlying immigration status and potential to access benefits and/or publicly funded services, with some in practice eligible for some or greater support subsequent to a full assessment of their circumstances:

**"[we] just needed to do a few things, in several of the cases, and people then became eligible. So there were some people that were clearly not - they'd exhausted every option - but... that's been a major learning point... in terms of just that extra time to look in detail at... individual cases, and to... work with law centres, work with the Home Office, and get into a position where they were actually eligible."**

(Independent key informant)

A particularly important distinction was drawn between European Economic Area (EEA) nationals and non-EEA individuals seeking asylum, with the former group more able to be supported to a resolution (through the EU settlement scheme or employment) and the latter much more difficult to assist:

**"the EEA nationals who [have] Limited Access to Benefits ... a lot of them have actually now got settled status, in which case, they can claim benefits without working, and the pre-settled status group can also claim benefits if they're working. That group has been slowly worked out, and that number's gone down. The group that is... really hard to rehouse... are the non-EEA nationals who are asylum-seekers, they're working through their legal position often with legal advisors, who are just taking a long time with lots of appeals... they're not able to work, and it's therefore much more difficult to find them any kind of accommodation."**

(Independent key informant)

This key informants' optimism regarding services' capacity to assist EEA nationals accommodated under Everyone In via the EU settlement scheme, should be interpreted in the light of recent survey evidence that 3 to 6 months prior to the closure of the scheme, fewer than half of the sample had obtained settled or pre-settled status.<sup>181</sup>

In this context, LAs abilities to assess eligibility and provide access to specialist support was seen to be incredibly important, but currently highly variable:

**"The communication that's coming from the Government is that local authorities should do all they can to support people within the law and should exhaust all options, but the issue is that that understanding of what it means to exhaust all options is different in different local authorities. In some areas there's some really good practice... and others, they see that as, well, we just can't support you because of your immigration status."**

(Voluntary sector key informant)

**"there are some local authorities that are working really, really hard within the constraints of the law to do everything they can to support this group and there are also lots that aren't."**

(Statutory sector key informant)

Another identified limiting factor was the very long wait periods for Home Office decisions in relation to immigration status, and the high financial burden on local authorities continuing to accommodate individuals during these periods. Acute concern was voiced about the group for whom all options have been or are expected to be exhausted when a formal decision is made:

180 House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (2021) *COVID-19: housing people sleeping rough*. Forty-Ninth Report of Session 2019–21. Online: House of Commons.

181 Bramley, G., Morris, M., Mort, L., Netto, G., Sosenko, F., & Webb, J. (2021) *The Scale, Causes and Impacts of Homelessness Among EEA Citizens*. Heriot-Watt University and IPPR. Online: Crisis. [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/246343/eea-report\\_v3.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/246343/eea-report_v3.pdf)

**“A lot of people, they’ve done all their paperwork, they’ve put it in and then they’re just sat and it’s really difficult for boroughs... Particularly, taking say the person who was here illegally, that’s going to be quite difficult to regularise their status... that has been probably the single most difficult and challenging factor because there isn’t really a solution for those more difficult cases.”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

**“The most difficult aspect was those non-EEA nationals whose only route was the asylum system. Many cases were supported to gain s.4 and s.95 support with the Home Office but there remain cases where support... isn’t offered as the individual has exhausted all asylum application options. These individuals have no resolution to their situation and are particularly challenging where no social care needs are present.”**

(LA respondent, the North)

In light of these challenges, the Kerslake Commission called for local authorities to be provided with funding to ensure that destitution is prevented for individuals who have exhausted all other options, as well as for improved guidance to local authorities and access to independent legal immigration advice for impacted individuals.<sup>182</sup>

182 The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (2021) *A New Way of Working: Ending Rough Sleeping Together: Final Report*. Online: The Kerslake Commission. <https://www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/KRSC-Final-Report-2021.pdf>

Accessing move-on accommodation for those with low or medium support needs appears to have been far easier, albeit that well over a third of LAs (39%, see table 3.1 above) still reported this being difficult. In some areas, this has been facilitated by special arrangements put in place to access social housing, including the suspension of choice-based lettings systems, a move to direct lets, and use of specially convened housing panels prioritising those facing homelessness during the pandemic. Open text responses to the survey suggest this may have been especially common in the North of England:

**“We gained approval to open direct lets for single person households during the pandemic. This was outside of our choice based lettings process.”**

(LA respondent, the North)

**“Temporary suspension of Choice based lettings to enable direct matching of social housing to homeless applicant.”**

(LA respondent, the North)

In other areas, access to private rented sector accommodation appears to have facilitated move-on for this group, albeit with challenges in relation to affordability:

**“we’ve got... good links in terms of around the PRS and getting people who can cope in the private rented sector out into that kind of accommodation with some floating support. I think**

**that’s... working well... [but] only certain areas of [London\*] that are affordable, which is an ongoing issue.”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

Some key informants noted that access to the Private Rented Sector (PRS) had become easier at points during the pandemic, linked to increases in the LHA rate and briefly plateauing rent levels, but this more positive context was seen to have come to an end. Others saw access to the PRS as even more challenging during the period, as evictions protections and restrictions on moving home restricted availability. Concerns were also raised about PRS suitability in relation to quality and sustainability for some homeless households. Several key informants specifically noted challenges in ensuring that move-on accommodation for those with low/medium, and even in some cases high needs, was accompanied by appropriate levels of support.<sup>183</sup>

**“that there needs to be longer-term settlement for support services, as in funding settlement. There needs to be multiyear awards that are also flexible, and can potentially roll over, and it needs to be ringfenced.”**

(Housing sector key informant)

**“I think there’s still a view from Government if you just help people into accommodation and give them a bit of support, then they can get back on**

183 See also The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (2021) *A New Way of Working: Ending Rough Sleeping Together: Final Report*. Online: The Kerslake Commission. <https://www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/KRSC-Final-Report-2021.pdf>

184 RSAP evolved out of the 2020/21 Next Steps Accommodation Programme which funded continued Everyone In emergency provision during 2020/21. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/next-steps-accommodation-programme-guidance-and-proposal-templates>. The programme is administered separately within and outside of London.

**their feet and go back into the rental market... people might well need that support for the rest of their lives. It’s not just necessarily a temporary thing.”**

(Voluntary sector key informant)

Several key informants emphasised that some local authorities have ‘absorbed’ some of the Everyone In cohort into their mainstream TA, and expressed concerns about the adequacy of this response, in particular where such accommodation is congregate in nature:

**“Everyone In... [has] just massively swelled their [LAs] temporary accommodation estate... [and] in that position, people are still not having their needs met. They are still facing extreme challenges around the health and well-being... we are spending a huge amount of money on maintaining that as the status quo... They need their own homes; they need their own spaces.”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

Highly relevant to move-on options for the Everyone In cohort is the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP),<sup>184</sup> a capital and revenue funding programme that intends to support up to 6,000 rough sleepers access supported move-on accommodation, including providing 3,300 units in the first year, and backed by £433 million over the 2021-24

period.<sup>185</sup> Capital funding is heavily concentrated in the early years of the programme and collaboration with wider stakeholders required. There is a presumption in favour of self-contained accommodation (although shared options are not ruled out) and tenancies are intended to be for two-year period in most cases.<sup>186</sup>

Key informants voiced qualified but significant support for RSAP, seeing it as a “great idea... helpful” (Statutory sector key informant) and “useful and effective” (Statutory sector key informant) in enabling move-on from Everyone In accommodation. The linking of capital and revenue funding together was especially welcomed and an acknowledged response to sector criticisms of previous funding programmes. This being said, there were a range of frustrations voiced about the shape and nature of the programme. One central concern for LAs is the longer-term prospects for those accommodated to sustain that accommodation and what happens when the maximum period allowed by the funding is reached:

**“There is some additional rough sleeper accommodation available but support for them regarding mental health and drug and alcohol remains harder to access especially where dual diagnosis. So we are now finding that they are losing the accommodation.”**  
(LA respondent, the South)

185 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021) *Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2021-24: Prospectus, guidance and proposal form for the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2021-24*. Online: DLUHC & MHCLG. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-accommodation-programme-2021-24>

186 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021) *Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme: Prospectus and Guidance (Outside of Greater London)* [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/994775/RSAP\\_2021-24\\_Prospectus.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/994775/RSAP_2021-24_Prospectus.pdf)

187 The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (2021) *A New Way of Working: Ending Rough Sleeping Together: Final Report*. Online: The Kerslake Commission. <https://www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/KRSC-Final-Report-2021.pdf>

**“The ‘Everyone In initiative’, had as positive impact during the pandemic. Individuals that where rough sleeping were accommodated... However, the move on options from ‘Everyone In’ were limited and there was no long-term vision for move on.”**  
(LA respondent, the North)

The presumption that RSAP move on accommodation would be for two-years was also criticised by the Kerslake Commission, which called for flexibility beyond this.<sup>187</sup> Additional concerns related to a lack of flexibility in the programme to respond to particular local needs, for example in relation to varying needs for new supply versus support funding: “the RSAP fund was much more centred on low needs move on accommodation, which does not match our demographic of need” (LA respondent, London) and also a concern that while welcome, the supply of RSAP accommodation enabled by the fund simply “doesn’t meet at all the demand” (LA respondent, the North).

Beyond these concerns, a central complaint concerned programme design and administration, and in particular timescales within which bids were required to be submitted. This was seen to have advantaged authorities within which homelessness was an existing strategic priority, staffing levels propitious, and partnerships already established. Deadlines for capital spending were seen to have made

delivering new build with the funding extremely challenging, leading to a reliance on market acquisitions instead, something that was seen to intensify “terrible vying for supply” (Independent key informant) in already tight housing market contexts. While there were acknowledged to have been improvements in second and subsequent funding cycles, these were not seen to have overcome the problem entirely:

**“although now it’s moved two-year capital scheme, there’s [still] no space for new build. You can’t build in that time, so all that the fund allows for, really is acquisition on the market, purchase and repair, and there’s only so much you can purchase and repair. Everything that you do, both inflates your local housing, your local prices, and removes properties from other households that might need them. It’s not generating supply. It’s moving supply from one section of society to another.”**  
(Statutory sector key informant)

### 3.4 Wider rough sleeping strategy, targets and funding

Tackling rough sleeping was already a very high priority for the Government pre-pandemic. 2018 saw the publication of a Rough Sleeping Strategy,<sup>188</sup> linked to the launch of the Rough Sleeping Initiative investment programme providing tailored and co-ordinated services to those sleeping rough, and including a commitment to end rough sleeping by 2027. The new 2019 Johnson Government was elected with a manifesto commitment

188 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018) *Rough Sleeping Strategy*. Online: MHCLG. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy\\_WEB.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy_WEB.pdf)

accelerating this timetable, committing to ending rough sleeping by 2024. A planned 2020 review of the strategy in light of the new target (to be undertaken by Baroness Casey) was delayed by the pandemic, and has subsequently remained outstanding. A new strategy is understood to be in development, and subject to the direction of travel to be taken following the appointment of Michael Gove as Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in September 2021.

Key informants emphasised that the absence of a strategy clearly focused on meeting target is a key barrier to achieving it, and also highlighted the absence of any clear account of what ‘ending’ means in this context, how specifically it will be measured, and the lack of a clear monitoring and performance review process to track progress and hold local authorities and the Department itself to account:

**“It’s always a challenge when you set a target of zero without knowing how you’re going to measure it, which is what has effectively happened.”**  
(Independent key informant)

**“The Government’s got this manifesto of commitment eliminating rough sleeping. Where’s your targets? Where’s your performance monitoring of councils? There’s no performance monitoring of councils. There’s nothing saying, ‘We’re going to hold you to account,’... They haven’t got a strategy.”**  
(Statutory sector key informant)

Key informants were clear that progress in this area has been given “real momentum” (Voluntary sector key informant) by Everyone In (see above), but that further progress depends on a number of factors. First, sustained investment in responses to rough sleeping is seen to be required, including via the Rough Sleeping Initiative (which has increased from £30m in 2018/19,<sup>189</sup> to £112m in 2020/21,<sup>190</sup> to £203m in 2021/2).<sup>191</sup> LA survey respondents were very positive about the impact of Rough Sleeping Initiative<sup>192</sup> and other rough sleeping targeted funding streams<sup>193</sup> in enabling them to address rough sleeping, with 61% considering these to have been ‘very helpful’:

**“The different funding opportunities have allowed us to commission support services such as an intensive and reactive in reach / outreach support service and a Housing First provision. The funding also allowed for the purchase and lease of self contained accommodation.”**  
(LA respondent, the South)

**“The funding has enabled us to maintain essential provision such as our Street Outreach team. It also helped**

**to partially cover the costs of accommodation and support for rough sleepers accommodated during Everyone In, and associated costs like immigration advice. Without this funding we would not have been able to deliver Everyone In or support those who were housed.”**  
(LA respondent, London)

However, some LAs with high levels of rough sleeping highlighted that these funds and uplifts only “partially” (LA respondent, London) covered actual cost of services in the recent pandemic period, sometimes falling vastly short:

**“[The extra funding] is very welcome and very helpful but given the numbers, it is a drop in the ocean. The extra funds we got for helping pay for everyone in/emergency accommodation was next to nothing but we spent nearly 30x our previous years averages.”**  
(LA respondent, the South)

189 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2019) *Impact evaluation of the Rough Sleeping Initiative 2018*. Online: MHCLG. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/831133/RSI\\_Impact\\_Evaluation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831133/RSI_Impact_Evaluation.pdf)

190 See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-initiative-2020-to-2021-funding-allocations>

191 See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-initiative-2021-to-2022-funding-allocations>

192 Echoing the positive results of an evaluation of the initiative and reductions in nationally enumerated rough sleeping from 2018 onwards: see Section 3.2 and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2019) *Impact evaluation of the Rough Sleeping Initiative 2018*. Online: MHCLG. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/831133/RSI\\_Impact\\_Evaluation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831133/RSI_Impact_Evaluation.pdf)

193 See discussion about RSAP above, and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government & The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP (2020) *Jenrick launches ‘Protect Programme’: the next step in winter rough sleeping plan*. Online: Gov.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jenrick-launches-protect-programme-the-next-step-in-winter-rough-sleeping-plan>; Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Department of Health and Social Care, Eddie Hughes MP, & Gillian Keegan MP (2021) *Government announces support for rough sleepers over winter*. Online: Gov.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-support-for-rough-sleepers-over-winter>

Familiar complaints were also strongly voiced regarding the negative impacts of yearly funding rounds on staff capacity and retention, and the possibility of commissioning services strategically and cost-effectively, with this approach described as “time consuming and frustrating”, as making it “difficult to recruit and retain experienced staff” (LA respondent, the South) and as causing “instability for both the individual and providers” (LA respondent, the North). In this context, there was enormous relief at Government moves to a three-year funding cycle.<sup>194</sup>

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

**“you’re not going to end rough sleeping without somehow coming up with a solution for people who have got No Recourse to Public Funds.”**  
(Housing sector key informant)

**“it’s just a real tension... between the Government’s ambition to eliminate rough sleeping and then their very, very strong commitment to hostile environment.”**  
(Statutory sector key informant)

This tension is especially concerning given expectations that the numbers impacted by NRPf policy and other migration-related entitlement restrictions are likely to increase following the closure of the EU settlement scheme and potential impacts of the Nationality and Borders Bill.

194 HM Treasury (2021) *Chancellor Launches Vision for Future Public Spending*. Online: HM Treasury. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-launches-vision-for-future-public-spending>

Third, rough sleeping reduction is seen to require concerted efforts to prevent it happening in the first place and avoid repeat homelessness among those effected. This focus on minimising ‘inflow’ and sustaining ‘outflow’ was seen to be a weakness in current Government policy and funding by a range of stakeholders:

**“The funding helps fix rough sleeping when it has happened but does not do much to address the structural, systemic issues that cause rough sleeping, such as the austerity-engendered cuts to substance misuse, mental health, adult social care etc services.”**  
(LA respondent, London)

**“it’s really important that the RSI [Rough Sleeping Initiative] money keeps going... we’ve accommodated a lot of vulnerable people where this is their first property for a long time... [we] now need to... provide the support to make sure they can retain that accommodation, so they don’t go back on to the streets.”**  
(Statutory sector key informant)

Several key informants also noted in their consideration of the Government’s rough sleeping focus that it has to some extent crowded out or distracted from acute challenges in relation to wider forms of statutory homelessness, and in particular the large and increasing numbers residing in TA, sometimes for very long periods (see chapter 4).

### 3.5 Housing First

A key element of Government efforts to address rough sleeping are the regional Housing First pilots in Greater Manchester, the West Midlands and Liverpool, launched with £28m of funding in 2018 and which started to accommodate tenants in 2019. Interim results from the ongoing evaluation<sup>195</sup> indicate that at the end of February 2021, 904 individuals had been recruited across the three regions, falling short of target across the pilot areas to varying degrees. These shortfalls were seen by key informants in this study to reflect first, challenges associated with the pandemic, but also second, the challenges faced setting up pilots across regions involving multiple LAs as well as wider stakeholders:

**“the pilots were massively ambitious... Setting up one unit of high-fidelity Housing First is one thing. Trying to redesign a region’s approach across multiple local authorities and put in place a high-fidelity Housing First pilot which cuts across X number of local authorities and different housing markets [is another].”**  
(Statutory sector key informant)

Of those recruited across the pilot areas, 59% had been housed (with the remainder awaiting settled housing). Of those housed, 14% had subsequently exited the programme, most commonly as a result of the service user dying. Tenants interviewed as part of the evaluation reported being highly satisfied with the programme, with the greatest benefit identified as having secured their own housing, but additional benefits linked to the programme and

195 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021) Evaluation of the Housing First Pilots: Second Process Evaluation Report. Online: MHCLG. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1005888/Housing\\_First\\_Second\\_Process\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005888/Housing_First_Second_Process_Report.pdf)

in particular support provision also clear, including: stabilising or reducing harmful behaviours (substance use, drinking and/or sex work), improved health and health service engagement, and re-establishing relationships with friends and family, including children. Access to housing is a key concern across the Pilots, with waiting periods for being housed varying substantially across areas but sometimes leading to the disengagement of service users. Additional challenges identified by the evaluation to date include difficulties sustaining caseloads consistent with high fidelity Housing First (1:7) with existing resources, difficulties recruiting appropriate staff, and challenges operating wider systems and supports needed to address tenants’ needs, including in particular mental health support.

Key informants able to comment on the pilots were overwhelmingly positive about its efficacy and impact for those accommodated, and in terms of generating lessons regarding implementing person-centred support for and generating systems change to better respond to the needs of the target cohort:

**“It’s gone very well for individuals on the programme. We’ve built a huge amount of good practice in terms of what person-centred support genuinely looks like. What we mean by that, what we mean by intensive support, which is actually about an intensive commitment to building trust, and a trusting relationship and a relationship built on choice and control from the individual.”**  
(Statutory sector key informant)

The value of the approach was also seen to have been reinforced as making *“more and more sense”* (Statutory sector key informant) in light of the health concerns related to hostel provision generated by the pandemic.

Concern around the programme focused on the need for scaled-up Housing First provision and the translation of lessons learned to wider practice, both within and beyond the pilot regions:

**“the challenge for all of it is there’s lots of lessons come out of all of these systemic change programmes, but if they’re not embedded into the mainstream then all you do is, oh, that’s really interesting, that’s lovely... [but] cost[s] a lot of money. Well, we’ll go back to dealing with crisis.”**  
(Voluntary sector key informant)

**“just as important, is how much of a shift does that lead to within normal practice... we shouldn’t have to be setting up this sort of fast stream for people to be able to access social housing... What we really want to see is that social housing allocation policy is changed to mean that these people aren’t excluded... We... want this to be available for**

**more people, we know that there’s more people who need it.”**  
(Statutory sector key informant)

While the Government has committed significant levels of funding to rough sleeping and homelessness compared to pre-pandemic levels,<sup>196</sup> lack of clarity regarding whether pilot funding will be extended as a result of the 2021 Comprehensive Spending Review has raised serious concerns regarding the adequacy of arrangements beyond the pilot end date.<sup>197</sup>

Local authority survey results indicate that Housing First-type services operate far beyond the pilot regions,<sup>198</sup> with 59% of respondents reporting some provision in their area (a high of 69% in London, and low of 44% in the Midlands), and a number of others reporting that they are in the process of commissioning such services.<sup>199</sup> It is clear, however, that these locally delivered Housing First-like models are quite varied and can depart (sometimes quite radically) from high fidelity Housing First. Indeed, in several cases, what local authorities were describing as Housing First or Housing First-like appeared more akin to traditional temporary supported housing:

**“We are operating a Housing Led model, so not quite Housing First but along the same principles. We are offering TA and ensuring that the wrap around services are in**

196 Heath, L. (2021) Budget 2021: Sunak promises £640m per year for homelessness. Inside Housing. 27 October. Online: *Inside Housing*. <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/budget-2021-sunak-promises-640m-per-year-for-homelessness-73087>

197 Heath, L. (2021) Hundreds in Housing First programme at ‘serious risk’ of returning to streets if funding stopped. Inside Housing. 26 October. Online: *Inside Housing*. <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/hundreds-in-housing-first-programme-at-serious-risk-of-returning-to-streets-if-funding-stopped-73056>

198 See also: Housing First England (2020) The Picture of Housing First in England 2020. Online: Homeless Link. <https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/picture-housing-first>

199 Defined in the survey as ‘the provision of settled independent housing with long-term intensive, flexible, wrap-around support to homeless people with complex needs without any requirement that users be ‘housing ready’

**place before offering long term housing.”**

(LA respondent, the South)

**“Although it is labelled Housing First, it is really supported housing for those with complex needs, the tenancy is dependent on support engagement therefore not truly Housing First.”**

(LA respondent, the North)

In areas with Housing First provision, the main reported strength was that the model enables them to offer accommodation to those who have tended to be excluded from housing options in the past:

**“it is wholly person centred, delivers high levels of support, can sidestep the problems of shared accommodation, can work directly with entrenched cohort who would otherwise not engage with mainstream services. Has been very effective in terms of bringing numbers of rough sleepers down.”**

(LA respondent, the North)

**“Made a significant difference to our housing and support offer for entrenched rough sleepers, and has prevented recurrence of rough sleeping within this group.”**

(LA respondent, the Midlands)

Highlighted weaknesses included limited access to appropriate tenancies as well as relevant support services (see above), and challenges recruiting and retaining staff with the required skills.

**“until there is a viable solution to the issue of housing supply, [Housing First] will continue to be a precious and scarce resource, access to which has to be tightly managed.”**

(LA respondent, London)

**“in order to attract the right staff ratios and quality of staff the money has to be there for more than just a couple of years.”**

(LA respondent, the North)

Linked to these issues were enduring challenges about the funding of Housing First-type services, and in particular the challenge of recruiting landlords willing to let to those with complex need when funding is only place for a limited period:

**“you’re asking landlords to take, to basically say, ‘Give someone a tenancy for life. We’ve got funding for support for the next couple of years. You going to be alright with that? This person’s got multiple support needs. It’s going to take us quite a long time to properly help them rebuild themselves, but after two years, we might have to just leave them in your accommodation without anything.”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

### **3.6 The Homelessness Reduction Act**

In 2018, the HRA came into force, providing a radical new legal framework defining the nature of LA duties to homeless households. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic just two years after the Act came into the force is seen to have created a challenging context in which to

understand – or at least isolate – its impacts and effectiveness. Nevertheless, two key themes emerged from our analysis regarding the interaction between the pandemic and the HRA. First, the pandemic context is seen to have (quite radically) accelerated the achievement of a central aim of the HRA, this being to enhance the support available to single homeless households via LA Housing Options teams, including but not limited to those experiencing rough sleeping:

**“I think ... the HRA [aim] to create a better service for single persons came into its own during the pandemic and we were able to reach out more.”**

(LA respondent, the South)

**“the pandemic slightly fast-forwarded some of the aims of the Homelessness Reduction Act in terms of single people... in the heart of the pandemic the majority of approaches were to do with Everyone In but those are people to which we owe a homelessness duty under the HRA.”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

Second, it was recognised that the pandemic response had necessitated a focus in local authorities on responding to crisis, and may have distracted from and/or minimised opportunities for preventative interventions (see also Chapter 4):

**“through Everyone In, the entire country’s response became about crisis intervention, not about prevention... a big question... how do we move local**

**authorities back to using the HRA as their overarching framework because probably, when Everyone In was happening... The focus probably wasn’t on that preventative element, so how do we get them back there?”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

**“On the relief of homelessness side, I think there’s been so much focus on rough sleeping, I think that’s been to the detriment of the casework. So councils have struggled just to deal with the number of rough sleepers and the single people and the applications.”**

(Independent key informant)

Beyond these pandemic-related effects, key informant interviews gave an opportunity to explore views on the strengths and weaknesses of the legislative framework three years after it came into force. Key informants overarching assessment of the Act and its implementation to date was positive, with particular strengths highlighted including the reorientation it has prompted in some LAs away from testing entitlement in relation to a series of tests, and towards a culture of assisting (almost all) people facing homelessness secure a positive housing outcome:

**“HRA I think has been brilliant in the sense of it covers everybody. Whereas before... you’d be, not statutory homeless, not homeless, all the tests, you would fall out, and singles would just tumble out, so I think HRA is really good in that sense.”**

(Voluntary sector key informant)

**“the culture change element of it... that’s been really good... there’s a lot of housing officers who, through no fault of their own, ended up in a position where they felt their job was to try and stop people from getting support.... [but] where the senior leaders in a borough have really embraced [that] actually this [the HRA] is about working together and personalised housing plans and trying to get a good outcome... that’s been really good.”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

The emphasis within the legislative framework on preventative interventions was also seen as a key strength. Interestingly, a number of key informants noted that the Act has incentivised prevention work targeting those at risk prior to the 56-day risk window enshrined in the legislation in some LAs, in part to avoid the pressure and administrative demands associated with processing individuals through prevention and relief stages when they are at more imminent risk:

**“That prevention duty, the strengthening of that... was fundamentally important... Local authorities... look 56 days upstream... [some] even earlier, so they didn’t have to get embroiled in all the additional requirements around people having personal plans, etc., etc. I’m thinking, this is perfect... I think those obligations are really important.”**

(Independent key informant)

**“We don’t wait for the 56 days, we try and prevent earlier... The reason we did that is because of the high level of caseloads we’ve got now, which is higher than ever. It’s always difficult to deal with the prevention side when you’ve got the statutory time clock ticking.... So that’s helping.”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

This overall positive assessment of the HRA was tempered by the view that the resources and funding available to implement it on an ongoing basis were not sufficient, especially in the wider context of straitened LA budgets:

**“it wasn’t funded well enough and... there was a huge administrative burden placed with all the different duties and moving people between them.”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

**“the scale of your homelessness prevention grant... has... gone up but not kept to scale with the pace of, and the rate of demand... If you’ve got a transformative piece of legislation which is what the HRA could have been or was purported to be, without funding, you can’t expect to see that real shift in public service provision towards prevention.”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

The pandemic period was seen to have intensified pre-existing workforce challenges linked to the onerousness of administering the HRA, with several participants reporting difficulties recruiting and retaining appropriately

skilled staff<sup>200</sup> even where funds are available for them to do so. One issue here is seen to be the short term nature of the Government funding streams on homelessness (see above), and another the impacts of a very stressful and high pressure period within the public sector, which according to some has led to low morale and high absence-rates:

**“we’re really struggling to recruit effective officers... we just can’t... get a really good calibre of staff in place... I’ve got the money, I just can’t recruit.”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

**“sector staff have been absolutely amazing... but they are being asked to do a lot... we need to look at... What can you do to ensure that people... that are working frontline... feel supported and recognised for the work they’re doing because I think there is that risk.”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

In addition to these concerns about high demands associated with the HRA, key informants also expressed the view that in various ways the Act did not go far enough in expanding the legal duties upon local authorities and other stakeholders in responding to homelessness. Key issues were the continuing lack of entitlements to TA and settled housing for particular groups:

**“there should be a safety net where people are assisted and housed pending... assessment. That ultimately is what needs to happen, a duty to house, not just a duty to help... that ability to put someone in a place of safety.”**

(Voluntary sector key informant)

**“we see people through... non-statutory provision who... have high needs, have complex needs, who have experiences of trauma, who have a mix of things that make them vulnerable, but under the legislation... they can be deemed to be not in priority need, and that is a fundamental flaw... intentionality... [is] a massive issue with the legislation [too].”**

(Statutory sector key informant)

Key informants also often made the point that they would welcome a more muscular ‘duty to cooperate’ in place of the current ‘duty to refer’ placed upon some wider public authorities where someone is threatened with homelessness. While the duty is seen to have improved practice and partnership working, it is also seen to perpetuate the view that LA Housing Options fundamentally ‘carry the can’ in responding to homelessness:

**“the duty to refer is a good start, but we would like to see it as a duty to collaborate... th’re’s a bit of risk shunting...”**

<sup>200</sup> Reflecting on similar concerns emerging from their review of the COVID-19 rough sleeping response, the Kerslake Commission recently recommended that Homelessness Link launch a consultation on professional accreditation for the homelessness sector. The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (2021) *A New Way of Working: Ending Rough Sleeping Together: Final Report*. Online: The Kerslake Commission. <https://www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/KRSC-Final-Report-2021.pdf>.

**instead of that woven working together... that all then just shunts the risk and the issues on to the local authority.”**  
(Voluntary sector key informant)

More broadly, it was recognised that the HRA alone cannot effectively prevent homelessness given its focus on what has been described as ‘crisis prevention’ (when people are at imminent risk of homelessness) as opposed to ‘universal’ or ‘targeted’ prevention that seeks to reduce homelessness risk across entire populations or groups at especially high risk, via for example housing supply, access and regulatory reform and/or poverty reduction efforts.<sup>201</sup>

**“you’ve got to actually address the structural causes of homelessness and... prevent it in the first place... you can have more and more legislation, but if the homes aren’t there, it’s not going to necessarily change people’s outcomes.”**

(Voluntary sector key informant)

**‘it’s predicated on responding to crisis... We would want a duty to prevent and understanding and identifying the risks that residents face... when it’s related to poverty... when somebody loses their job and they suffer a significant income shock, when they are losing control, particularly includes the benefits cap.’**  
(Statutory sector key informant)

While the statutory framework established via the HRA has remained largely the same since 2018, in July 2021 provisions of the Domestic Abuse Act came into force, meaning that any household who is homeless as a result of domestic abuse is automatically in ‘priority need’ under the HRA, and thus owed TA by their LA, and settled housing where the prevention and relief duties fail, regardless of whether the household includes dependent children or passes the vulnerability test. Key informants strongly welcomed this legislative change, alongside wider shifts in understandings of and responses to domestic abuse:

**‘it’s gone down really well politically, leaders and deputy mayors are really happy to be able to say, ‘Okay this group now has priority.’ It builds upon a really strong movement for that and... there’s been a lot of work done with housing advisors about trying to make sure that they really understand, particularly coercive control... that really does improve matters.’**  
(Statutory sector key informant)

Two thirds (64%) of LA survey respondents anticipate seeing increases in presentations linked to domestic abuse during 2021/22, and of these, several saw the new provisions as a key driver. While additional demands on already stretched Housing Options teams were acknowledged by key informants and local authorities alike, it was also noted that funding associated with the Domestic Abuse Act is enabling the development of new services in this area:

**“DVA will increase mainly due to the Domestic Abuse Act . . . Some Govt funding means more services will be providing more support helping more people to flee.”**  
(LA respondent, London)

While the homelessness-related provisions of the Domestic Abuse Act were by and large welcomed, key informants were keen to stress the continued limitations of responses and policy in this area. In particular, there were seen to be gaps in responding adequately to particular sub-groups of domestic abuse survivors, including those with multiple and complex needs, and those with NRPF/Other RE:

**“with this new round of funding... it’s supposed to be additional to what they’ve already got locally. But it’s whether the local authorities... [are] thinking specifically about the needs of women with multiple disadvantage that are homeless, and creating services to cater for that, or whether they’re just sticking with what they know and that is building or commissioning more refuges.”**  
(Voluntary sector key informant)

Domestic abuse survivors facing homelessness were also seen to face, along with other homeless households, continued challenges in relation to long stays in TA, and housing affordability especially in more pressurised housing market contexts, and as a result of the Benefit Cap.

### 3.7 Key points

- The Everyone In initiative prompted by the pandemic accommodated over 37,000 individuals experiencing or at risk of rough sleeping between March 2020 and January 2021. The response is credited with the prevention of COVID-19 infections, hospital admissions and deaths, as well as improved joint working on homelessness, especially between the homelessness and health sectors.
- Very substantial reductions in enumerated levels of rough sleeping (of 37% between Autumn 2019 and Autumn 2020 on one key measure) and radically reduced reliance use of dormitory-style night shelters in winter 2020/21 were also attributed to this response.
- Key limitations of the Everyone In response include use of poor quality emergency accommodation with insufficient support provision in some areas. It is also clear that the emergency response worked less well for particular groups, including young people, women and those with more complex needs.
- Non-UK nationals with No Recourse to Public Funds or other restricted eligibility for statutory support benefitted enormously from the initial inclusiveness of the Everyone In response, but have subsequently been subject to inconsistent offers in different areas following a shift in Government messaging and the ramping down of Everyone In funding.
- Available data indicates that more than two thirds (over 26,000) of those accommodated via Everyone In have been moved on to more settled accommodation options including rental tenancies, or supported accommodation placements. There are concerns about those who have left emergency accommodation without a clearly more settled or appropriate

201 Fitzpatrick, S., Mackie, P. & Wood, J. (2019) *Homelessness prevention in the UK: Policy briefing*. Online: UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence. <https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Homelessness-Prevention-in-the-UK-Policy-Brief-July-2019-final.pdf>

offer, and regarding the suitability of some settled move on. The vast majority of LAs report that securing move-on accommodation for those with complex needs and NRPF was challenging.

- The current Government has committed to a target of ending rough sleeping by 2024. This ambition has been supported with radically increased investment in rough sleeping responses, including a six-fold increase in Rough Sleeping Initiative funding between 2018/19 and 2020/21 and progress against target has been radically accelerated by responses to the pandemic. But there is little confidence in the Government's ability to meet this target in the absence of a clear definition of what 'ending rough sleeping' looks like and how it will be measured, an updated strategy, a wider focus on rough sleeping prevention and move-on, and a willingness to address the clear tensions the target and immigration policy.
- Over 900 people have been recruited to Government funded Housing First pilots across three regions, and 59% of those housed. Initial evaluation outputs indicate positive results for clients accommodated, albeit that numbers are short of target, reflecting challenges associated with the regional scale of the pilots and the pandemic. Access to housing, problems sustaining low caseloads, and difficulties recruiting appropriate staff were identified as key challenges. Lack of clarity regarding whether pilot funding will be extended as a result of the 2021 Comprehensive Spending Review has raised serious concerns regarding the adequacy of arrangements beyond the pilot end date.
- Housing First-type services are reportedly in operation in a majority of LA areas in England (59%), albeit that fidelity to Housing First principles clearly varies substantially, with some provision classed as Housing First more akin to traditional supported housing provision. Areas report Housing First being highly efficacious for the groups targeted, but delivery challenges included accessing housing, securing appropriate wider support and recruiting appropriate staff.
- The pandemic radically accelerated the support offered to single homeless households, in line with one of the key aims of the HRA 2017. The preventative focus of the Act is seen as a key strength, albeit that the pandemic prompted a shift in focus to crisis responses rather than intervention further upstream. Resourcing and administration of the Act is a key challenge for LAs. Stakeholders are nevertheless of the view that the HRA does not go far enough in expanding the legal duties of public authorities to homeless households, with particular gaps including some groups continued lack of entitlement to temporary and settled housing, and the weakness of the 'duty to refer' placed on wider partners, as opposed to a more muscular 'duty to co-operate'.
- Under new provisions introduced via the Domestic Abuse Act, any household who is homeless as a result of domestic abuse is automatically in 'priority need'. Key informants strongly welcomed this change, alongside wider shifts in understandings of and responses to domestic abuse. Two thirds of LAs expect increased applications from those facing domestic abuse during 2021/22, in part as a result of this shift.

# Homelessness trends

## 4. Statutory homelessness trends

### 4.1 Introduction

This is the second edition of the Homelessness Monitor England where our statutory homelessness analysis is substantially based on the operation of the HRA 2017, in force from 1 April 2018. Our prime focus is the third year of the HRA regime, financial year 2020/21, effectively the first twelve months of the COVID-19 pandemic. In comparing 2020/21 with 2019/20, therefore, we are identifying the impacts of the public health emergency as reflected in the homelessness statistics.

Part and parcel of the HRA framework is a novel set of legal and associated statistical concepts.<sup>202</sup> However, given that the regime has been in place only since 2018 there is limited scope for trend over time analyses where these involve such new metrics. Nevertheless, in the case of a few key metrics, it remains possible to retain trend analyses

covering more extended periods, albeit sometimes requiring qualification. This is true with respect to Main Duty (MD) decisions and, especially, TA placements. In relation to such statistics, as in previous editions of the Homelessness Monitor England, our analysis takes as its starting point 2009/10. The chapter also draws on the results of our bespoke survey of LAs, and interpreting both these and the statistical data presented, we draw on key informant interview data (see Chapter 1).

The chapter is structured as follows. First, in Section 4.2 we begin with a flow chart diagram illustrating the structure of the HRA and presenting the raw national case processing statistics to give a sense of the relative incidence of the various case decisions logged by LAs during 2019/20 and 2020/21. We then focus in on applications and decisions to shed light on the changing incidence

<sup>202</sup> It should be noted that the H-CLIC statistical series on which we primarily draw has not yet received the designation of official National Statistics. In a recent assessment report, the Office for Statistics Regulation outline the key issues regarding quality and public value and detail six actions required of DLUHC to enable the statistics to achieve this designation in the future. See Office for Statistics Regulation, UK Statistics Authority (2021) *Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics: Statistics on Statutory Homelessness in England* (produced by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities). Assessment report 364.

of homelessness in the post-HRA period, focusing in particular on changes before and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Next, in Section 4.3, we analyse the statistics in relation to the profile of homelessness applicants and the factors prompting them to seek assistance. Section 4.4 then focuses on the use of TA, mainly in terms of its utility as a proxy for homelessness stress as this bears on LAs. Linking back to the flow chart, Section 4.5 analyses the distribution of outcomes that result from statutory decisions taken under each legal power as identified in Figure 4.1, before Section 4.6 reviews key stakeholder views in access to settled housing for homeless households during 2020/2021.

#### 4.2 The changing incidence of statutory homelessness demand: headline indicators and processes

Figure 4.1 contextualises official statistics on LA statutory homelessness decisions under the second (2019/20) and third (2020/21) years of the HRA regime's operation. These have been collated from the H-CLIC system.<sup>203</sup> The flow chart is a substantially simplified representation of the multiple possible outcomes of HRA homelessness application and assessment processes.<sup>204</sup>

As depicted in Figure 4.1, there are four significant HRA LA decision-taking points. A few applications may ultimately pass through all four of these. This would be true where:

- The applicant is initially deemed eligible (primarily in relation to citizenship/immigration status)

- The eligible applicant is judged as threatened with homelessness – and thus subject to the Prevention Duty (S195)
- Efforts to prevent homelessness having been unsuccessful, the applicant is subject to the Relief Duty (S189B)
- The Relief Duty having been unsuccessful in relieving homelessness, the applicant is subject to the Full Duty assessment (S193(2)).

At each of these decision points various outcomes are possible. Our flow chart necessarily amalgamates some of these for intelligibility. For example, the box 'not prevented – case closed' under S195 includes applications deemed to have been withdrawn as well as those where an offer of accommodation has been refused or where there has been 'an unreasonable refusal to co-operate'. A finer breakdown of case closure decisions is presented at Figure 4.15, and can also be found in officially published DLUHC (formerly MHCLG) statistics.<sup>205</sup>

The statutory outcomes that result from decisions at each stage of this process are examined later in this chapter in Section 4.5. In the remainder of this section and in Sections 4.3-4.4 we analyse the scale and nature of homelessness 'demand' as revealed by the published figures.

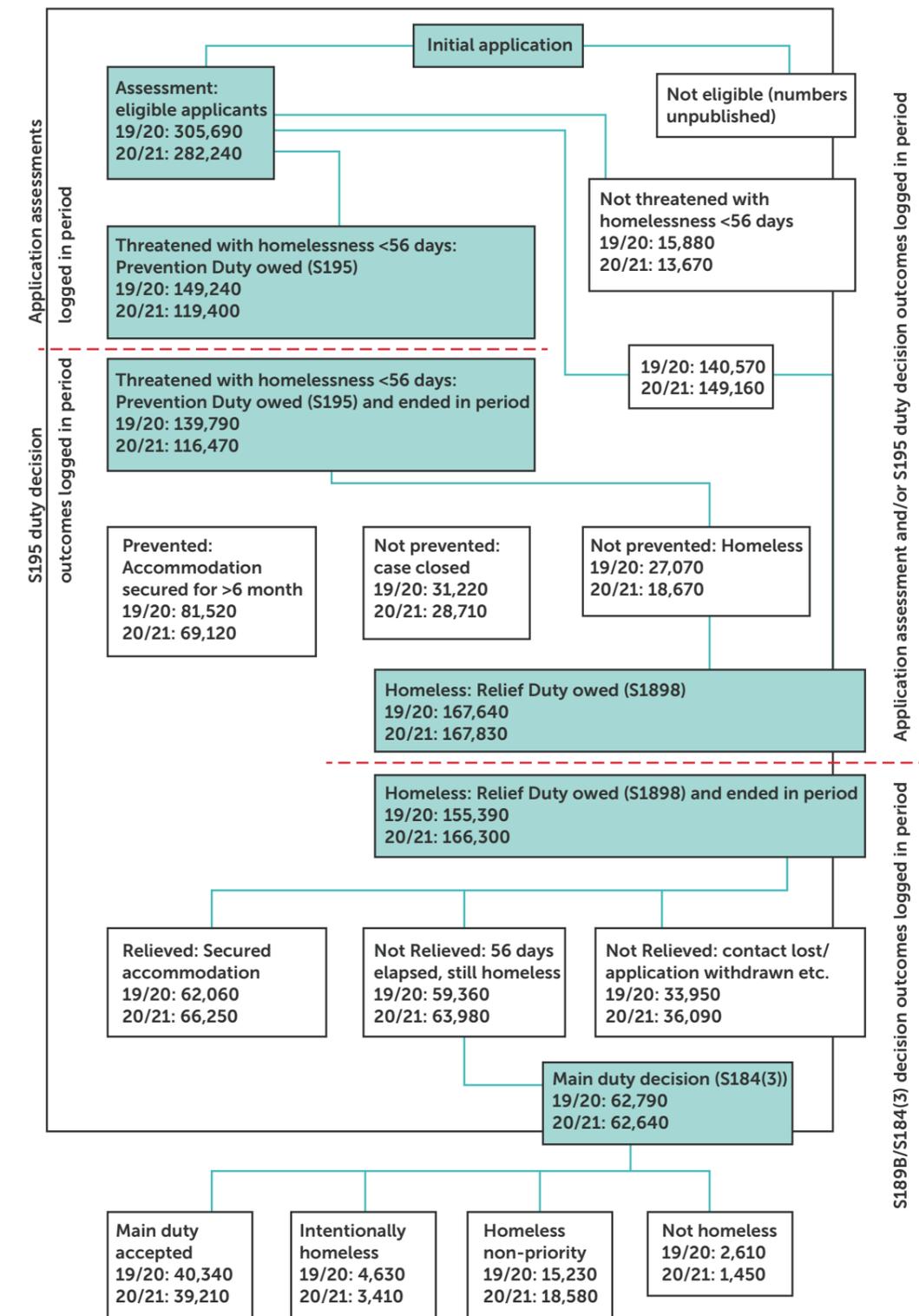
Historically, 'homelessness acceptance' statistics generated quarterly through the statutory homelessness system were widely treated as the prime measure of homelessness. With the April 2018 introduction of the HRA regime, however, a new official prime

<sup>203</sup> Accompanying HRA implementation as from April 2018, this 'individual case return' framework replaced the previous system of quarterly aggregate statistical returns. See DLUHC briefing on the new recording system at: <https://bit.ly/2W47x2n>

<sup>204</sup> An elaborated flow chart, as produced for the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) is at: <https://bit.ly/2F6NiKB>

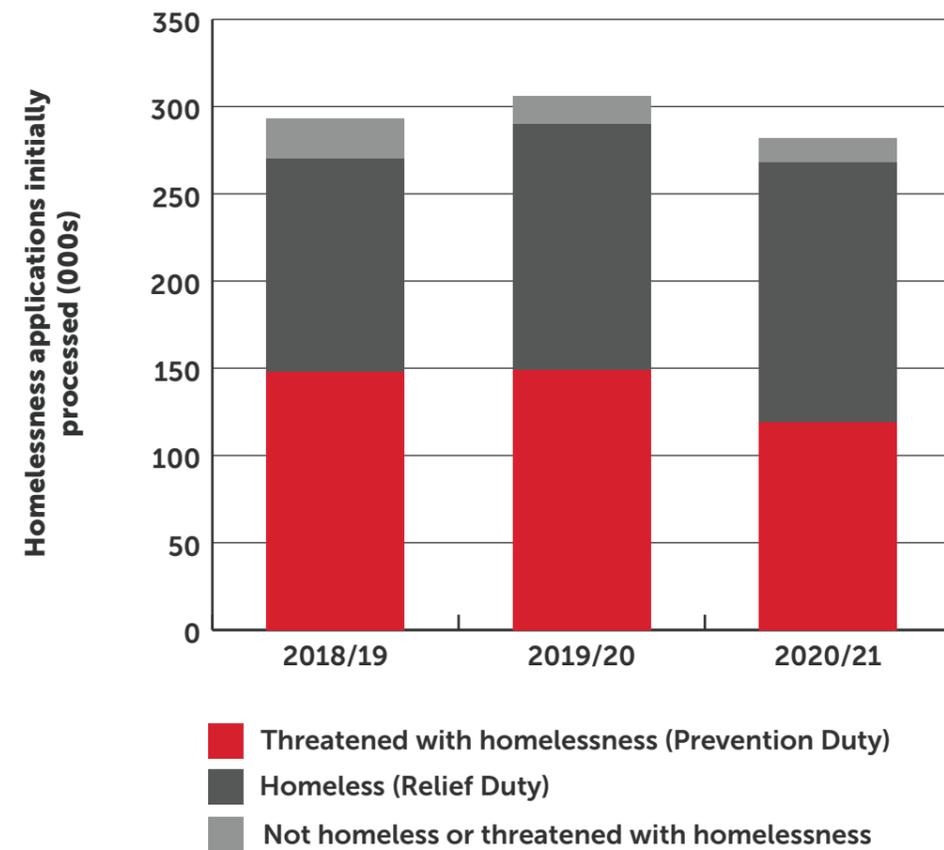
<sup>205</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

**Figure 4.1: Homelessness Reduction Act – statutory homelessness decisions 2019/20 and 2020/21**



Source: Authors – based on DLUHC statistics and drawn with DLUHC assistance. Note: 1. Statistics cited in each box represent national published totals for 2018/19 and 2019/20. 2. Homelessness prevention and relief duties completed during each financial year denoted as such by the term 'and ended in period'.

**Figure 4.2: Eligible homelessness applications 2018/19-2020/21: breakdown by initial decision**



Source: DLUHC Homelessness Statistics

measure of 'homelessness demand' was created, namely: 'initial decision of homelessness duty owed'. The decision here refers to whether, at first contact, an eligible applicant<sup>206</sup> is deemed by a LA as homeless or threatened with homelessness.

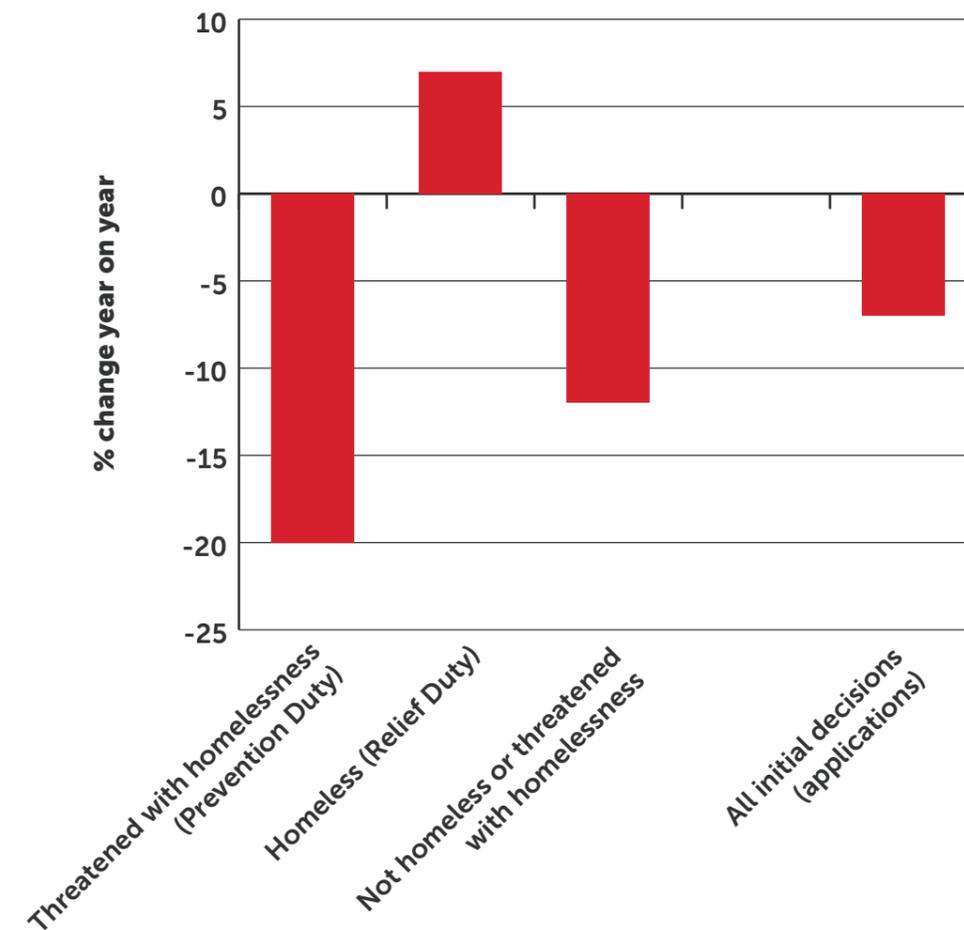
In 2020/21, the initial pandemic year, total eligible applications fell back by 8%, from 306,000 in 2019/20 to 282,000. This came about wholly because of a 20% reduction in those classed as threatened with homelessness (and therefore owed the prevention duty) – see Figure 4.3. This drop in people at immediate risk

of homelessness is consistent with the COVID-19 eviction moratorium suppressing the flow of renters approaching local authorities for help, as noted by several LA survey respondents:

**“there was a decrease in the number of households presenting from private sector tenancies where interventions to prevent homelessness are greater.”**  
(LA respondent, London)

<sup>206</sup> That is, a person whose citizenship and immigration status entitles them to assistance – e.g., unaffected by rules that exclude certain non-UK citizens from recourse to public funds.

**Figure 4.3: Initial application decision outcomes, 2020/21 - % change on 2019/20**



Source: DLUHC Homelessness Statistics

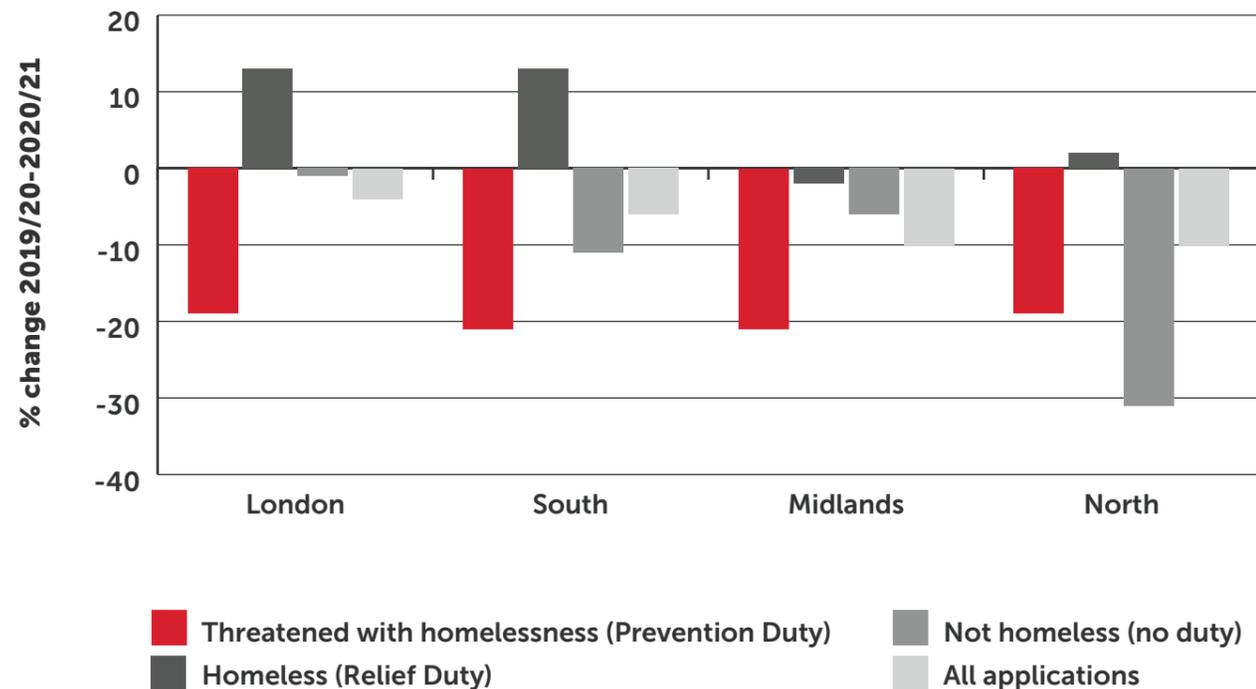
As shown in Figure 4.3, applicants deemed actually homeless (and therefore owed the relief duty) continued to increase in 2020/21 – up by 7% on the year and 23% over two years.

Significantly reduced numbers of applicants deemed as threatened with homelessness were common to all broad regions in 2020/21 – see Figure 4.4. In terms of the other 'outcome of initial assessment' categories defined here there was considerable diversity across England. Notably, marked increases in actually homeless applicants in London and the South were largely unmatched elsewhere.

Finally, although the numbers involved were relatively small, there was a proportionately large drop in 'not homeless' application outcomes in the North.

By comparison with the Housing Act 1996 regime and its associated non-statutory prevention and relief activity, a much-increased proportion of those seeking help under the HRA are being formally assisted under prevention or relief duties, with the result that far fewer applicants/applications are 'progressing' through the system as far as a MD decision (see Figure 4.1). Thus, in Year 3 of the new system, for example, only 63,980 cases

Figure 4.4: Initial application decision outcomes, 2020/21 - % change on 2019/20 by region



Source: DLUHC Homelessness Statistics

passed through those initial stages to be referred for a MD judgement – equating to only 24% of the 268,570 applications judged homeless or threatened with homelessness at the initial stage<sup>207</sup> – see Figure 4.5. Likewise, the number of households deemed unintentionally homeless and in priority need has been substantially reduced. This traditional ‘headline indicator’ of homelessness demand – at 39,210 in 2020/21 – remained well below the 57,000 recorded in 2017/18 – albeit significantly higher

207 By comparison, under the pre-HRA system in 2017/18 109,000 households were assessed in terms of the MD, equating to some 40% of all LA statutory and non-statutory case actions recorded that year. However, the extent to which such MD-assessed cases would have been already subject to prevention and/or relief efforts is difficult to know.

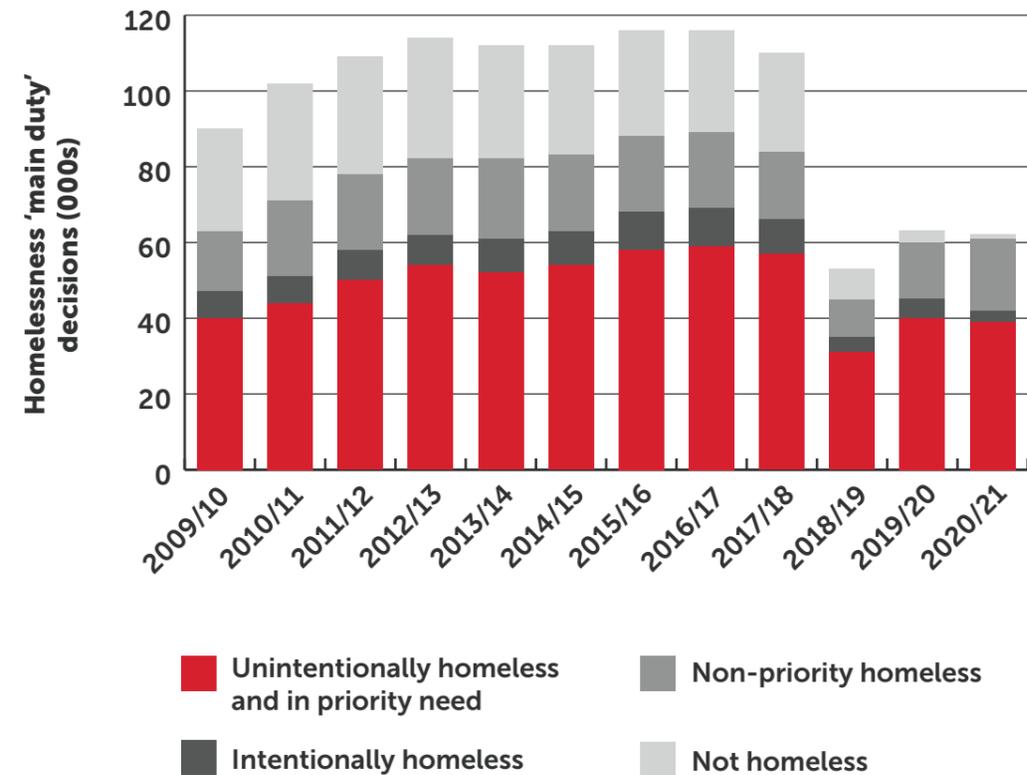
208 A similar pattern was evident in Wales after the introduction of the Housing Wales Act 2014. See Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Young, G., Watts, B. & Wood, J. (2021) *The Homelessness Monitor: Wales 2021*. London: Crisis. <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/homelessness-monitor/wales/the-homelessness-monitor-wales-2021/>

209 Some or all of those classed as such under HRA procedures may be households whose housing situation has improved since their original application (when they will have been judged as owed the prevention or relief duty).

than recorded in Year 1 of the HRA regime.<sup>208</sup>

Notably, ‘MD accepted’ decisions in 2020/21 represented 63% of all MD decisions, well up on the 52% recorded under the old regime in 2017/18. An important contributory factor here is that ‘not homeless’ MD decisions are hugely reduced under the new regime – accounting for only 2% of the latter in 2019/20 (2,650 households) compared with 23% of 2017/18 MD outcomes (25,720 households).<sup>209</sup>

Figure 4.5: Main Duty decisions, 2009/10-2019/20



Source: DLUHC Homelessness Statistics

#### Local authority perspectives on homelessness demand

Complementing these administrative statistical measures, the results of our survey provide another perspective on changing homelessness demand. Asked about changes in the overall number of households seeking homelessness assistance from their authority in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20, two thirds of responding LAs reported an increase, and only 12% a reduction in footfall (see table A2.2, appendix 2). This appears to be in some tension with the 8% reduction in overall eligible applications recorded via H-CLIC and reported above. This apparent tension is most likely explained by the unique context of LA homelessness activity during 2020/21, and in LA homelessness activity targeting the Everyone In cohort of people experiencing or at risk of rough

sleeping (including those not formally eligible for assistance under the HRA) may not have been fully captured in the official statistics, in particular at the beginning of the pandemic. This is in line with explanatory open text responses given by LAs reporting an increase in footfall:

**“The ‘Everyone In’ initiative led to an increase in the numbers of singles applicants, and EEA nationals without entitlements/ no access to benefits and other migrant groups with NRPF/ no access to benefits.”**  
(LA respondent, the North)

LA respondents were also asked about their perception of changes in the level homelessness prevention activity

undertaken in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20. The majority of responding authorities (51%) reported that they had undertaken more homelessness prevention in the pandemic year. Again, this is in some tension with the administrative statistics reported above that there was a 20% year-on-year decline in the number of households owed the prevention duty in 2020/21. The most obvious explanation here is that in responding to this question, LAs are referring to a broader range of 'preventative activity' than that captured purely by the prevention duty caseload. LA open text responses suggest in particular that responses to this question in some areas incorporate prevention work undertaken in advance of households being at risk of homelessness within the next 56 days, as captured by the HRA statistical returns (see also chapter 3):

**"We... have a corporate commitment to homelessness prevention that focusses on interventions before such duties [prevention and relief] would be triggered."**  
(LA respondent, the South)

Open text survey responses also suggest that at least some of those reporting being 'more active' on prevention in 2020/21 were referring to the need for more intensive work with a smaller number of applicants than usual:

**"whilst statistically we may have had less preventions and relief, its not fair to conclude we were 'less active', the cases we did have were exceedingly hard to resolve"**  
(LA respondent, the North)

### Referrals for homelessness assessment

As discussed in Chapter 3, an important innovation brought in through the HRA was the Duty to Refer. In the interests of a prevention-focused approach, this involves certain specified public agencies being mandated to notify the relevant LA where an agency service user is at risk of homelessness and therefore in need of housing assistance. The agencies concerned include prisons, youth offender institutions, social services and hospitals. The extent to which such referrals are, in fact, taking place is now usefully calibrated in DLUHC published statistics.

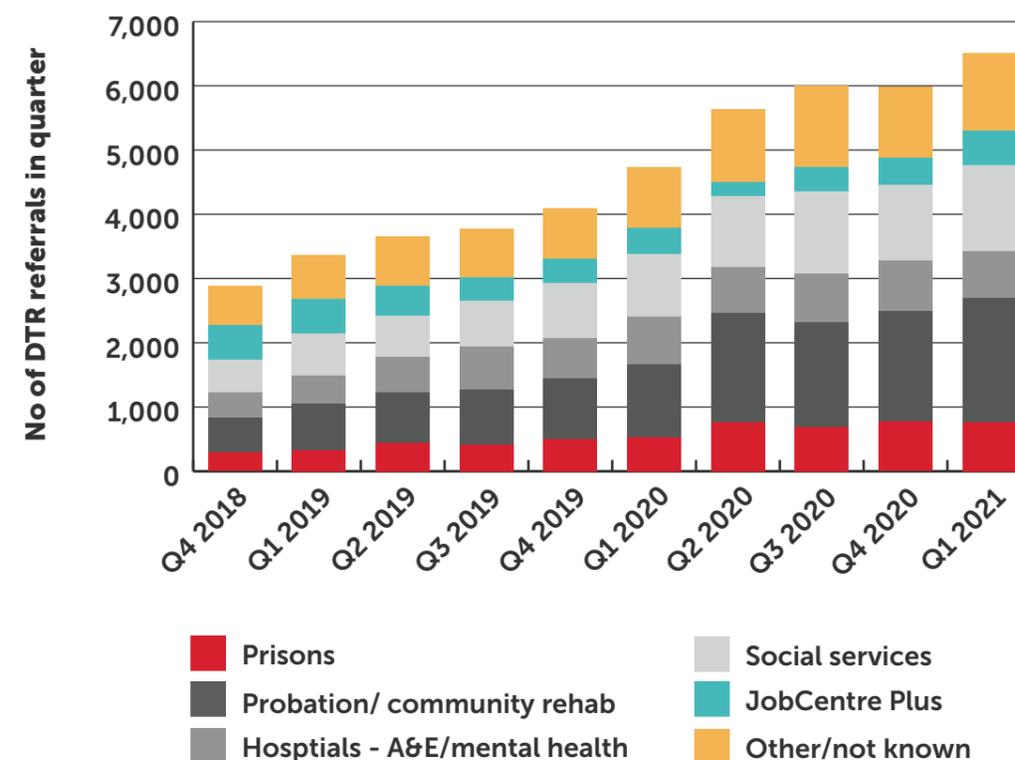
Duty to Refer referrals have been increasingly outnumbering referrals by other agencies (e.g., Non-Government Organisations) since the start of this statistical series. Collectively, Duty to Refer and other referrals grew from 7% to 14% of all eligible applications over the period. In the most recent twelve months, Duty to Refer referrals totalled some 24,100, while other such notifications totalled 14,500.

Focusing on the most recent quarter (Q1 2021) the largest single Duty to Refer referral source was probation and community rehabilitation services, followed by Social Services departments (see Figure 4.6).

### 4.3 Statutory homelessness: profile and causes

Historically, statistical data on the statutory homelessness caseload (i.e., profile data) was restricted to the cohort owed the main rehousing duty (i.e., assessed as unintentionally homeless and in priority need). Under the HRA H-CLIC framework, however, such data is collected and published for the much wider group of households deemed by LAs as owed a duty of homelessness prevention or relief (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.6: Referrals under 'Duty to Refer' 2018-2021



Source: DLUHC homelessness statistics.

Notes: 1. 'Prisons' includes Youth Secure Estate; 2. Social services includes adult social services, children's social services and 'Nil Recourse' team. 3. 'Other' includes not known.

### Household type

The bulk of those assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness in 2020/21 – 67% – were single adults (see Figure 4.7(a)). Far more 'relief duty' applicants (judged homeless, rather than threatened with homelessness) were single adult households than in the 'prevention duty' (threatened with homelessness) cohort – 76% compared with 55%. The difference here is almost entirely accounted for by single men – the representation of single women was almost identical across the two groups.

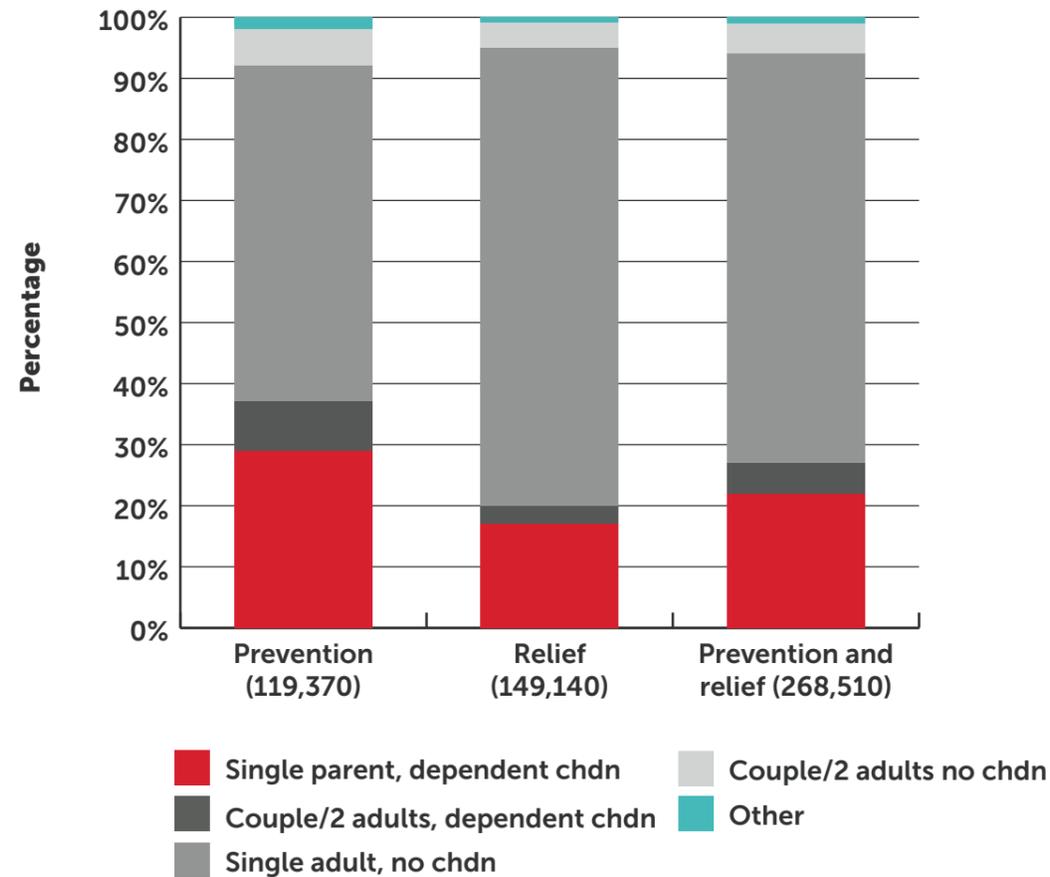
As shown in Figure 4.7(b), the overall reduction in eligible applicants recorded in 2020/21 resulted entirely from a substantial drop in families

(i.e. households including dependent children). In particular, couples with children were 33% fewer in number in 2020/21 than in the previous year. Single parent families, meanwhile, dropped by 19%. Single adult households, by contrast, slightly increased – by 3%.

These trends in the profile of statutory homeless households likely reflect two key pandemic-related drivers. First, the reduction in families eligible for assistance under the HRA likely reflects the disproportionate protection given to this group by the evictions protections discussed in Chapter 2, given their greater likelihood of being in rented accommodation as compared to single person

**Figure 4.7: Homeless applicants owed prevention or relief duties in 2020/21: household type profile**

**(a) Distinguishing 'prevention duty' applicants from 'relief duty' applicants**

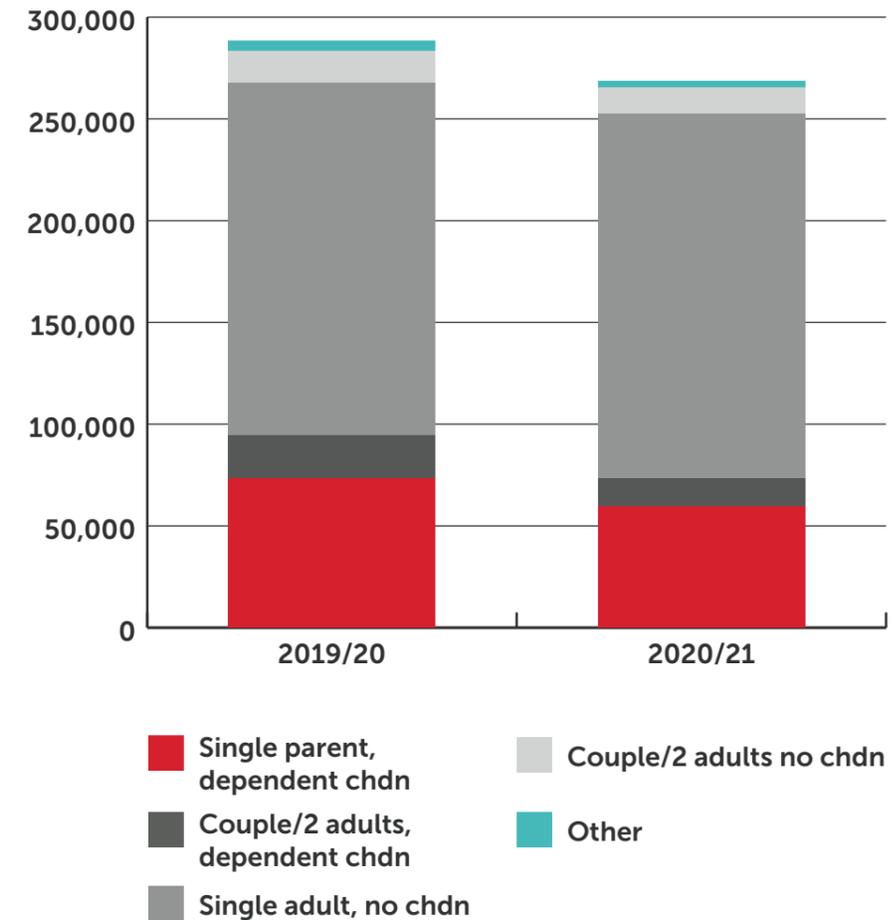


Source: DLUHC Homelessness Statistics

households. Second, the increase in single person households owed prevention or relief duty likely reflects their greater likelihood of being accommodated informally by family or friends and the pressures on such sofa-surfing type arrangements during the public health crisis and associated lockdowns. Demand from households previously sofa-surfing was seen to have increased by 70% of LA survey respondents during 2020/21, a point also made by key informants:

**“there are some trends that are very specific to the pandemic over the last year. So a slowdown, or a reduction in families approaching councils because of the suspension of possession orders... The other side of that is an increase... [in] single people... people who were in less secure situations like sofa surfing, coming and asking for assistance.”**  
(Independent key informant)

**(b) All prevention and relief duty applicants: 2020/21 compared with 2019/20**



Source: DLUHC Homelessness Statistics

Taking a longer-term view, it is worth noting that these household-type profiles (especially that for 2020/21) represent a very major departure from that depicted by the official statutory homelessness statistics in the pre-HRA era. The latter focused much more narrowly on the subset of applicants accepted as owed a MD, only around a third of whom were single adults. This prominence of single homeless people within the official homelessness statistics brings

England more closely in line with the position in Scotland, where legal entitlements under homelessness legislation were extended to single homeless households over the 2000s, culminating in the abolition of the priority need criterion in 2012.<sup>210</sup> The shifted profile reflects one of the intended effects of the HRA, in enhancing the quality and comprehensiveness of data on this group (see Chapter 3). It also has profound implications for the revealed

210 Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. & Watts, B. (2015) *The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2015*. London: Crisis

profile of the statutory homeless population in other respects, including in relation to their support needs, as now discussed.

**Support needs**

Among households owed a prevention or relief duty, 136,000 (or 52%) contained a person with support needs in 2020/21, almost identical to the number in 2019/20 (135,000), with 15% assessed as having three or more support needs. Key stakeholders noted an increase in the proportion of households seeking assistance with complex needs,<sup>211</sup> albeit that no clear trend is evident in the data, perhaps reflecting that some of those helped under 'Everyone In' were not recorded in these official statistics. Stakeholders commenting on this observed trend noted a lack of support from other agencies that made addressing the needs of this more complex cohort extremely challenging:

**“Complexity is the thing that has increased the most, and there is almost no support from other agencies, especially social services and mental health, and so all of these cases are coming down to homeless services. As complexity increases, so does the time needed to resolve things, so case loads are a lot higher.”**  
(LA respondent, the South)

Statutory data now published in this area also cover the nature of homelessness applicants' assessed support needs. The support needs most frequently identified among households owed prevention or

relief duties relate to mental ill health (25%) and physical ill health or disability (15%). Smaller proportions of households are assessed as having support needs associated with drug problems (8%) and alcohol dependency (5%). A fuller breakdown of this data is shown in Figure 4.8, which reveals very substantially lower assessed rates of most support needs among London applicants, likely reflecting the role of the city's especially pressurised housing market in placing a wider cohort of the population at risk of homelessness than is true elsewhere.

**Immediate reason for homelessness**

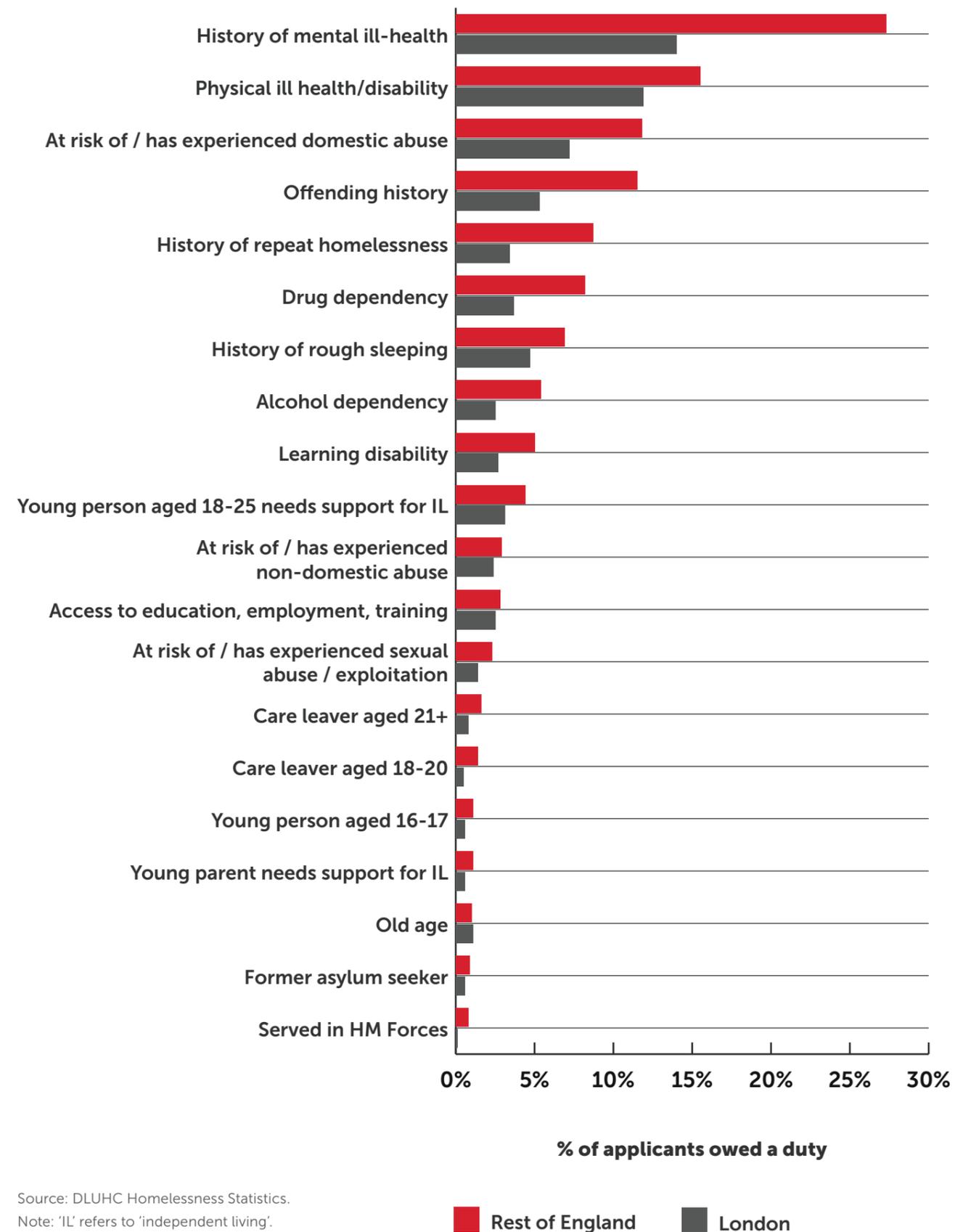
More than half of all households owed a duty of prevention or relief in 2020/21 (53%) were people who had needed to exit accommodation of an existing household – those asked to leave by family or friends (32%), those having lost (or under threat of losing) their home because of relationship breakdown (9%) or due to domestic abuse (12%) – see Figure 4.9. The most marked differences in the prevention versus relief cohort profiles relate to end of private tenancy (much more common for the prevention cohort) and domestic abuse (more common in the relief cohort). This makes sense in terms of the likely urgency of different types of housing insecurity events.

Nearly a third of applicants judged homeless or threatened with homelessness (31%) were in this position due the loss of an existing tenancy in either the private rented sector (22%)<sup>212</sup> or the social rented sector (9%) (see Figure 4.9). Within these cohorts (not shown in our graphics), approximately 27,000 households had been evicted or had otherwise lost their tenancy due to

211 See also: Crisis Research and Evaluation Team (2022) *"In This Together": Large Grants Evaluation Report*. Online: Crisis. [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/246640/crisis\\_itt\\_large\\_grants\\_evaluation\\_2022.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/246640/crisis_itt_large_grants_evaluation_2022.pdf)

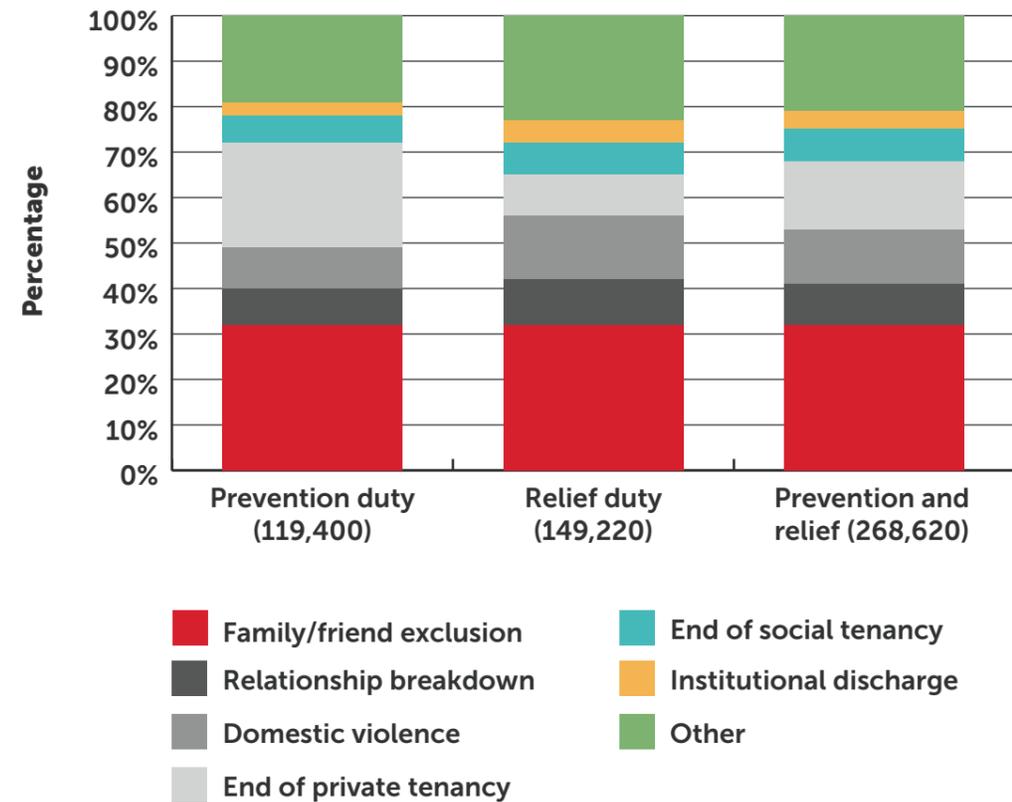
212 Note that this is a somewhat smaller proportion than the 'end of AST' as reason for homelessness statistic that readers might recall from earlier editions of the Homelessness Monitor. This reflects the fact that under the HRA regime the 'reason for homelessness' statistical breakdown relates to all households deemed as owed a prevention or relief duty, as opposed to the substantially narrower cohort analysed as such under pre-HRA arrangements – i.e., households accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

**Figure 4.8: Homeless applicants owed prevention or relief duties in 2020/21: assessed support needs**



Source: DLUHC Homelessness Statistics.  
Note: 'IL' refers to 'independent living'.

**Figure 4.9: Homeless applicants owed prevention or relief duties in 2020/21: main reason for loss (or threat of loss) of last settled home**



Source: DLUHC Homelessness Statistics.

Notes: 1. Relationship breakdown includes instances of domestic abuse. 2. Institutional discharge includes people required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support. 3. End of social tenancy includes people evicted from supported housing.

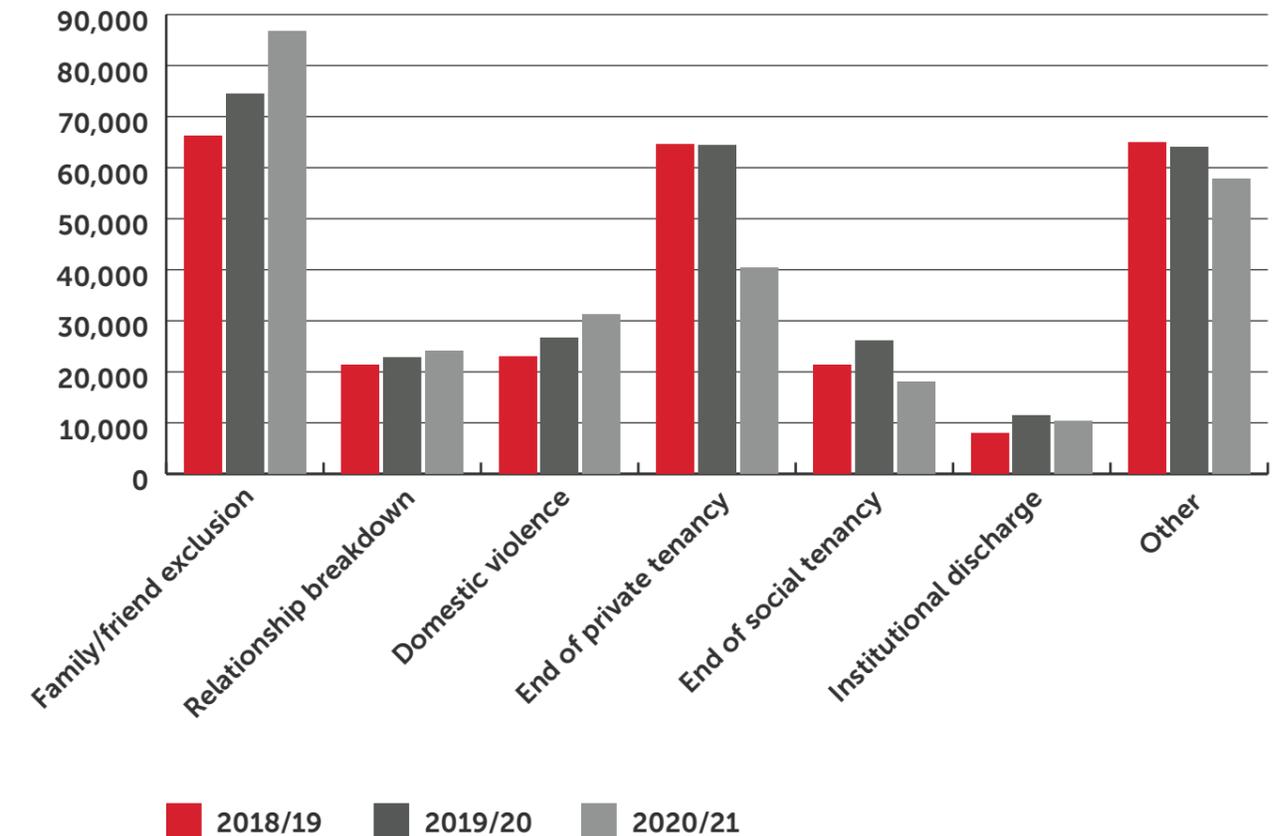
rent arrears, a figure equating to 9% of all households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness in 2020/21. The published stats do not allow us to break down reasons for homelessness among different household types.

No doubt due largely to the pandemic, the mix of 'immediate reasons for homelessness' changed substantially in 2020/21. Categories that involve the loss of accommodation as part of an existing household tended to grow. As shown in Figure 4.10, family/friend exclusions were up by 17%, the same increase seen in the numbers made homeless due to domestic

abuse. These trends were seen to be closely linked to the pressures within the home arising with the pandemic context, albeit in the case of domestic abuse-related applications, the coming into force of new provisions with the Domestic Abuse Act seen to be relevant too (see Chapter 3):

**“People presenting due to domestic abuse... saw an increase in 2020/21... This matches with concerns during lockdown that more time in the home due to the stay at home restrictions could lead**

**Figure 4.10: Homeless applicants owed prevention or relief duties, 2018/19-2020/21**



Source: DLUHC statistics

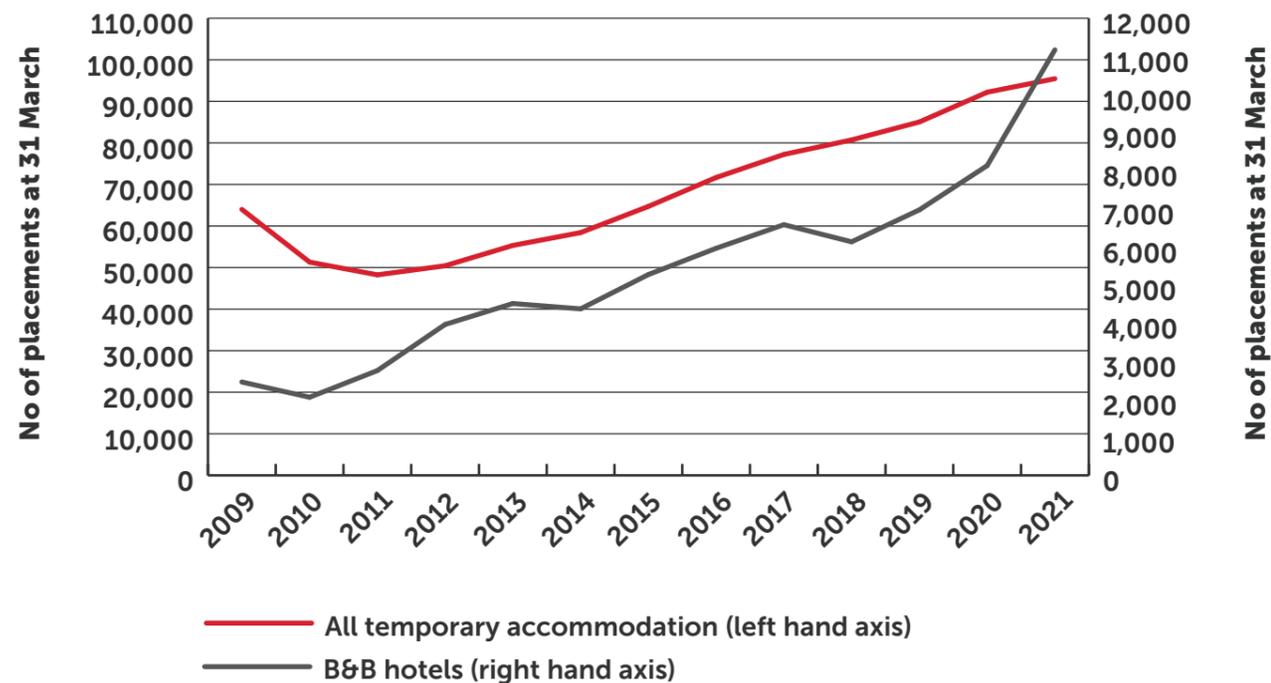
**an increase in domestic abuse.” (LA respondent, the North)**

At the national level, increases in homelessness applications for these reasons were more than counterbalanced, however, by the substantially reduced numbers of private renters (down 37%) and social renters (down 31%) whose tenancy had ended for some reason. The COVID-19 eviction moratorium discussed in chapter 2 will have been a major underlying cause of this trend.

An ongoing concern about the 'reason for homelessness' statistics as graphed in Figures 4.9 and 4.10 is the relatively

large proportion (21% in 2020/21) classed as having lost accommodation for 'other' reasons. This raises the possibility that LA recording practice may be failing to properly log the cause concerned, according to the (quite detailed) DLUHC classification. This problem is far from new – 18% of cases captured in the 'reason for homelessness' breakdown in 2017/18 (the last year of the pre-HRA system) were similarly classified. Nevertheless, especially given the crucial significance of this breakdown in informing LA homelessness strategies, it is important that efforts are made to manage it down.

**Figure 4.11: Local authorities' use of temporary accommodation for homeless households at financial year end, March 2009-March 2021**



Source: DLUHC homelessness statistics

#### 4.4 Temporary accommodation placements

The number of households in TA is another important indicator of the changing scale of homelessness, especially in relation to LAs' capacity to discharge statutory rehousing duties to homeless people. This assertion rests on an understanding that most of the TA caseload normally involves households which have been assessed as owed the main rehousing duty and who are in the queue for a permanent tenancy offer (as opposed to those whose homelessness application is under assessment). Since rates of TA utilisation reflect the interaction of (homelessness) demand and (social/affordable housing) supply, they are an acute proxy for changing rates of

homelessness stress as these bear on LAs.<sup>213</sup>

As a barometer of the changing rate of homelessness, TA placements have also recently acquired greater significance because their use has been largely unaffected by the introduction of new HRA procedures from 2018 (a change that complicates the interpretation of trends over time in traditional measures of homelessness – see Figure 4.5 and accompanying text).

Since bottoming out in 2010/11, total placements in TA have almost doubled, with the overall national total rising by 4% in the year to 31 March 2021 (see Figure 4.10).<sup>214</sup> B&B hotel placements

increased much more sharply during the year – up by 37%. This increase occurred entirely during Q2 2020, as the first wave of the COVID-19 struck. However, we understand that the sequence charted in Figure 4.11 does not comprehensively include placements associated with the Everyone In program to protect rough sleepers and others in congregate accommodation in the pandemic, with practice of recording Everyone In placements through H-CLIC varying by local area.

The bulk of TA placements involve self-contained units (see Figure 4.12), with just under a fifth (18%) of total placements at 31 March 2021 taking the form of B&B hotel or hostel rooms – accommodation in which units often lack cooking facilities and where sanitary facilities may be shared. Although B&B hotels and hostels are mainly used for childless households, the 31 March 2021 cohort included 4,000 households with children (24% of all households in these forms of accommodation). One key informant, however, was keen to emphasise that families being in self-contained TA is not a reliable proxy for that accommodation being appropriate or of a decent standard:<sup>215</sup>

**“they squeeze some tiny shower room in the corner and give you a microwave and a sink and say it’s self-contained. What you gain from not sharing kitchens and bathrooms with strangers, you lose... [because] it’s still one room, you’re literally cooking a foot from the bed with all your packing crates looming**

**over you, and kids bouncing off the walls, and teenagers having to sit in the en suite toilet to do their homework on their lap.... the standards are often very poor. There’s no housing management, as such, it’s mainly just to stop people causing a nuisance to each other, as opposed to making sure people are in decent conditions and having their complaints addressed.”**  
(Voluntary sector key informant)

Signs of stress are also evident in the substantial levels of out-of-borough TA. At 31 March 2021, such placements numbered 26,170, most of these probably the responsibility of London boroughs. At 27% of the national placement total, this proportion has remained fairly stable in recent years, although much higher than the 11% recorded in 2010/11.<sup>216</sup>

In addition to these quantitative trends in TA use, stakeholders reported qualitative changes in TA usage resulting from the pandemic. The “silting-up” (LA respondent, the South) of TA – and resulting longer lengths of stay – given unprecedented demand for it (linked to Everyone In) and challenges accessing move-on accommodation (see below) was a key theme here. More positively, several LA survey respondents noted that the pandemic had altered approaches to TA for single homeless households, including opening up (through funding and/or culture change) self-contained options, where available, for this cohort:

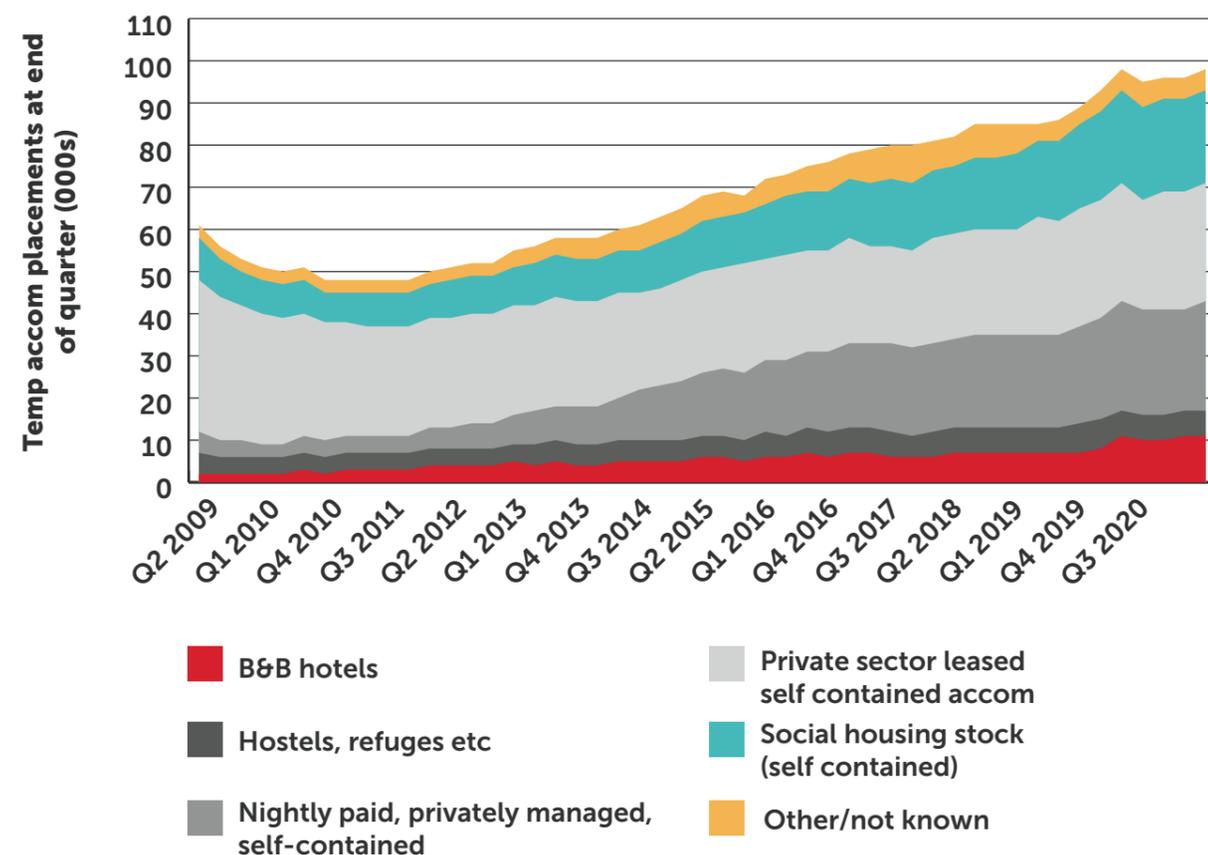
<sup>213</sup> As recognized by the crucial role total TA numbers play in the projections analysis of core homelessness presented in chapter 5.

<sup>214</sup> It should be noted that the TA statistics discussed in this section do not include those reflecting LA emergency action undertaken in the COVID-19 pandemic to accommodate rough sleepers and others under the Everyone In program. Everyone In actions are covered in Chapter 3.

<sup>215</sup> See also: Garvie, D. (2020) *Cashing in - How a shortage of social housing is fuelling a multimillion-pound temporary accommodation sector*. Online: Shelter [https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_and\\_research/policy\\_library/briefing\\_cashing\\_in\\_-\\_how\\_a\\_shortage\\_of\\_social\\_housing\\_is\\_fuelling\\_a\\_multimillion-pound\\_temporary\\_accommodation\\_sector](https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_and_research/policy_library/briefing_cashing_in_-_how_a_shortage_of_social_housing_is_fuelling_a_multimillion-pound_temporary_accommodation_sector)

<sup>216</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2020) *Statutory homelessness live tables; April 2019 to March 2020*, England; Table TA1. Online: DLUHC

**Figure 4.12: Temporary accommodation placements, Q2 2009- Q1 2021 (Quarter by Quarter): type of temporary accommodation**



Source: DLUHC homelessness statistics

**“additional funding has allowed for increase service provision resulting in more options for those rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping, through increased access to self-contained units which has resulted in greater dignity, and sustainability allowed for those accessing services.”**

(LA respondent, the North)

Pulling back, a very strong area of concern voiced by key informants was that a focus on the substantial and rising numbers in TA, including families with children,<sup>217</sup> has been crowded out as a policy priority within homelessness by the Government’s focus on rough sleeping reduction and responses:

**“there has been this strong concentration on rough sleepers, possibly to the detriment of the focus**

**on families in temporary accommodation, and the numbers don’t seem to be reducing in that area. Clearly that’s a great concern.”**  
(Housing sector key informant)

**“the real hidden homelessness throughout all of it, which has just largely been ignored, is family homelessness... to have lived through the last two years in temporary accommodation with children... and try and do home-schooling and try and keep those occupied and safe and keep your sanity while you’re doing it, that’s, that to me is just the issue that... Government, nationally, are not taking... seriously.”**  
(Voluntary sector key informant)

#### **4.5 Analysing Homelessness Reduction Act duty decision outcomes**

Graphically re-presenting statistics set out in Figure 4.1, Figure 4.13 demonstrates that almost half (48%) of 2020/21 prevention and relief actions ended with accommodation having been secured (i.e. households have been enabled to retain existing – or to obtain new – accommodation). This was the outcome for most prevention duty cases ended during the year (59%), with the equivalent figure for relief cases ended being 40%. The distribution of outcomes for the two previous years were virtually identical.

Assisting an applicant to obtain a new place to live (rather than to retain existing housing) was, by definition, the ‘accommodation secured’ result for all of the 2020/21 relief cases with this outcome. More detailed DLUHC statistics show that this was also true for 44,440 (38%) of the 116,470 prevention cases logged as

‘duty ended’ during the year. The other 24,690 whose prevention duty ended with ‘accommodation secured’ (21% of all prevention cases closed) were assisted to retain existing accommodation. The proportionate split between these two possible outcomes for prevention cases resolved was very similar in 2019/20. In absolute terms, both numbers were somewhat reduced in accord with the general reduction in prevention outcomes (as shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2).

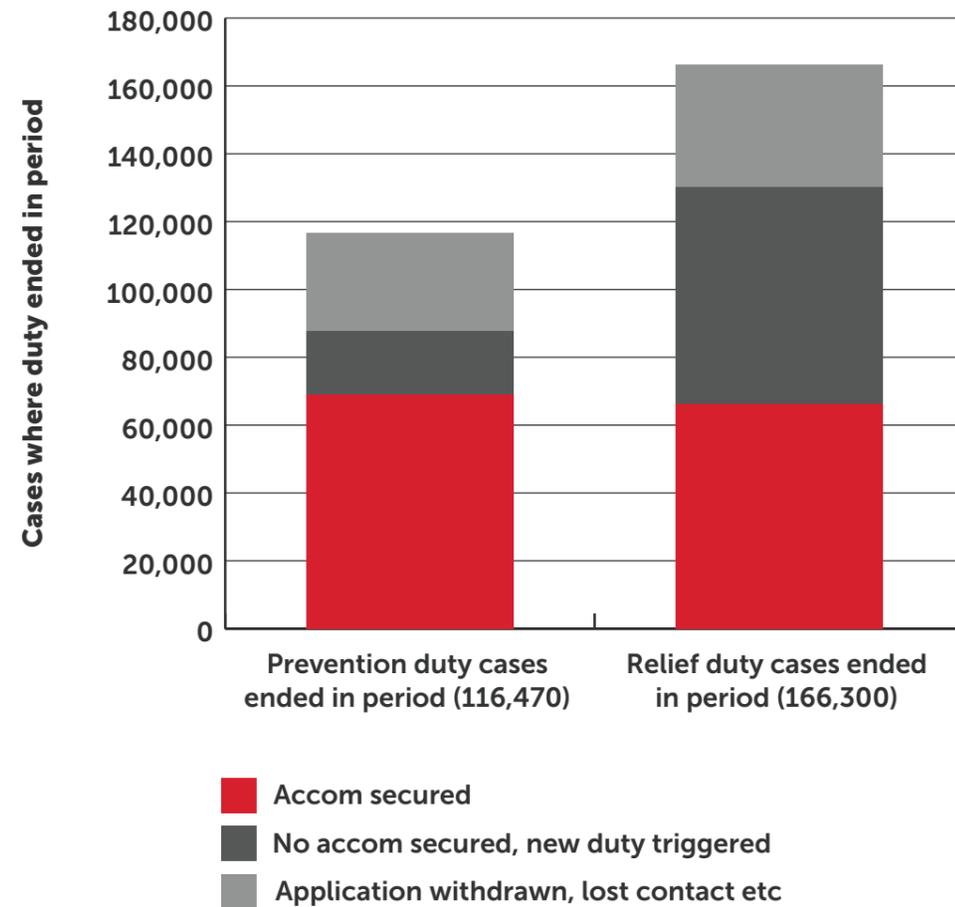
As also illustrated by Figure 4.13, the prevention or relief duty outcome often involves the triggering of a ‘new duty’ (see also Figure 4.1). For prevention cases, the onset of actual (as opposed to threatened) homelessness can lead to a relief duty, whereas in relief cases the inability to secure accommodation within 56 days can lead to a MD decision.

A substantial proportion of ‘accommodation secured’ outcomes for prevention and relief duties involved social rented housing (see Figure 4.14), including 14,760 relief cases resolved as such in 2020/21 and a proportion of the 20,180 social rental ‘prevention action closed’ cases (published statistics do not differentiate cases where an existing tenancy was secured versus a new one offered in the case of prevention duty discharges). As such, the number of new social rental tenancies facilitated via prevention and relief activity in was not far short of the number enabled through MD decisions in 2020/21 (18,280) – and it could have been greater (depending on the proportion of prevention cases resolved via a new social rental tenancy – as opposed to being assisted to retain an existing tenancy).

Returning to figure 4.14, we can see that 6,710 prevention cases ended with supported housing being offered (a new tenancy) or secured having been at risk, and an additional 16,820

<sup>217</sup> A 2020 report by the Children’s Society also raised the issue of the impacts of housing insecurity on children. See: The Children’s Society (2020) *Moving Always Moving*. Online: The Children’s Society. <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/moving-always-moving>

**Figure 4.13: Outcomes of prevention and relief activity in 2020/21 – cases where associated duties ended in period**



Source: DLUHC homelessness statistics

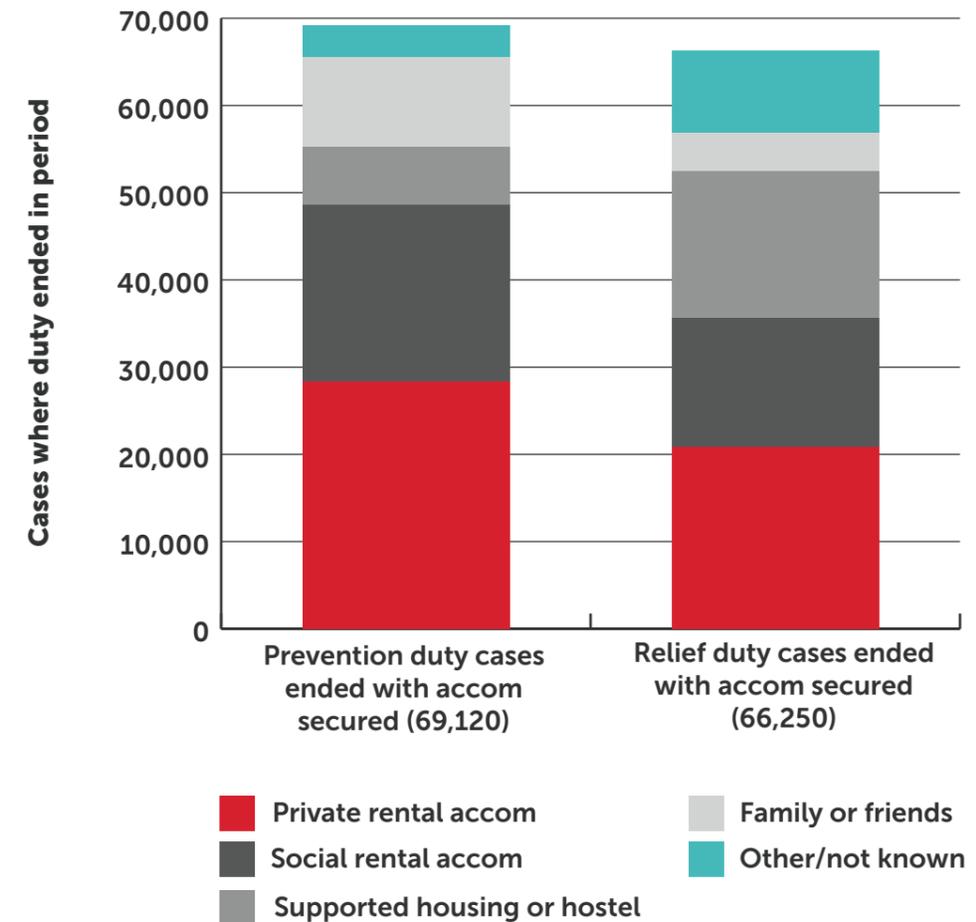
relief cases ended with an offer of such accommodation. Access to – and the quality of – supported housing is discussed further below, but it is important to note there that discharging prevention or relief duties into this kind of accommodation encompasses a wide range of types of accommodation, ranging from secure tenancies in self-contained supported accommodation models, to placements in hostel-type congregate accommodation in which residents have very little security of tenure<sup>218</sup>

(albeit that the HRA framework requires said accommodation to be available for at least six months).

The third ‘duty ended in 2020/21’ housing outcome identified in Figure 4.13 (and Figure 4.1) involved the 28,710 prevention cases and the 36,090 relief cases labelled as ‘application withdrawn, lost contact etc’. In such cases, households exit the system without having been assisted to secure settled accommodation. For this reason, and particularly since the

<sup>218</sup> Indeed, households in some forms of supported accommodation would still be counted as ‘core homeless’. See Chapter 5.

**Figure 4.14: Outcomes of prevention and relief activity in 2020/21 – cases where associated duties ended in period with accommodation secured**



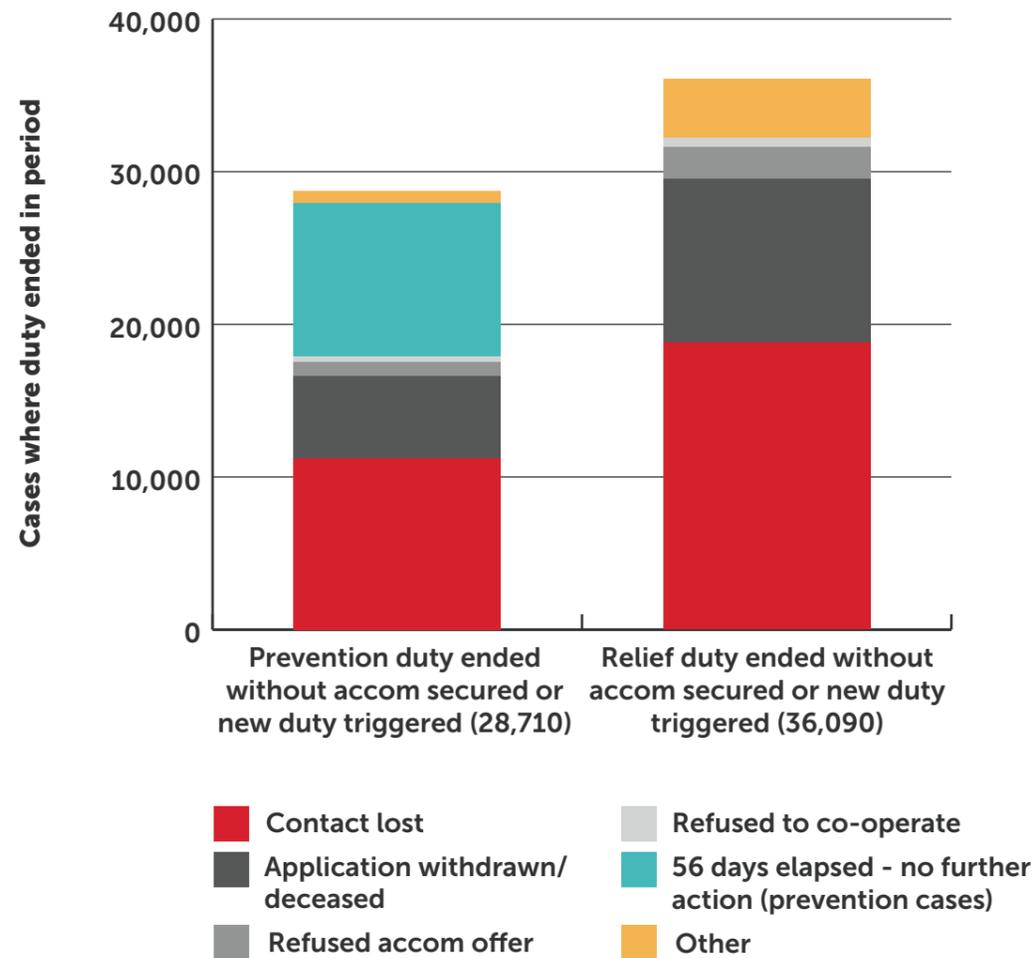
Source: DLUHC homelessness statistics

HRA enables authorities to discharge prevention or relief duty on the grounds of applicant non-cooperation, they are of particular interest. With this in mind, Figure 4.15 presents a more detailed breakdown. However, as shown here, only a relatively small number of cases (a total of 1,010) were recorded as having been ended in this way in 2020/21 (equivalent numbers for 2018/19 and 2019/20 were 790 and 910, respectively). Far more

common was the scenario where contact with the applicant was lost or the application was withdrawn.<sup>219</sup> From a policy analysis perspective it is regrettable that post-application situations for this significant cohort of applicants remain unknown. However, it is also recognised that expecting local authorities to devote more resources to accurate logging of substantive outcomes for those concerned may be unrealistic. While

<sup>219</sup> It is also worth noting that such ‘leakage’ from the statutory homelessness system was also significant under the pre-HRA framework. For example, in 2017/18 only 75% of the 40,040 households accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need subsequently accepted a social or private rental tenancy offer. The most common scenario for disappearance from the process was the abandonment of temporary accommodation.

**Figure 4.15: Outcomes of prevention and relief activity in 2020/21 – cases where associated duties ended in period without accommodation secured or new duty triggered**



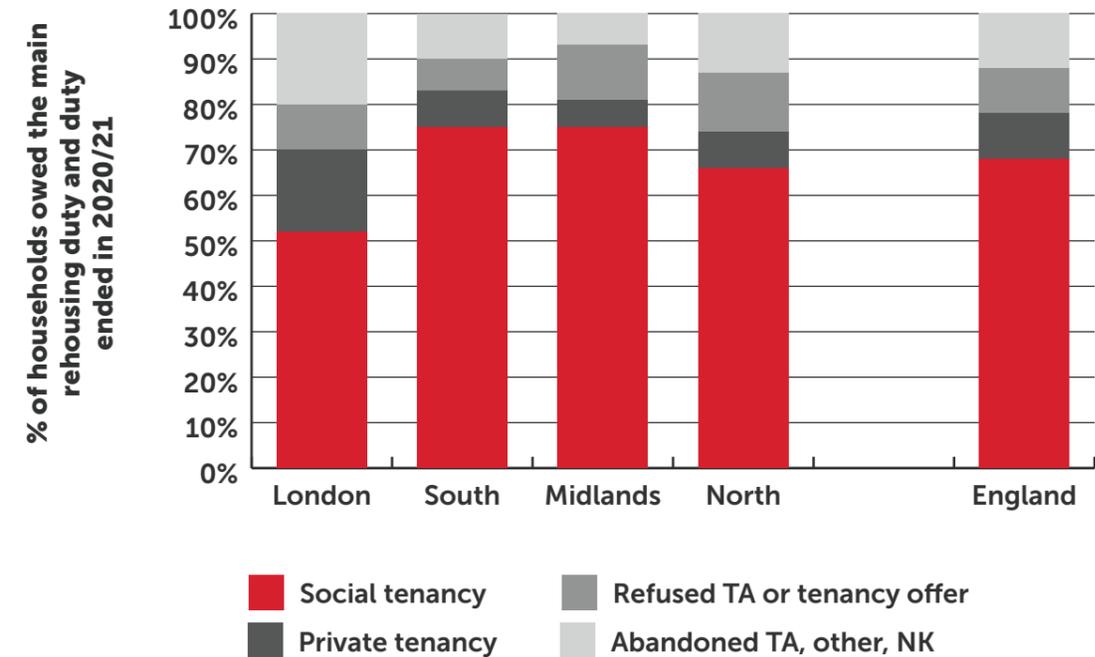
Source: DLUHC homelessness statistics

better routine recording would be desirable, enhanced understanding of this phenomenon might call for targeted research.

Prevention duty cases ended in the category '56 days elapsed – no further action' (see Figure 4.15) probably involved instances where, an applicant initially judged as threatened with homelessness within 56 days had not, in fact, experienced this outcome within the specified timescale. Where, in the case of households owed a relief duty (i.e., already homeless), 56

days elapses without a resolution, the MD assessment process is triggered (see Figure 4.1). Significant here – and a point probably made most clearly by Figure 4.15 – is that a substantial proportion of relief cases (around 36,000) are ended without being assisted into new accommodation or being referred for a MD assessment because they lose contact etc. Moreover, as is flagged below, there are also a very substantial number of (mainly single) applicants who 'stay the course' to the very end of the MD stage without a housing resolution

**Figure 4.16: Housing (and other) outcomes for households owed the Main Duty, where duty ended in 2020/21 – by region**



Source: DLUHC homelessness statistics.

Note: Abandoned TA includes 'became intentionally homeless from TA'

because they are deemed not in priority need or to be intentionally homeless.

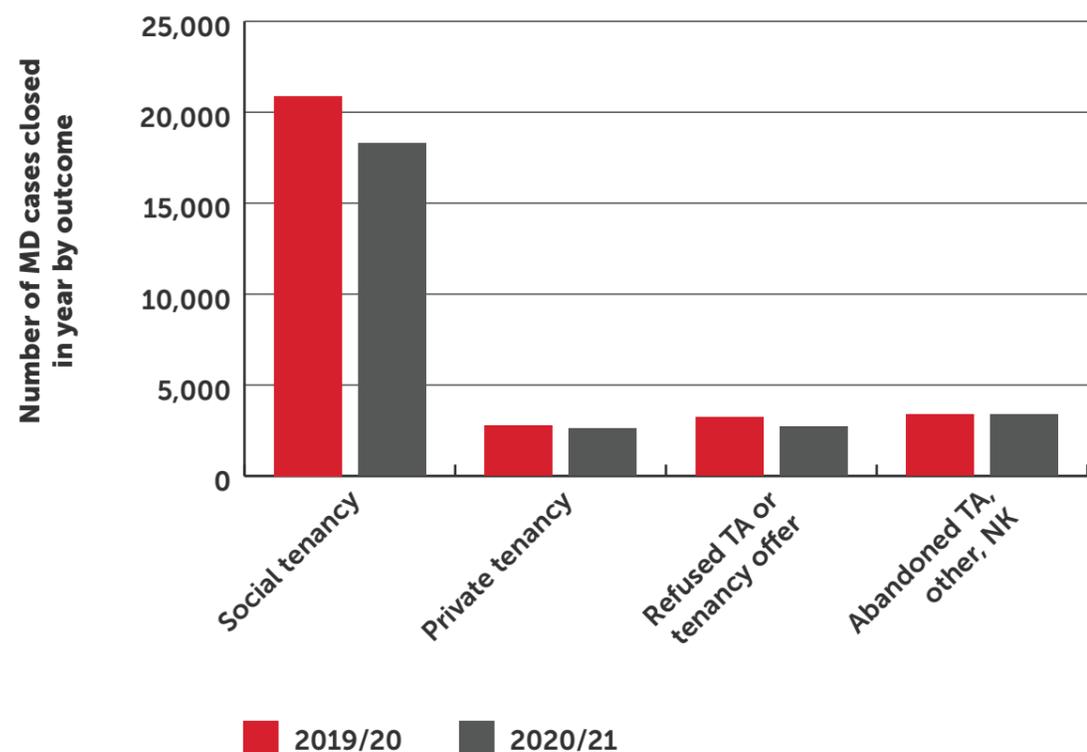
**Main duty decision outcomes**

Some 26,960 applications with a 'Main Duty owed' decision were ended in 2020/21. Nationally, in 78% of cases the outcome was a tenancy offer accepted – see Figure 4.16. Private tenancy outcomes were somewhat more common in London (18% of MD owed decisions) than in other regions (7% in Rest of England). Likewise, probably reflecting the typically longer stays in TA in London, the incidence of TA abandonment was substantially higher in the Capital than elsewhere.

MD cases ended in 2020/21 totalled 26,960 – down by 11% on 2019/20. As shown in Figure 4.17, this was mainly due to a 12% decline in cases ended via a social housing tenancy, an theme explored further below.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that substantial numbers of (mainly single) homeless applicants still reach the end of the post-HRA system without having secured settled accommodation, or even having had such accommodation offered to them. In 2020/21, around 22,000 homeless households were deemed either not to be in priority need or to be intentionally homeless, and therefore not owed the main rehousing duty (see Figure 4.1 and Chapter 3).

**Figure 4.17: Housing (and other) outcomes for households owed the Main Duty, where duty ended in 2019/20 and 2020/21 - England**



Source: DLUHC homelessness statistics. Note: Abandoned TA includes 'became intentionally homeless from TA'

#### 4.6 Access to move-on accommodation for homeless households

As discussed in the previous section, discharging prevention, relief and main duty discharge can involve securing new accommodation for an applicant in the social or private rented sectors. In the case of prevention and relief duties, discharging can also involve securing the applicant access to supported housing or hostel accommodation. In this section, we consider LA and key informant perspectives on trends in access to these forms of move-on accommodation during 2020/21.

##### Private rented sector accommodation

Almost four fifths (78%) of LA survey respondents reported that access to

private rented tenancies for homeless households had become more challenging in 2020/21 as compared to the year prior. Key to these intensified challenges accessing the PRS was the role of the evictions moratorium in drastically reducing the availability of new lets, but also more indirect moratorium impacts incentivising landlords to either exit the sector altogether or become more selective in choosing tenants:

**“Private landlords are becoming increasingly risk averse with many choosing to leave the market. Landlords are no longer willing to risk taking a tenant without a landlord reference and are becoming increasingly**

**sceptical around accepting anyone in receipt of benefits - especially as many have struggled to manage difficult tenants during the pandemic.”** (LA respondent, the Midlands)

While a minority of LAs noted that the rebasing of LHA rates in early 2020 had opened up access to the PRS briefly, a perceived countervailing trend towards increased market buoyancy and higher rents appears to have cancelled out any such gains in most areas, and is also seen to be contributing towards increased landlord selectivity:

**“Many working families are just not able to afford private rental properties as prices have increased. LHA rates have not increased to keep up with rental increased. It used to be that families on benefits struggled to access private rented accommodation, but now people in employment are finding this difficult, due to the lack of properties available and the cost.”**

(LA respondent, the South)

**“the high demand for PRS accommodation gives landlord a greater choice of tenant leaving homeless persons with limited funds or poor tenancy history unlikely in being successful.”**

(LA respondent, the South)

##### Social housing

While access to social rented tenancies for homeless households was seen to have deteriorated to a lesser extent than for PRS tenancies, well over half (57%) of LA respondents still identified challenges accessing the tenure as having intensified in 2020/21. Key

factors influencing this include a slowing down of void turnarounds linked to the pandemic and lower tenancy turnover linked evictions protection but also a wider reluctance for households to move during the pandemic:

**“Lower numbers of properties available due to restrictions imposed regarding moving initially and then later the impact of being unable to get supplies and restrictions on how many of the workforce could work in an empty property at any one time.”** (LA respondent, the South)

LA survey respondents were asked whether changes in Housing Association or LA allocation policies and/or practice since the start of the pandemic had made it easier to prevent or relieve homelessness. In the case of both LA and Housing Association policy, well over half of responding authorities reported neither positive nor negative changes in this area. In the case of LA policy, around a fifth (22%) of responding authorities reported changes making responding to homelessness easier, with around the same proportion (20%) reporting changes making it more difficult. In the case of Housing Association policy, a third (31%) reported changes in allocations policy/practice making responding to homelessness more difficult, and only 9% changes making it easier. Where LA respondents had seen improvements in the ability of homeless households to access social rented tenancies, this tended to be linked to temporary suspensions in choice-based lettings in favour of direct allocations:

**“We moved to a direct let system to avoid the bidding process... We were able to very**

**much prioritise those most in need for rehousing and it was highly successful.”**

(LA respondent, the South)

A key and long-standing policy issue seen to inhibit homeless households access to social housing is the use of affordability or financial capability checks on the part of housing providers. A strong majority of LA survey respondents (59%) reported that these make access difficult in their area:

**“Our main RP [Registered Provider] wants 8 weeks up front for those on UC which is not affordable to our customers. They are also very tight on their affordability checks, taking [a] customer’s spending at the current time rather than what they can afford once moved in – for example, they may have that extra £20 to pay for a taxi instead of walking, however if they need to pay rent they may choose to do that rather than have an extravagance.”**

(LA respondent, the South)

In addition, many LA survey respondents commented on the reluctance of housing associations in their area to accommodate homeless households with more complex needs:

**“We often find RSLs skip any clients with complex issues, former arrears or bad credit. I do not expect to see this getting better post covid.”**

(LA respondent, the South)

While some LAs were highly critical of what they saw as Housing Associations abnegating their social mission (“RPs [Registered Providers] need reminding that they are supposed to be social landlords as they act like private businesses only wanting the ‘nice’ tenants”, LA survey respondent, North), others saw such risk aversion in accommodating low income or complex needs groups as ‘understandable’ (LA respondent, the South), not least in light of wider Government policy including restrictions in entitlements to help with housing costs that can often lead to a gap between the rent owed and benefits received (see Chapter 2), so too the lack of an adequate funding arrangement ensuring that those who need housing support receive it. This echoed the diversity of views expressed by key informants:

**“You can’t get away from the fact that you look at the size of the stock of those big RPs and think what more could they do.”**

(Independent key informant)

**“housing associations have been applying affordability checks... for quite a long time... the majority of them do... It’s understandable... You don’t want to be setting someone up to fail in a way, do you? You don’t want to be letting to someone that further down the line they’re going to be struggling to pay the rent and getting into arrears and then you’re having to evict them. So I can understand why they do it, but that’s the barrier that a lot of people fall foul of.”**

(Voluntary sector key informant)

In this vein, the Kerlake Commission recommend a greater role for the regulator in monitoring providers’ performance in supporting responses to homelessness, including via a peer review mechanism.<sup>220</sup> Interestingly, however, one key informant noted a tension between this agenda (to open up access for homeless households) and wider trends in the regulation of social towards better protecting existing tenants:

**“the role of the regulator in England is changing because of the Social Housing White Paper and the drive to have more tenant involvement in the governance and running of housing associations following Grenfell... We’re worried that with the focus on what tenants need... there’ll be less of a focus on those people who haven’t been housed, who need housing... the homeless.”**

(Housing sector key informant)

#### **Supported accommodation**

Just under half (47%) of LA survey respondents reported access to supported accommodation becoming more difficult in 2020/21. Many respondents suggested that the existing supply of supported accommodation is insufficient to meet demand, with access issues being compounded by three pandemic-related factors. First, options for move-on from supported accommodation have been limited by a lack of movement in social and private rental markets (see above):

**“Lack of move on from supported housing (largely due to Covid lock downs and reduced availability of PRS and social housing) made access to supported accommodation more challenging.”**

(LA respondent, the North)

Second, in some areas, the scale of existing supported accommodation had been scaled back to ensure alignment with pandemic-related measures pertaining to congregate and shared forms of accommodation:

**“Covid-19 restrictions meant occupation had to be reduced, more customers, less available placements.”**

(LA respondent, London)

Third, increased demand related in substantial part to the Everyone-In is seen to have put additional pressure on already limited supply, with particular challenges faced in procuring appropriate supported accommodation for those with more complex needs:

**“Due to the increased demand following Everyone In, it has become extremely challenging to find supported accommodation for chaotic singles who have been rough sleeping or have mental health issues . . . The providers with specialist knowledge in this area are at full capacity.”**

(LA respondent, London)

220 The Kerlake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (2021) *A New Way of Working: Ending Rough Sleeping Together: Final Report*. Online: The Kerlake Commission. <https://www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/KRSC-Final-Report-2021.pdf>; <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Investigation-into-the-housing-of-rough-sleepers-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf>

Related to concerns about an insufficient supply of supported accommodation are strongly voiced concerns by key informants regarding the insufficient funding available for floating housing support services:

**“that there needs to be longer-term [funding] settlement for support services... multiyear awards that are also flexible, and can potentially roll over, and it needs to be ringfenced... it has consequences for the supply of supported housing, but also the availability of tenancy sustainable support, or other types of floating support that people need.”**  
(Housing sector key informant)

In the minority of areas (15%) where access to supported accommodation was deemed to have become easier, this was primarily attributed to the impacts of new Government funding streams in this area, including RSAP (see Chapter 3).

A separate concern in relation to supported accommodation concerned the provision of ‘exempt accommodation’ in some areas. Exempt accommodation refers to accommodation provided alongside “care, support and supervision”<sup>221</sup> and thus within which residents are allowed to apply for benefits exceeding standard LHA limits.<sup>222</sup> While one LA survey respondent noted that the such provision eases the pressure on other forms of supported accommodation in their area, an acute concern surrounded the provision of

some ‘exempt accommodation’ of very poor quality, with little if any support in place, run by private companies with complex governance arrangements and subject to minimal scrutiny and oversight due to gaps in the relevant regulatory frameworks:<sup>223</sup>

**“We are seeing many new companies trying to enter the supported market - particularly where the property is leased from a private landlord to a specialist provider, at a significantly inflated rent. However, they are unable to deal with the high needs of our clients. Some of these companies are of unknown quality and the quality of support provided is questionable.”**  
(LA respondent, London)

**“we’ve come across people... middle-aged men - who have been living in that supported accommodation for like ten years and no real support, no move-on plan. Completely institutionalised and basically just living out their life in a hostel room... It’s the total lack of housing management in a lot of these exempt accommodation places. The main housing management is the security guard on the door, but there’s not a lot else.”**  
(Voluntary sector key informant)

Several key informants noted that this issue had emerged at the scale it has because of the “perfect storm” (Voluntary sector key informant) of insufficient supported accommodation supply and funding, LHA rates that are out of step with market rents, and the regulatory loop holes noted above. These issues with the exempt accommodation sector have recently garnered the attention of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Ending Homelessness,<sup>224</sup> with a Select Committee Inquiry into the matter subsequently launched.<sup>225</sup> They are also under examination via a Government funded pilot scheme in four areas testing new approaches to improving standards in supported housing.<sup>226</sup> The issue was seen to be urgent and “unfinished business” (Statutory sector key informant) by key informants involved in this study, with some acknowledgement that efforts to address it have been hampered by a high level Government focus on Brexit and then the pandemic. It was also noted that increasing regulator action in this area, and specifically the closing down of clear ‘rogue’ players, while welcome, risks flooding affected local authorities with individuals in need of alternative supported housing provision.

#### 4.7 Key points

- Some 282,000 eligible households sought help from local authorities on grounds of homelessness in 2020/21 – an 8% reduction on the equivalent figure for 2019/20. This reduction resulted wholly from a 20% drop in the numbers assessed as ‘threatened with homelessness’, and owed the prevention duty. Applicants assessed as actually homeless (and owed the

relief duty) increased by 7% over the year, and by 23% over the previous two years.

- Two thirds of LA survey respondents reported a year-on-year increase in the number of households seeking assistance in 2020/21, and over half an increase in the amount of prevention activity undertaken in 2020/21. This apparent disjuncture with the official administrative statistics might be explained by demand from ineligible households (due to their migration status) or others assisted outwith the parameters of the statutory framework, and thus not recorded in the prevention and relief statistics.
- Applications involving family households fell by 22% in 2020/21, whereas single adult household applications rose by 3%. People made homeless by ‘family/friend exclusions’, relationship breakdown or domestic abuse account for just over half of all applications in 2020/21 (53%), up by 14% on the previous year. These trends in the profile of statutory homeless households reflect pandemic-related drivers, including evictions protections disproportionately protecting families, and the intensification of pressures within the home putting those in informal sofa-surfing arrangements and experiencing domestic abuse at greater risk of homelessness.
- While HRA provisions give far better protection to single homeless households than the prior legal framework, it should be noted that some key groups still navigate the

221 Paragraph 4(10) of Schedule 3 to the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Consequential Provisions) Regulations 2006. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2006/217/schedule/3>

222 See: Campbell Tickell (2021) *Safe, Successful, Sustainable: A shared vision for better homes, support and opportunities*. Online: Campbell Tickell [https://www.campbelltickell.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/PRO\\_Lesson-Learnt-report\\_October2021\\_FV.pdf](https://www.campbelltickell.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/PRO_Lesson-Learnt-report_October2021_FV.pdf)

223 For a detailed account of these, see *ibid*. See also St Basil’s (2021) *Young People In: A report on young people who were assisted by the Everyone In programme across the West Midlands during the first national lockdown*. Online: St Basils. <https://stbasils.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Young-People-In-St-Basils-Deep-Dive-report-FINAL-pdf.pdf>

224 All Party Parliamentary Group on Ending Homelessness (2021) *How can the Government make the exempt accommodation sector work for everyone?* Meeting Minutes, 21st October 2021.

225 UK Parliament (2022) *Levelling Up Committee launches inquiry into exempt accommodation*. 7 December. Online: UK Parliament. <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/17/levelling-up-housing-and-communities-committee/news/159501/levelling-up-committee-launches-inquiry-into-exempt-accommodation/>

226 See: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Department for Work and Pensions, Baroness Deborah Stedman-Scott OBE DL, and Eddie Hughes MP (2021) *Pilots to improve supported housing for vulnerable people extended*. Online: Gov.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pilots-to-improve-supported-housing-for-vulnerable-people-extended>

system without having secured settled accommodation, including in 2020/21 around 22,000 homeless households were deemed either not to be in priority need or to be intentionally homeless, and therefore not owed the main rehousing duty

- Total TA placements continued to increase in 2020/21 (up by 4% during the year), with B&B hotel placements rising by 37%; some of this increase reflects actions under the Everyone In programme, although such placements are unlikely to have been comprehensively recorded via H-CLIC.
- The vast majority of MD decision outcomes involve the household accepted a social housing tenancy offer, with an additional 7% accepted an offer of PRS accommodation. According to 78% of LA survey respondents, access to PRS accommodation became more difficult during 2020/21, with 57% identifying access to the social rented sector becoming more challenging also.
- Compared with the rest of England, 'main rehousing duty accepted' decisions (Section 184(3)) in London were more likely to involve private rental placements (18% compared with 7%); likewise, probably reflecting the typically longer stays in TA in London, the incidence of TA abandonment was substantially higher in the Capital than elsewhere.

# Core homelessness

## 5. Core homelessness: numbers, projections and policy impacts

### 5.1: Introduction

This chapter presents updated estimates of the level and composition of core homelessness in England<sup>227</sup> in 2019 and 2020, both preceding and during the COVID-19 emergency. It reviews trends over the preceding years and assesses the core homelessness impact of the pandemic and policy responses to it, before presenting updated forward projections of core homelessness numbers and composition over the next 20 years, including a regional breakdown. A forecasting model is used to examine the impacts of a range of potential policy and practice changes on potential core homelessness numbers, as well as key numbers in the wider statutory homelessness system.

The chapter is structured in the following way. First, in this section we define the elements of core homelessness and review the reasons

driving the development of this concept, based on limitations of the existing official statistics. Then in section 5.2 we present estimates of the main elements of core homelessness over the period 2012 to 2020, with a particular focus on the last two years. Section 5.3 introduces the forward projection model and the policy options considered, with further detail on model updates given in Appendix 3. Section 5.4 presents baseline scenario forward projections, while Section 5.5 discusses forward projections under a range of different policy scenarios. Section 5.6 looks at the impacts of cumulatively introducing the policy options tested.

### The concept of core homelessness

The core homelessness concept was introduced in research undertaken with Crisis in 2017, updated in 2018,<sup>228</sup> and then subject to a further major update in last year's Homelessness Monitor England.<sup>229</sup> Its components

<sup>227</sup> Detailed projections and scenarios have been developed and updated for Wales and Scotland, published separately.

<sup>228</sup> 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](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.

<sup>229</sup> Fitzpatrick, S., Watts, B., Pawson H., Bramley, G., Wood, J., Stephen, M., & Blenkinsopp, J. (2021) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2021*. London: Crisis. <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244703/crisis-england-monitor-executive-summary-2021.pdf>

**Table 5.1: Core homelessness categories and definitions**

Category	Description
<b>Rough Sleeping</b>	Sleeping in the open e.g. in streets, parks, carparks, doorways
<b>Unconventional Accommodation</b>	Sleeping in places/spaces not intended as normal residential accommodation, e.g. cars, vans, lorries, caravans/motor homes, tents, boats, sheds, garages, industrial/commercial premises
<b>Hostels etc.</b>	Communal emergency and temporary accommodation primarily targeted at homeless people including hostels, refuges and shelters <sup>230</sup>
<b>Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation</b>	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)
<b>Sofa Surfing</b>	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

and their definitions as applied in this study are shown in Table 5.1.

The development of the core homelessness concept seeks to enable a robust measurement framework that overcomes limitations in traditional approaches to homelessness calibration used in the UK, and in particular on statutory homelessness statistics (tracking those seeking local authority housing assistance), and counts or estimates of rough sleeping. While both of these approaches are informative and important (and reviewed as a core part of our analysis in Chapter 4), they are also subject to shortcomings that limit their value for analytical purposes – including cross-country (including within UK) comparison, trend over time analysis and serving as a basis for projections on the possible future scale of homelessness.

These limitations are reviewed more fully in chapter 5 of the previous

edition of the Homelessness Monitor England, but include that statistics derived from statutory homelessness activity are in fact measures of 'expressed demand'. As such, they omit people whose circumstances may equate to 'homelessness' in an objective sense, but who have not (or have not yet) made an application, reflecting for example perceived or real limits to their entitlements (e.g. single people) and/or eligibility (e.g. people with No Recourse to Public Funds or limited access to benefits). On the other hand, the statutory homelessness statistics do include households who are legally homeless, but less acutely because either they have not yet left their previous accommodation or they have been temporarily housed in 'suitable' accommodation. While not included in our core homelessness estimates, understanding the scale and drivers of these forms of 'other statutory homelessness' remains crucially important, not least because

<sup>230</sup> For the purposes of these core homeless estimates and projections, 'Everyone In' accommodation in hotels and its legacy is treated as being part of 'hostels, etc.' Data for 2020 have been adjusted to reflect the fact that some of it was recorded by LAs as 'B&B' (part of 'unsuitable TA').

**Table 5.2: Data sources used to estimate base period numbers in each category of core homelessness**

Category	Data sources
<b>Rough Sleeping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destitution in the UK 2019 survey of users of crisis services;</li> <li>• Public Voice retrospective survey of adult experiences, 2020;</li> <li>• Office of National Statistics Survey of living Conditions 2018 retrospective questions on housing difficulties;</li> <li>• H-CLIC administrative data on prior accommodation of homeless applicants, 2018-20;</li> <li>• Local Authority Rough Sleeper Counts/estimates, augmented in London by CHAIN and supplementary Local Authority monitoring returns, and with some imputation in non-London areas where counts were not conducted</li> </ul>
<b>Unconventional Accommodation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destitution in the UK 2019 survey of users of crisis services;</li> <li>• Public Voice retrospective survey of adult experiences, 2020;</li> <li>• Office of National Statistics Survey of living Conditions 2018 retrospective questions on housing difficulties;</li> <li>• H-CLIC administrative data on prior accommodation of homeless applicants, 2018-20;</li> </ul>
<b>Hostels etc.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destitution in the UK 2019 survey of users of crisis services;</li> <li>• Public Voice retrospective survey of adult experiences, 2020;</li> <li>• Office of National Statistics Survey of living Conditions 2018 retrospective questions on housing difficulties;</li> <li>• H-CLIC administrative data on prior accommodation of homeless applicants, 2018-20;</li> <li>• Homeless Link Survey of services for single homeless, 2019</li> <li>• DWP Freedom of Information dataset on Housing Benefit cases in short term, emergency or transitional<sup>231</sup> accommodation, 2020 and 2021</li> </ul>
<b>Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destitution in the UK 2019 survey of users of crisis services;</li> <li>• Public Voice retrospective survey of adult experiences, 2020;</li> <li>• Office of National Statistics Survey of living Conditions 2018 retrospective questions on housing difficulties;</li> <li>• H-CLIC administrative data on homeless households placed in selected categories of temporary accommodation, 2020;</li> <li>• DWP Freedom of Information dataset on Housing Benefit cases in selected categories of temporary accommodation, 2020</li> </ul>
<b>Sofa Surfing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Voice retrospective survey of adult experiences, 2020;</li> <li>• Office of National Statistics Survey of living Conditions 2018 retrospective questions on housing difficulties;</li> <li>• English Housing Survey data on concealed households meeting definition and temporary household members avoiding homelessness, 2017-18</li> <li>• UK Household Longitudinal Survey on concealed households meeting definition, 2017-18.</li> </ul>

<sup>231</sup> Adjusted to exclude estimated numbers in certain transitional rehab-type facilities, based on Blood et al (2016) study.

they have major service planning and resource implications for local authorities. We therefore use our forecasting model to generate key numbers relating to the statutory system – homeless applications and total numbers of households in temporary accommodation – as part of the output of all scenarios. Rough sleeping counts and estimates are one useful source of data to track trends over time in this most acute form of homelessness, but also suffer limitations that we seek to overcome in our approach to measuring core homelessness, including a recognised tendency to undercount or estimate levels of street homelessness.

## 5.2 Core homelessness estimates and trends

In this section we present evidence on the level of core homelessness in England in the period up to and including the COVID-19 pandemic. The estimates of core homelessness in the base period (2018/19) presented below draw on ten data sources overall, with each component triangulating at least four data sources, helping to address variations in statistical robustness in terms of coverage, definitions used and sample sizes applying to any single measure. The sources used to estimate numbers in each category of core homelessness are summarised in Table 5.2. More details on the datasets and weightings given to each component were provided in a separate Technical Report,<sup>232</sup> with some additional information on updates included in this round (in particular concerning 2020,<sup>233</sup> but also more minor updates to 2019 estimates) given in Appendix 3.

The estimates presented here are based on a central set of such assumptions detailed in the Technical

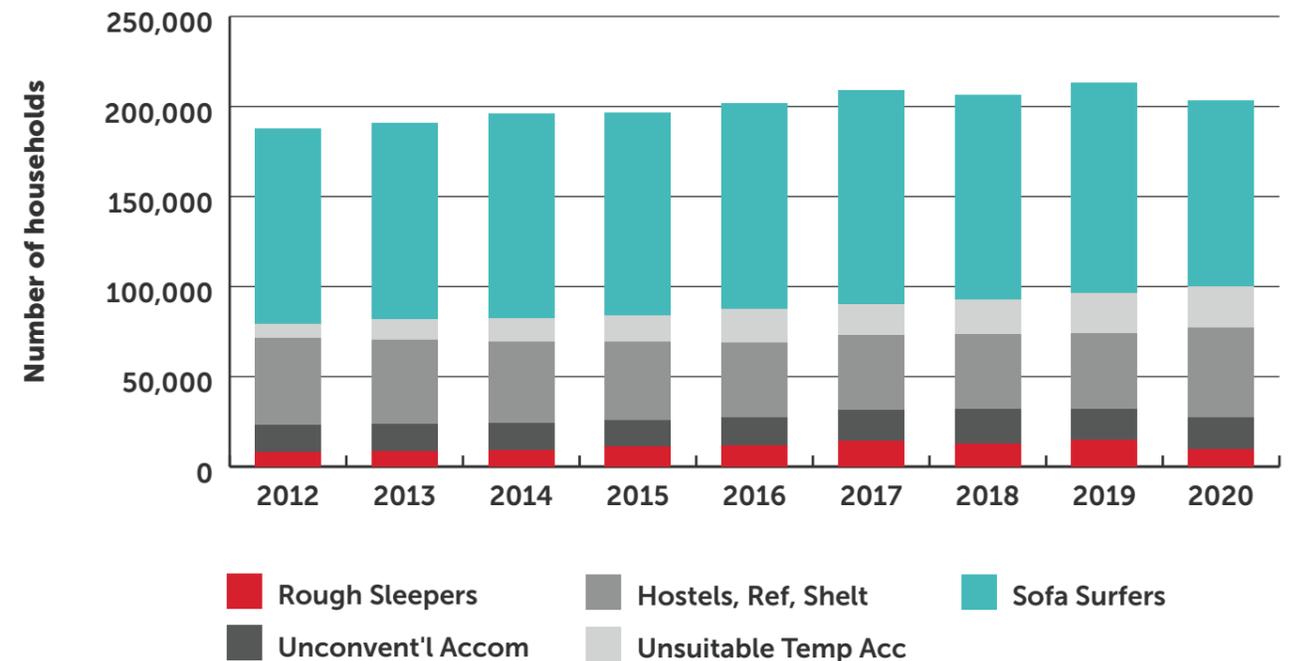
Report and supplemented in Appendix 3, but there remain degrees of uncertainty about the coverage of the different sources described above. Additional uncertainties have arisen from the COVID-19 disruption to services and to some data collections, and from the somewhat limited data which have been compiled and published on the exact scope of 'Everyone In' provision and how this is reflected in the routine statistics (see Chapters 3 and 4).

Figure 5.1 below shows our central estimates of core homeless in England and its composition in terms of the five main categories in the period up to 2020. The general trend picture was that core homelessness numbers (pre-COVID-19) were on a gradually rising trajectory. The overall numbers rose by 14% between 2012 and 2019. There were rises in each component between 2012 and 2019, apart from hostels etc., with the largest percentage terms increase between 2012 and 2019 being for unsuitable temporary accommodation (194%) and rough sleeping (85%).

In 2020, the number of core homeless households in England was about 203,400, down somewhat (5%) from 213,200 in 2019. This is primarily attributable to the Everyone In initiative, with clear reductions in rough sleeping (down nearly 4,800 or 33%) and sofa surfing (down 13,300 or 11%), but partially offset by an increase in hostels, etc. (of nearly 7,700 or 18%, net) because of the additional special provision.

A similar analysis by broad region of England is shown in Figure 5.2. As noted in previous editions of the Homelessness Monitor England, as well as in Chapters 3 and 4 of this

Figure 5.1: Core homelessness estimates by category, England 2012-2020



Sources: Authors estimates of core homelessness elements from sources listed in Table 5.2, and described more fully in Fitzpatrick et al, 2021, Appendix 3 and Bramley 2021.

report, the coming into force of the HRA led to an increasing emphasis on addressing homelessness among single person households, including those with complex needs. This shifts the regional picture of *statutory* homelessness somewhat, with more emphasis on the midlands and north, particularly the more economically disadvantaged urban areas there.<sup>234</sup> While this would impact some sectors of core homelessness (especially use of unsuitable TA), one might expect some offsetting effects on other area such as sofa surfing. Other factors may include continuing poor economic performance in northern regions and a cooling of the London housing market from around 2016, together with the sharp drop in international migration in 2020. These factors are reflected in Figure 5.2, and also in the fact that

the growth in core homelessness up to 2019 seems to have been greater since 2012 in those regions (up 18% in the North and 38% in the Midlands, compared with 9% in the South and 4% in London).

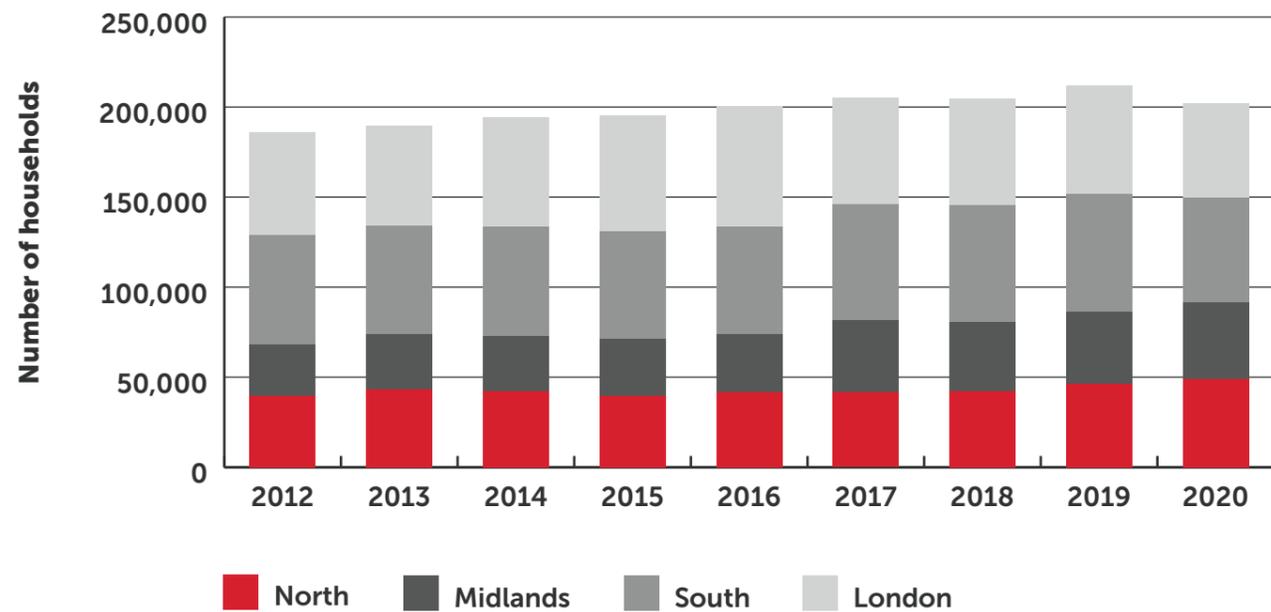
Figure 5.3 shows timelines for core homelessness expressed as percentage rates of resident households by region. This brings out several features more clearly. Firstly, London remains the most important hotspot for core homelessness, but the difference between it and the Midlands has narrowed noticeably, as London's rates have fallen and Midland rates have risen. Secondly, the rate for the south is close to the English average while the north has a generally lower rate. Thirdly, England as a whole, and two of its broad regions

<sup>232</sup> Further detail and commentary on these sources is contained in Bramley, G. (2021) *Research on Core Homelessness and Homeless Projections: Technical Report on new baseline estimates and scenario projections*. Edinburgh. Heriot-Watt University. <https://doi.org/10.17861/fex5-jg80>

<sup>233</sup> In this chapter, references to years such as '2020' should be taken to mean 'Financial Year 2020/21', i.e. April 2020 to March 2021, which is the normal basis for reporting homelessness statistics and many other public data.

<sup>234</sup> For some confirmatory evidence from initial H-CLIC returns see Fitzpatrick, S. & Bramley, G. (2021) *The Ruling Parties' Record on Homelessness and Complex Needs (May 2015 to pre-COVID 2020)*, Social Policy and Distributional Outcomes in a Changing Britain Research Paper 9. Online: LSE. <https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spdo/spdorp09.pdf>

**Figure 5.2: Core homelessness estimates by broad region, England 2012-2020**



Sources: Authors estimates of core homelessness elements from sources listed in Table 5.2, and described more fully in Fitzpatrick et al, 2021, Appendix 3 and Bramley 2021.

(London and the South) saw a marked reduction in 2020, with the Midlands showing a slight further rise while the North was static.

Recent research on experience of homelessness among EEA nationals adds a further element to this regional story, with core homelessness among this group heavily concentrated in London: EEA citizens in London have experience core homelessness at 1.7 times the overall London rate and 3.5 times the national rate. 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. While core homelessness among EEA citizens appears to have declined during the pandemic, in line

with core homelessness overall, this group were found to have suffered disproportionately from job loss through the pandemic. EEA citizens experiencing core homelessness and unemployment were found, according to this new survey evidence, to typically have 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.<sup>235</sup>

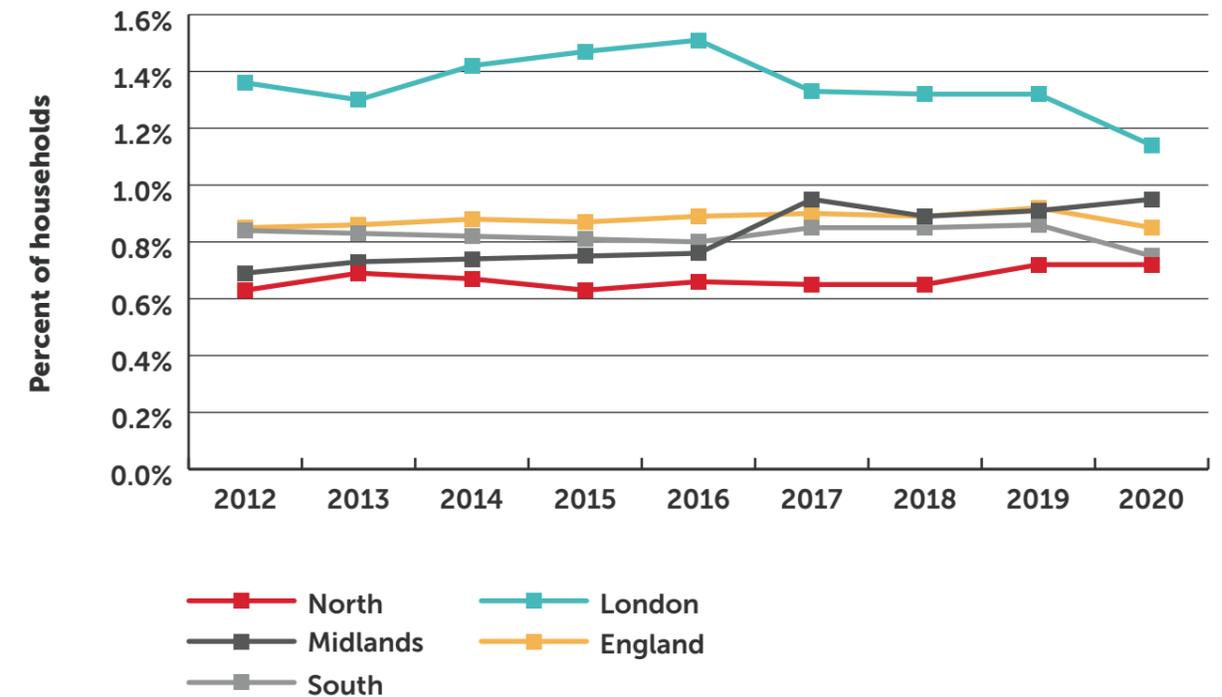
**5.3 Introduction to projections**

An integral part of the original 2017 report on core homelessness<sup>236</sup> was the development and deployment of a forecasting model to examine

235 Bramley, G., Morris, M., Mort, L., Netto, G., Sosenko, F., & Webb, J. (2021) *The Scale, Causes and Impacts of Homelessness Among EEA Citizens*. Heriot-Watt University and IPPR. Online: Crisis. [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/246343/eea-report\\_v3.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/246343/eea-report_v3.pdf)

236 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](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237582/crisis_homelessness_projections_2017.pdf)

**Figure 5.3: Core homelessness rates as % of households by broad region and for England overall, 2012-2020.**



Sources: Authors estimates of core homelessness elements from sources listed in Table 5.2, and described more fully in Fitzpatrick et al, 2021, Appendix 3 and Bramley 2021.

future scenarios for the evolution of core homelessness and the potential impact of different policy options. That forecasting model was comprehensively updated and refined for the Homelessness Monitor England 2021. In this edition, some further refinements to some of the components of the forecasting model have been made, while input data has been updated by 1-2 years in most cases. This chapter presents an updated and further refined set of future scenarios looking at the medium (2-5 years) and longer (10-20 years) term. These scenarios mainly differ in respect of policies and provisions made by Government.

The COVID-19 emergency and initial responses to it are baked into the base year (2020) and the forecasts for the immediately following years. The

model can test different economic scenarios, but in this application we mainly follow a central set of assumptions, except in relation to one scenario focused on regional 'levelling up'. This central scenario has been built on comprehensively updated local/sub-regional data on recent economic performance and forecasts built upon these data, as used in contemporary land use and transportation planning modelling. The shorter term macro economic trajectory is based on recent forecasts by the OBR and the average of independent forecasts published by H M Treasury. Future national population trends are consistent with Office for National Statistics projections, but the sub-regional distribution of that population and its propensity to form households are both predicted within the model.

**Table 5.3: Policy scenarios tested through projections model over period 2021-41**

Shorthand Name	Description
<b>With-Covid Baseline</b>	Includes effects of Covid pandemic and lockdown and associated economic recession with heightened unemployment and destitution, including tapering legacy of 'Everyone In'
<b>Max Prevention</b>	More effective prevention, raising the ratio of prevention to total cases and the proportion of prevention cases found/secured accommodation to the level of better performing authorities
<b>Rehousing Quotas</b>	Allocating up to 20% of net social lettings to core homeless households on an ongoing basis
<b>Raise LHA</b>	Raise Local Housing Allowance to median level in all local authority areas and maintain relative level in real terms through effective indexing <sup>237</sup>
<b>Limit Evictions</b>	Legal & administrative measures to limit and delay evictions from private renting, to reduce core homelessness precipitated by eviction from the PRS by the same order of magnitude as observed in 2020
<b>UC &amp; destitution measures</b>	Reinstate £20 per week enhancement to UC personal allowance, end 5-week wait for first UC payment, curb debt deductions from benefits, reduce Personal Independence Payment 'fails', improve Local Welfare Support and scrap Benefit Cap <sup>238</sup>
<b>Housing First &amp; Severe and Multiple Disadvantage (SMD) reduction</b>	Increase by 3x the level of Housing First provision, with associated increase in rehabilitation services for addictions & offending, leading to progressive reduction in hostel etc accommodation and crime rates
<b>Housing Supply</b>	Increase in total and social rented housing supply in line with recommendations of 2018 Crisis/NHF 'Housing Requirements' report i.e. c.340,000 per annum total, up to 85,000 per annum social rented
<b>Levelling Up</b>	Raising economic growth rates in regions beyond London & SE to reduce growth gap by c. 65%
<b>Large Welfare Increase</b>	In addition to the UC and destitution measures, increase personal allowances in UC and related systems by 3x the amount in the above scenario (from mid 2020s)

<sup>237</sup> It should be noted that the baseline assumption for LHA is not the same as the current Government policy of fixed allowances in money terms with no indexing. Such a policy would be totally unsustainable within a few years, with core homelessness rising exponentially. Therefore we assume indexing on CPI, which tends to grow less than rents.

<sup>238</sup> We have also tested the impact of certain benefit changes within this package separately, e.g. Benefit Cap, and also Autumn Budget 2021 reduction in UC taper rate. See later section in text.

The primary aim of these projections is to highlight the likely efficacy of different policies aimed at homelessness reduction, but also to alert stakeholders to the challenges which may lie ahead in addressing homelessness. This research builds on an existing modelling framework which has been used in a number of other research studies, referred to as the Sub-Regional Housing Market Model.<sup>239</sup> The model predicts levels of housing need and key homelessness numbers, for sub-regional areas in England, with a major focus on time horizons of 2024, 2026, 2031 and 2041. For this 2022 report, improvements have been made to parts of the forecasting model to take account of new data, and potential to improve model properties. Further details are given in Appendix 3.

It should also be noted, of course, that the context for modelling the housing system and homelessness has been greatly impacted by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, which led to an unprecedented economic contraction and associated social impacts (including increased poverty and destitution for some groups), and prompted exceptional Government measures to protect some adversely affected groups (see chapter 2). The modelling takes account of these effects through inclusion of destitution measures and assumptions and in other technical ways, for example through a modified unemployment variable which takes account of the massive spike in UC claiming.

The baseline projection entails a phased emergence from the immediate COVID-19 effects in 2022-23, including expected levels of economic 'bounceback' moderated by some expected impacts of Brexit and trade disruption.

Looking forward, nine variant policy packages were tested by running the projection model forward over 20 years with each policy in place. These policy options are described in Table 5.3.

#### 5.4 The baseline projections

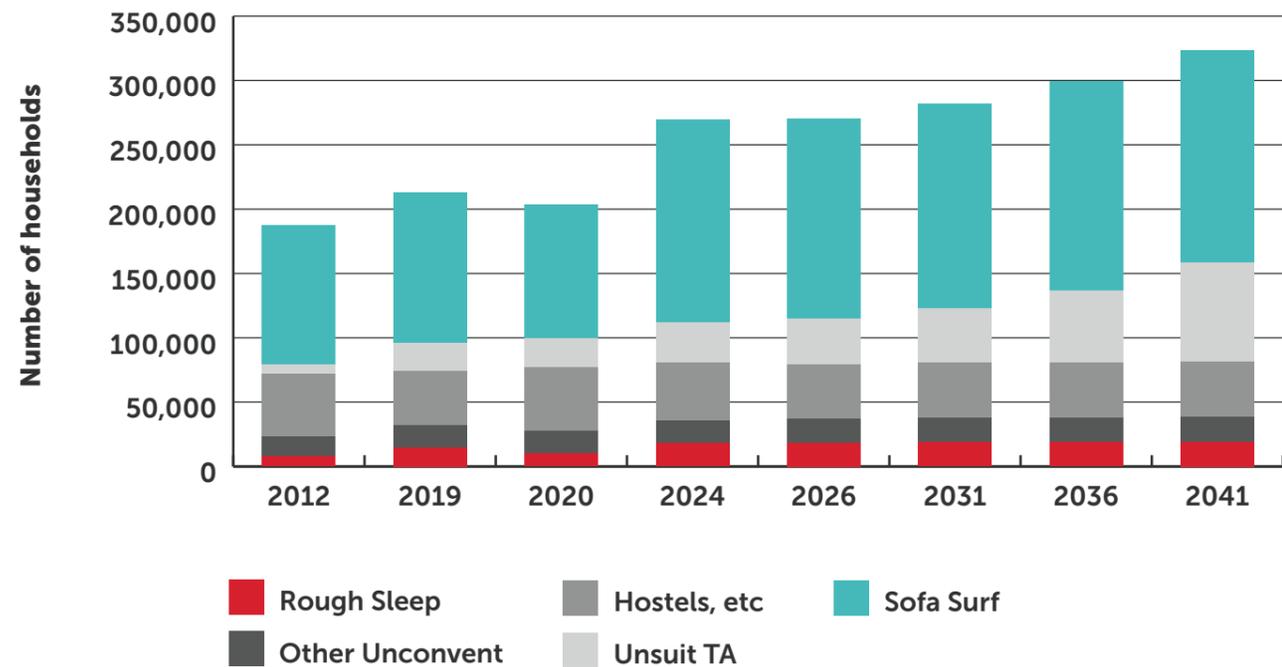
Figure 5.4 shows our resulting new 'with-COVID-19' baseline estimates and projections by category for key years. It is obviously of particular interest to focus on 2020, the first year of the crisis and special measures. For the following period, we show 2024 as a representative year, then 2026 and five-yearly intervals thereafter.

The Government's key economic measures in 2020 (the Job Retention (furlough) scheme, self-employment and business support schemes) served to insulate many workers and households from the worst effects of lockdown and the large reduction in GDP resulting. Taken in conjunction with Everyone In, this meant that in 2020 core homelessness in general and rough sleeping specifically, as well as sofa surfing, were reduced somewhat compared with 2019. This is consistent with trends in statutory homelessness measures associated with the pandemic and crisis response, and discussed in chapter 4.

The adverse economic and social impacts of COVID-19 and the associated lockdowns and economic disruptions are expected to continue in 2021 and to some extent the following years. As a result, the model predicts quite a spike in some elements of core homelessness over these few years, assuming no further policy measures were put in place. Most elements of core homelessness and the total are still significantly above 2020 levels and pre-COVID-19 levels in 2024. This applies to rough sleeping, hostels (deliberately, given the inclusion

<sup>239</sup> Bramley, G. & Watkins, D. (2016) 'Housebuilding, demographic change and affordability as outcomes of local planning decisions: exploring interactions using a sub-regional model of housing markets in England', *Progress in Planning*, 104, 1-35 <http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?scp=84937510196&partnerID=8YFLogxK>

**Figure 5.4: New with-COVID-19 baseline projection of core homelessness by category, England 2012-41**



Sources: Authors estimates of core homelessness elements from sources listed in Table 5.2, and described more fully in Fitzpatrick et al, 2021, Appendix 3 and Bramley 2021.

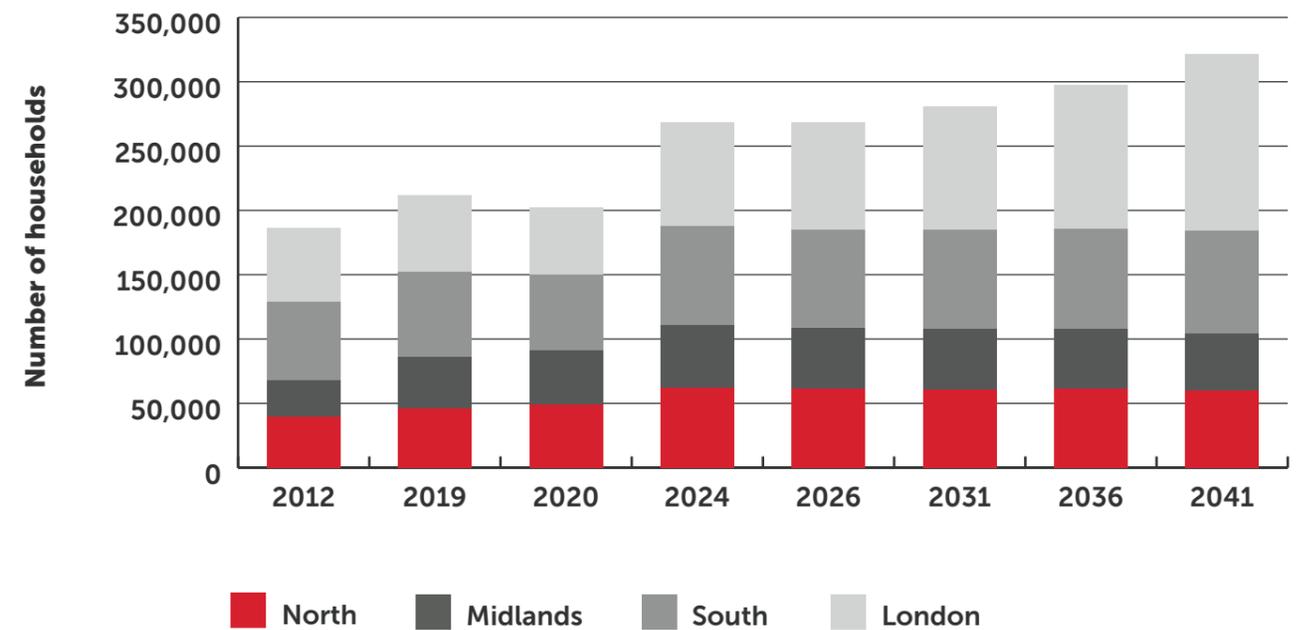
of remaining special hotel-based provision here), unsuitable TA and sofa surfing. Overall core homelessness in 2024 is projected to be one-third higher than 2019 levels under this scenario.

The largest increase in absolute numerical terms would be in sofa surfing, although in proportional terms the forecast rise in rough sleeping is particularly steep. Drivers of these increases include changes in employment(-)/unemployment(+), real incomes, poverty, house prices and rents, and expected reduced rates of social lettings as well as the ending of the evictions moratorium in the private rented sector. Some may regard this as unduly pessimistic, but our projection follows official OBR and related economic forecasts in the short term. It should also be underlined that, in the case of LHA, we are not actually

following the Government's apparent policy of cash freeze, because this would be demonstrably unsustainable in the medium to longer term in the sense that it would see core homelessness rise exponentially in the short term. We instead index LHA rates with CPI. The prospect of significant rises in core homelessness, as the Government appears to seek a return to 'business as usual' in most areas of mainstream policy (notable welfare), urges consideration of a range of policy measures to counter this, as considered below.

The regional impacts shown in Figure 5.5 suggest that the core homelessness impacts of all of the factors enumerated above would be substantial in all regions up to 2024 and subsequently. However, the impacts to 2024 are greater in the North and London (34-36% up on

**Figure 5.5: New with-COVID-19 baseline projection of core homelessness by broad region, England 2012-41**



Sources: Authors estimates and projections of core homelessness elements from sources listed in Table 5.2, and described more fully in Fitzpatrick et al, 2021, Appendix 3 and Bramley 2021.

2019), compared with the Midlands and the South (25-27%). Later in the projection period, the prospective worsening of core homelessness prospects appears to be strikingly concentrated on London, with some easing in the Midlands and North. The main form of core homelessness which rises dramatically in London in the longer term is unsuitable TA, as pressure through the statutory system places ever greater strain on the ability of authorities to respond appropriately. This in turn also suggests a longer term accentuation of the divide between London and much of the rest of the country, with ever more extreme housing market pressure in London. Thus, the broader agenda of regional imbalance, which may be addressed by the Government's 'Levelling Up' policy, remains important.

**Key informant and local authority expectations of homelessness trends**

Before discussing the evidence and assumptions used when adapting this baseline forecast to alternative policy scenarios, it is worth briefly highlighting perspectives from our key informants and LA survey respondent on anticipated trends in homelessness. Key informant perspectives fit closely with the baseline projections presented above, and in particular with the expectation of substantial increases in homelessness in the short-term linked to the ending of COVID-19 related protections combined with increased pressure on household budgets:

**“furlough... didn’t finish until actually quite recently and we’re yet to see what the impacts are. Then there’s those bigger economic impacts around Brexit and all of that sort of stuff... what I’m mostly hearing... is a real sense of apprehension about what’s to come. The expectation being that we will see continued increases in homelessness presentations going forward.”**  
(Statutory sector key informant)

**“section 21 [cases] have disappeared off the map... We’re just back to a two-month notice period, from 1 October [2021], for assured shorthold tenancies. There’s a backlog in the courts, and some of the procedures that landlords have got to go through still remain. So when councils will start to see the big hit is probably around January, February [2022]... [we’ve also seen] the cut in Universal Credit... the fuel-cost cap coming off in April... people will not be able to afford their homes... I think there’s a perfect storm coming.”**  
(Independent key informant)

Local authorities too anticipated substantial increases in homelessness in the short-term. In particular, almost all LAs responding to our survey expect to see rises in those seeking assistance following eviction from the private rented sector (91% anticipate such a rise), with very high proportions also anticipating increased demand from families with children (79%); survivors

of domestic abuse (64%); and people evicted from social rented sector (61%). A somewhat more modest 53% expect to see increased demand from those asked to leave the family home.

In elaborating on these responses, LAs highlighted in particular the end of the eviction moratorium and concern for households that have built up arrears during the pandemic:

**“With the end of the eviction ban, we are concerned that those families who have built up significant rent arrears during lockdown will now start to feed through as homeless - and this is noticeable in our approaches.”**  
(LA respondent, London)

In combination with the ending of wider welfare protections (furlough, the UC uplift, and the refreezing of LHA), some LAs were anticipating a very significant increase in demand. Broad concerns around the homelessness impacts of economic recovery post-pandemic were also raised, so too the impact of increasing household costs:

**“Once the Courts start fully dealing with their backlogs, and landlords start to issue NTQs again, plus furlough ending and the uplift ending, we are expecting a tidal wave, to put it mildly. It is going to be a very, very busy couple of years. The impact of the pandemic is just beginning for homelessness services I feel.”**  
(LA respondent, the South)

**“With proposals to cap the Local Housing Allowance and the continuation of the Benefit Cap we can reasonably expect increased homelessness over the next twelve months should the economic recovery struggle and inflation continue to rise.”**

(LA respondent, London)

**“the ongoing Benefit Cap, LHA freeze and the more recent removal of the £20 per week Universal Credit uplift and soaring food and energy bills will see more people struggling to pay their rents and facing a threat of homelessness.”**

(LA respondent, London)

### 5.5 Impacts of policy changes

This section considers the impacts of the alternative policy scenarios described in table 5.3, as shown in Figure 5.6 below, which presents the percentage reductions in core homelessness, relative to the with-COVID-19 baseline, at key points in time for each policy considered in isolation. In Figure 5.6, the policies are shown in descending order of the size of their impact at the end of the projection period, 2041.

Policies which come top on this reckoning are some of those which have an impact which progressively builds up over time, including raising LHA to median rent levels in all localities and properly indexing it and deploying Housing First and other measures to reduce SMD homelessness and associated hostel

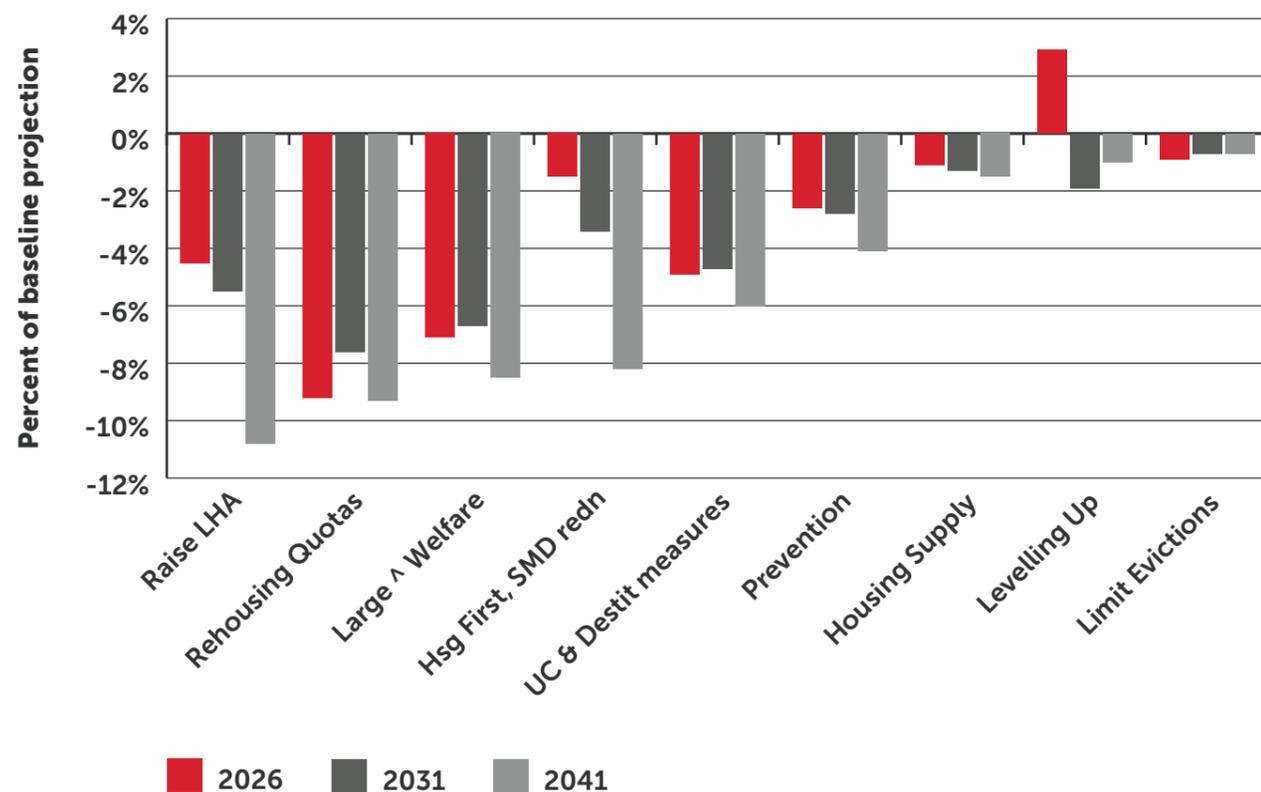
use. Conversely, policies capable of achieving significant short term alleviation, notably rehousing quotas for core homeless households and also the welfare benefits packages, have large effects in the relatively short term. Prevention also kicks in relatively early, but its impacts on core homelessness are rather less spectacular than is the case for some other scenarios. This is probably in part because in England prevention has been a strong theme of policy for some time, but also because in this round we have not been able to model all aspects of a ‘maximal prevention’ scenario, in particular a greater focus on financial advice and assistance. It is worth noting here that in many cases, such financial issues may not in any case be fully resolvable without modification of aspects of the welfare benefit system.

In some contrast with findings reported in 2021 for England, the impact of increased social housing supply on core homelessness appears to be more modest, while that of ‘levelling up’ appears perverse in the short term, and marginal in the longer term. Reasons for this are discussed further later in this section.

Time horizon has a bearing on the ranking of policies. If the main focus is on the five year horizon of 2026, the most impactful policies would be rehousing quotas and the large or moderate rise in welfare rates and the package to counter destitution,<sup>240</sup> while on the longer time horizon Housing First and raising /indexing the LHA have large impacts.

<sup>240</sup> Based on the findings of Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., Blenkinsopp, J., Wood, J., Sosenko, F., Littlewood, M., Johnsen, S., Watts, B., Treanor, M. and McIntyre, J. (2020) *Destitution in the UK 2020. Project Report*. York: JRF <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/destitution-uk-2020> these include ending the 5-week wait for UC, ending the taking of debt repayments from basic benefit payments, and ending the unjustified rejection of many Personal Independence Payment claims, as well as retaining the £20pw enhancement to personal allowances beyond April 2021.

**Figure 5.6: Summary of impact of policies considered individually by selected year, ranked by size of impact by 2041 (% of with-COVID-19 baseline core homeless forecast)**



Sources: Authors estimates and projections of core homelessness elements from sources listed in Table 5.2, and described more fully in Fitzpatrick et al, 2021, Appendix 3 and Bramley 2021.

**Impacts of different policies on each component of core homelessness in the long run**

It is important to understand that the overall impacts of policy scenarios described above is composed of differential impacts on the five different components of core homelessness, as represented in the core homelessness projection model. Table 5.4 looks at these effects on the longer term time horizon of 2041. The table also shows the impacts on two key measures for the statutory homelessness system: total homeless applications and total TA. We now consider impacts on these components of core and wider homelessness in turn.

It can be seen that a majority of policies have effects in the desirable direction of reducing *rough sleeping* in the longer run, but only four of these impacts are substantial (approaching or exceeding a 10% reduction). The biggest impacts are associated with the welfare benefit measures including measures aimed specifically at reducing destitution, which would reduce rough sleeping by nearly half. Next in importance is the strategy of using Housing First and improved rehabilitation services to reduce complex needs homelessness and in the process reduce hostel use gradually. Rehousing quotas for core homelessness also achieve a noticeable impact.

**Table 5.4: Longer term impact of policies considered individually on main components of core homelessness, overall homeless applications and total temporary accommodation (% of with-COVID-19 baseline at 2041)**

Impact in 2041 of policy measures	Rough Sleep	Unconventional Acc	Hostels, etc	Unsuitable Temp Acc	Sofa Surfing	Homeless Applic'ns	Total T A
Raise LHA	-0.7%	-1.7%	0.0%	-38.5%	-2.8%	0.2%	-21.5%
Limit Evictions	-4.0%	-0.2%	0.0%	-1.8%	-0.1%	-13.8%	-10.6%
Prevention	-1.7%	-0.7%	0.0%	-14.8%	-0.7%	2.4%	-10.8%
Rehousing Quotas	-13.5%	-1.9%	0.0%	-10.3%	-11.6%	0.0%	0.0%
UC & Destitution measures	-47.8%	-1.4%	0.0%	-10.2%	-1.2%	-34.1%	-30.3%
Hsg First, SMD red'n	-15.0%	-1.2%	-16.1%	-19.4%	-0.9%	-58.5%	-42.0%
Housing Supply	3.9%	0.4%	0.0%	-29.6%	10.4%	9.9%	-17.1%
Levelling Up	0.3%	-1.9%	0.0%	-0.9%	-1.4%	-0.4%	9.5%
Large Benefits increase	-56.9%	-1.9%	0.0%	-13.8%	-3.3%	-39.5%	-34.9%

The *unconventional accommodation* category, as represented in the current version of the model, shows relative limited changes in response to the different policy strategies. This is the category of core homelessness on which we have least robust evidence and hence limited capability to model drivers, although it is apparent that it is in part linked to other elements of core homelessness.

The *hostels* category is essentially supply-determined in our modelling approach; thus, the main opportunity to reduce hostel numbers is seen to lie in the Housing First related strategy.<sup>241</sup>

*Unsuitable temporary accommodation* is the category of core homelessness which is most likely to be affected by any and indeed all of the policies tested. This reflects the way our modelling structure channels a wide range of influences through the overall level of homeless applications to local authorities, movements in the total level of TA placements and, from the dynamics of that, the proportion of 'unsuitable' placements. These relationships can also be seen in the final two columns of the table. This category is very strongly influenced by raising LHA limits, and also by (total and social) housing supply, while being quite significantly influenced by prevention, Housing First, as well

<sup>241</sup> The impact of Housing First and related policies on reduced hostel numbers is somewhat attenuated when constraints are placed at sub-regional level on the scale of reduction related to overall local provision and the local scale of SMD homelessness.

as large increases in welfare benefit rates, and moderately affected by the remaining policies.

*Sofa surfing* presents a mixed picture. While most policies appear to have a beneficial impact in reducing this form of core homelessness, in most cases these effects are not very large in percentage terms. Nevertheless, even a moderate percentage impact on what is the largest category of core homelessness could make a worthwhile contribution to the overall outcome. From this point of view, rehousing quotas for those experiencing core homelessness are the most beneficial policy, followed by a large increase in benefits, and raising the LHA. Increased social housing supply on its own appears to have some positive impact on sofa surfing, for reasons discussed further below, but in practice the enabling of greater rehousing quotas for core homeless would offset this.

*Total homeless applications* are forecast to be most reduced, relative to baseline, by Housing First and related measures, and by the welfare measures including those geared to reducing destitution. The former relationship suggests that the SMD group account for a lot of repeat presentations and the Housing First plus rehabilitation services strategy (see table 5.3) is expected to reduce these substantially in the longer term. The latter underlines the relationship between homelessness and extreme poverty and the significant tendency for holes in the welfare safety net to contribute to homelessness. Reducing private rental evictions would also reduce homeless presentations, as was seen in 2020/21. Two apparently perverse effects are worth noting: increased social housing supply is predicted to increase total homeless applications, as is (to a marginal degree) a greater-still emphasis on prevention. However, from a core homelessness point of view, the

beneficial effect of supply on total TA numbers noted below is more important.

*Total TA* numbers would be significantly reduced by many of the measures examined here, especially Housing First, the welfare measures and raising of the LHA, but also by increased social housing supply. Rehousing quotas, as a downstream measure, would not impact on either total applications or total TA. The only perverse effect on total TA would come from 'Levelling Up', as modelled here. This is probably because it would increase pressure in some non-London housing markets. It is worth noting here that total TA is an important driver of the overall costs of local homelessness services.

#### Impacts of different policies on rough sleeping and other components in the short run

Shifting focus from the long, twenty year time horizon considered in the last section, there is strong current interest in the immediate post-COVID-19 period, and in particular in the Government's target of eliminating rough sleeping by 2024. In this section we therefore present a specific analysis of the forecast impacts of different policies on the components of core homelessness by 2024. Table 5.5 shows this analysis in the same format as Table 5.4

In the case of *rough sleeping*, the focus of immediate policy interest, it is clear that, while a number of policies would have an impact, one policy package dominates the picture. This is the package of welfare benefit policies aimed at sharply reducing destitution – maintaining £20 uplift in UC allowances, ending 5-week wait, stopping debt deductions, reducing rates of Personal Independence Payment assessment fails, and lifting the Benefit Cap. It does appear to be the specific destitution-focused elements here, rather than the

**Table 5.5: Shorter term impact of policies considered individually on main components of core homelessness, overall homeless applications and total temporary accommodation (% of with-COVID-19 baseline at 2024)**

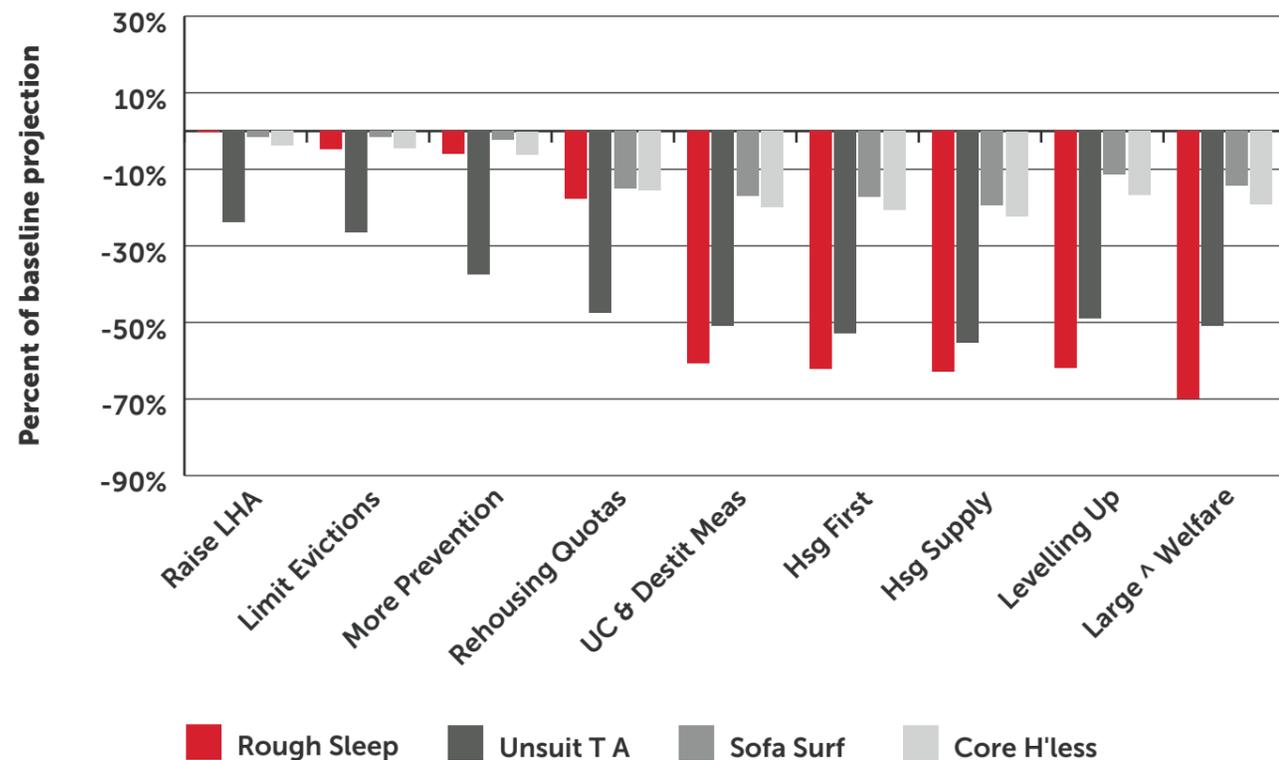
Impact in 2024 of policy measures	Rough Sleep	Unconventional Acc	Hostels etc	Unsuitable Temp Acc	Sofa Surfing	Homeless Applic'ns	Total T A
Raise LHA	-0.4%	-0.2%	0.0%	-23.9%	-1.5%	0.0%	-7.7%
Limit Evictions	-4.3%	0.0%	0.0%	-3.5%	-0.1%	-13.9%	-5.1%
Prevention	-1.5%	-0.1%	0.0%	-15.0%	-0.7%	2.4%	-6.0%
Rehousing Quotas	-12.0%	-0.3%	0.0%	-12.6%	-12.4%	0.0%	0.0%
UC & Destitution measures	-50.1%	-0.4%	0.0%	-5.2%	-1.3%	-14.8%	-6.7%
Hsg First, SMD red'n	-3.3%	0.0%	-1.3%	-3.9%	-0.2%	-19.1%	-6.3%
Housing Supply	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	-2.5%	0.0%	0.9%	-0.5%
Levelling Up	1.3%	-0.9%	0.0%	7.0%	6.2%	2.3%	4.1%
Large Benefits increase	-59.7%	-0.5%	0.0%	-8.0%	-3.3%	-22.1%	-9.6%

general rate of benefit allowances, which is critical. This is a very stark finding in the light of the increases in destitution and severe poverty detailed chapter 2, and the absence of any indication that Government's rough sleeping reduction strategy includes a focus on addressing destitution and severe poverty (see chapter 3). The other quite significant contributor to reducing rough sleeping would be social housing lettings quotas for core homeless. Other policies, on evictions and Housing First, would make a small contribution to reducing rough sleeping on this timescale.

The good news is that with all policies in place, rough sleeping in 2024 would be reduced by 63%, from 17,824 to 6,568. Given the typical relationship between DLUHC rough

sleeping count/estimates and our fuller estimate of the scale of rough sleeping in England, that might be consistent with a count estimate of around 2,500, roughly the level of 2013. While this is some way from an 'absolute zero' operationalisation of ending rough sleeping, it is a very substantial reduction on what our model suggests could take place with no further policy measures in place. It also suggests, however, that there is still a need to think creatively about additional measures targeting this group, beyond those captured in our model scenarios. Of particular relevance here is a key feature of rough sleeping, particularly in London, and discussed at length in Chapter 3, namely that a high proportion of rough sleepers in London have no recourse to public funds (NRPF) or limited

**Figure 5.7: Cumulative impact of successive measures by 2024 on selected components and total core homelessness (% of with-Covid baseline)**



Sources: Authors estimates of core homelessness elements from sources listed in Table 5.2, and described more fully in Fitzpatrick et al, 2021, Appendix 3 and Bramley 2021.

access to benefits, because of their immigration status.<sup>242</sup> It will clearly not be possible to eliminate rough sleeping in London by 2024 following the end of Everyone In, without addressing the circumstances of this group.

Figure 5.7 illustrates the cumulative impact of adding each measure in turn to the outturn level of rough sleeping, unsuitable TA, sofa surfing and core homelessness overall at the key target year of 2024. This shows again that for rough sleeping the key step is to address the features of UC and other working age benefits which are most likely to cause destitution; it is this which would enable a more than 50% reduction

in rough sleeping. For Unsuitable TA, there are progressive reductions with each step in the policy array, apart from 'levelling up', which as tested in our simulation would lead to a setback in core homeless impacts in the early years. For sofa surfing, the percentage impacts are smaller, although larger numbers are affected, with the biggest step forward being with rehousing quotas. Total core homelessness shows a similar pattern, with the first five measures achieving a 20% reduction by 2024. This analysis of the cumulative impact of policies is discussed further, in the context of medium-longer term developments, below.

Table 5.5 also shows that quite a number of policy measures could contribute to a substantial reduction in *unsuitable temporary accommodation* in the short term: raising and indexing LHA, maximising prevention, rehousing quotas, and welfare measures would all make a noticeable difference, with smaller impacts from limiting evictions, Housing First and increased housing supply. However, the initial impacts of 'levelling up' could see some increase in this form of core homelessness, via an increase in total TA also shown in this table. It is more difficult to reduce sofa surfing a lot on this short time horizon, but rehousing quotas for core homelessness would make for a sizeable reduction.

The costs and challenges of running the statutory homelessness system are primarily related to levels of homeless applications and total TA numbers. The former could be reduced in the short run most effectively by limiting evictions, welfare changes to reduce destitution and raise allowances, and Housing First. These measures would also help to reduce total TA, along with raising/indexing LHA rates.

#### Specific welfare changes

In this analysis, we mainly present welfare benefit changes in the form of packages, for example the package targeted at reducing destitution significantly. However, it is possible to report separately on different components of this package. Firstly, we can report on the effect of simply restoring the £20 per week enhancement to the UC personal allowance. This contributes only a modest part of the overall package, reducing core homelessness by 1.6% in 2024-26 dropping to 1.2% by 2041 (compared with 4.7% to 6.0% from the whole package). Secondly, scrapping the Benefit Cap would account for a reduction of 0.5% of core homelessness in 2024 rising gradually to 2.3% by 2041 (but 4.4% in London). This implies that the particular destitution-inducing features

of UC (5-week wait, debt deductions) together with Personal Independence Payment and Local Welfare Fund dysfunctions would be responsible for a 2.6% reduction in 2024 and 2.5% in 2041. However, both the latter and the £20 have a disproportionately greater impact on rough sleeping.

The Government did not respond to the arguments of many charities to retain the £20 UC uplift in the Autumn Budget of 2021, but they did institute a reduction in the UC 'taper' (from 63% to 55%) and a small increase (£10 pw) in the 'work allowance'. We estimate that this would only have a small impact on core homelessness, reducing it by 0.5% in 2024-26, falling to 0.3% later. However, this does not allow for the secondary effect of increased employment participation, which is expected to arise from this change, which would likely increase the effect to some extent. Nevertheless, this does not appear to be an adequate substitute for the £20 personal allowance uplift, let alone the other changes included in our welfare package.

#### 5.6 Stacking up the impacts

Important policy questions concern what can be achieved by implementing combinations of policy options, or indeed (if core homelessness were given a very high priority) all feasible and effective policies. So far, we have looked at policy options individually, enabling us to compare their individual effectiveness, short or longer term. While that gives some initial guide to 'what works', it is not necessarily the same as what the effect would be of adding that one to others already in place. Sometimes, adding a fresh policy approach may work in a synergistic way to increase the impact so that it is greater than the sum of its parts. However, more commonly, the more policies you add, the less they may appear to add, relative to what might have been expected from looking at them in isolation. That may be because the different policies

242 National Audit Office (2021) *Investigation into the Housing of Rough Sleepers during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. HC 1075. Online: NAO. <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Investigation-into-the-housing-of-rough-sleepers-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf>

are to varying degrees helping the same people, and the pool of those remaining 'at risk' may be getting smaller the more policies are in place.

It follows that, in this 'stacking up' approach, it does matter in which order policies are added to the package. We would argue that the most logical order would relate to immediacy of implementation and impact, and after that work through policies further back in the hierarchy that would take longer to impact, be more complex to implement, involve a wider range of sectors, and cost the most. Following these principles, we have created a sequence of nine scenarios building on our With-COVID-19 Baseline, and run the model with each element added in turn. The results are shown in Figure 5.8, where data points represent the number of core homeless households at a point in time over a 29 year period.

This analysis shows a number of things very clearly.

Firstly, by introducing a package of policy measures, it is possible to reduce projected levels of core homelessness by substantial margins. Future increases are, while quite possible, not inevitable. Implementing all policies discussed in the previous section would see core homelessness drop by 34% compared with the baseline by 2041. In 2041, core homelessness would be at around 2019 levels although still 13% above 2012 levels.

Secondly, some policies have a bigger impact than others. The biggest wins would come from: raising and indexing the LHA; implementing rehousing quotas for core homeless to access social housing; raising social security benefit rates and addressing the destitution-inducing features of the welfare system; and a

strategy of reducing complex needs homelessness through larger scale use of Housing First, with associated measures such as better rehabilitation services, and corresponding reduction of hostel spaces. Policies with moderately useful additional impacts include maximising prevention activity.

Thirdly, some policies have larger effects earlier on, including rehousing quotas, prevention and the measures to reduce destitution. Other strategies including the Housing First/SMD one, housing supply, and 'levelling up' would clearly be more gradual and progressive in their effects. It appears that housing supply would have net positive effects in the medium term (2026-31) while 'levelling up' (as implemented here) would have net positive effects in the longer term (2031-41), while actually increasing core homelessness in the shorter term.

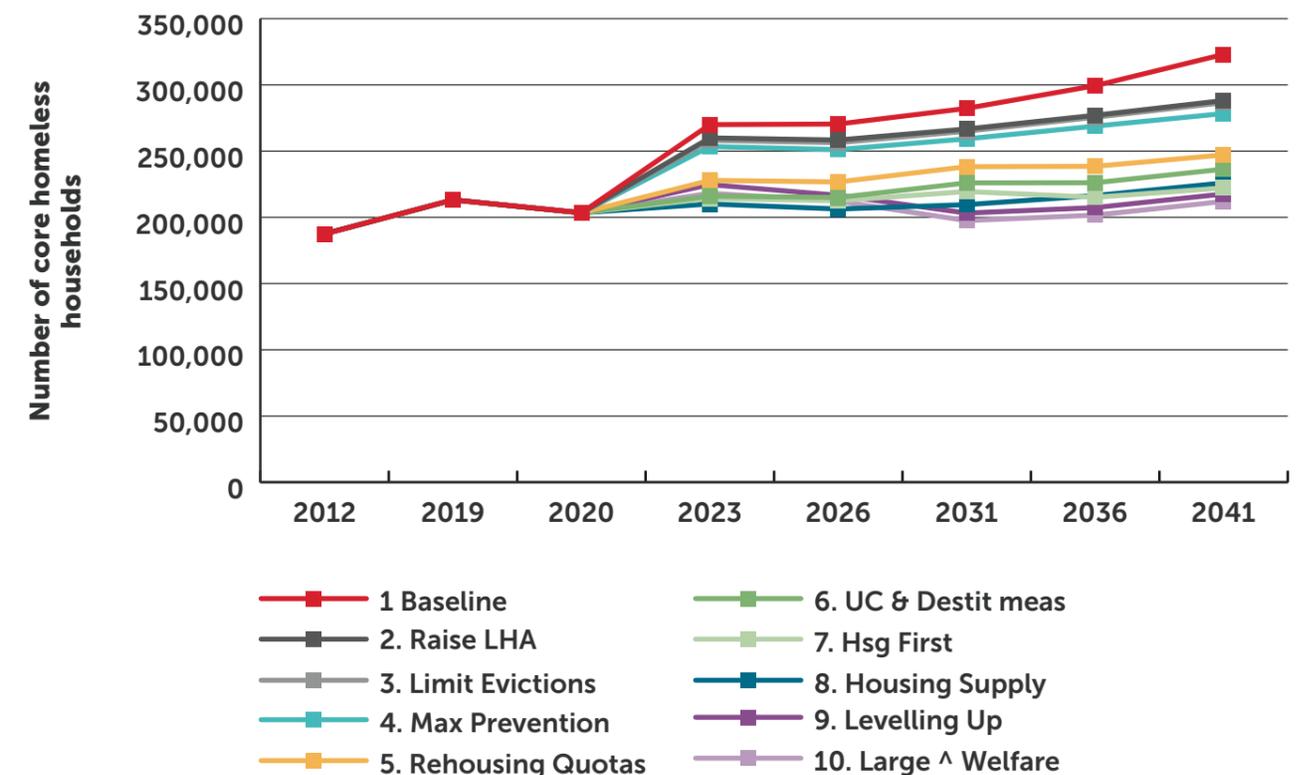
### Housing supply

The *housing supply* policy scenario is one where the overall effects on core homelessness are mixed and not always in the direction expected. This is in part explained by the very large backlog of housing need there is in England, especially in high pressure housing markets and the need to accompany any increase supply with targeted policies to increase access for people experiencing homelessness.

New supply would meet wider housing needs (crowding, sharing, unsuitability) on a large scale; such housing needs affect large numbers, with 1.6 million households containing 4.2 million people in housing need in 2018/19 for whom social renting would be the most appropriate (affordable) solution.<sup>243</sup> With this enhanced housing supply, the chances of a household in need accessing social renting would increase dramatically, by around 75% on average or 170% in London. Higher supply may also be, to some degree,

243 National Housing Federation (2021) *People in Housing Need: The scale and shape of housing need in England*, NHF December 2021. Online: NHF. <https://www.housing.org.uk/resources/people-in-housing-need-2021/>

**Figure 5.8: Total core homelessness in England with the sequential addition of nine policy scenarios to reduce core homelessness in the period to 2041**



Sources: Authors estimates and projections of core homelessness elements from sources listed in Table 5.2, and described more fully in Fitzpatrick et al, 2021, Appendix 3 and Bramley 2021.

a necessary precondition (practically or politically) for the longer term implementation of other measures, particularly rehousing quotas, Housing First or indeed successful prevention. For example, with a preponderance of single homeless applicants post-HRA, and a shortage of one-bedroom units in the social sector (highlighted by controversy around the so-called 'Bedroom Tax'), increased new supply may be needed to rebalance and diversify the supply to match needs, whether in terms of size, type or location. For local authorities balancing the needs and concerns of different groups in housing need, for example overcrowded families or those with health problems, additional supply may be the key to unlocking quota policies and Housing First.

What the model shows above is that increased, targeted social (and general) housing supply would reduce core homelessness by around 1.5% in the medium-longer run and have an immediate effect on rough sleeping levels. This relatively small net impact reflects contrasting impacts on different elements of homelessness, as shown in Table 5.4, where a very large (30%) and valuable reduction in unsuitable TA and of 17% in total TA was contrasted with nearly 10% increases in sofa surfing and in total homeless applications.

Some technical changes in the relevant models may account for some of the differences from the reported impacts of supply in the last Homelessness Monitor England (2021),

but forensic examination suggests that the models remain sound. The main factor which leads to the apparently perverse impact on sofa surfing is the regionally differentiated population and household formation changes induced by the increased social supply targeted on areas of greatest need. Whilst increased supply continues to reduce unsuitable and total temporary accommodation placements, there is a rise in sofa surfing concentrated in London (15%) and the North West (12%), while there is barely any increase in the Midlands or East of England. This can be related to population increases of 7.1% in London vs 2.6% nationally resulting from migration changes induced in this scenario, and changes in household numbers of 15% in London and 7.7% in the North West compared with 6.6% for England overall, which reflect both internal migration and household formation, pointing again to the need to link supply to other policy levers to bring core homelessness down.

This apparent weakening of overall impacts on core homelessness from housing supply is compounded in the analysis of incremental additions shown in Figure 5.8 (and 5.9 below for London). Nationally, increased supply reduces core homelessness by 2-10,000 in the period 2023-2031, but becomes net positive (increasing core homelessness) after 2036, as the effects mentioned above kick in. A similar picture applies in London (see Figure 5.9 below), although supply has net beneficial effects here right up to 2041. Inevitably, with other faster acting policies put in place first, some of the people helped by housing supply will have already been helped by other measures.

#### 'Levelling up'

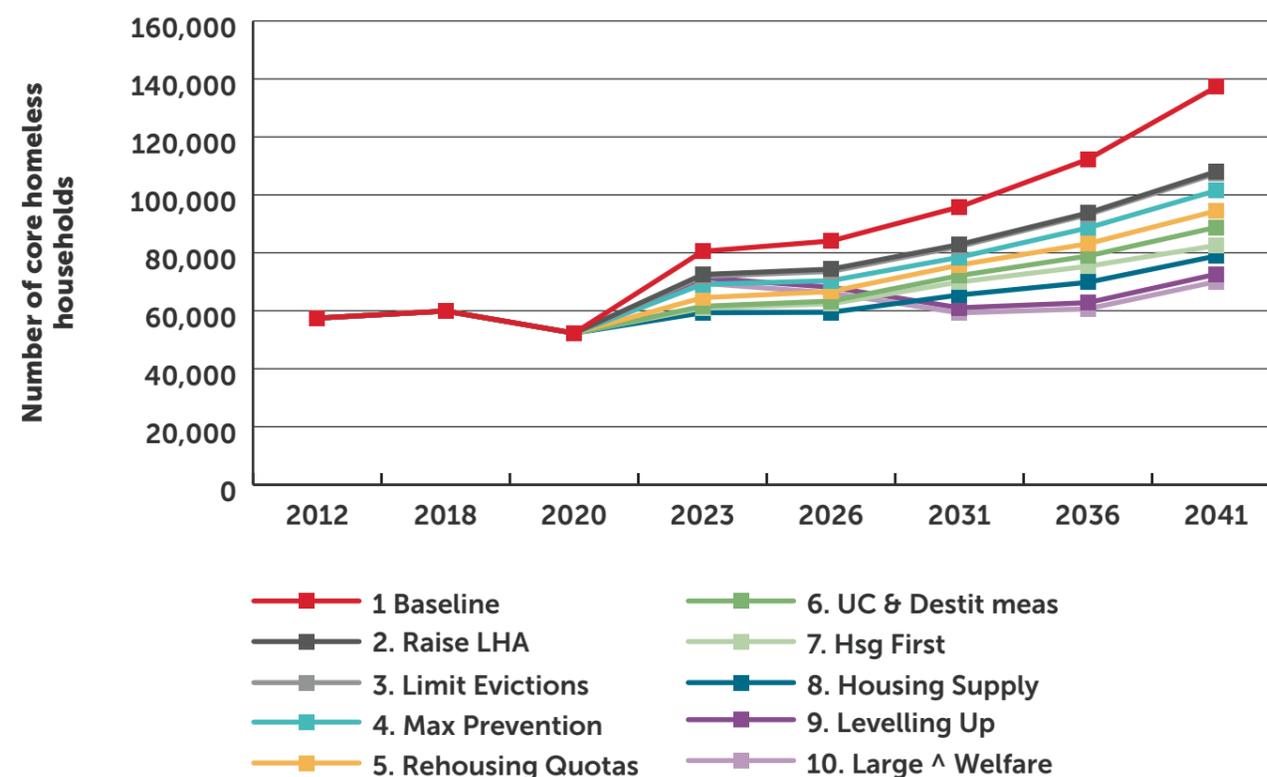
The 'levelling up' scenario is clearly related to important national policy and political debates at the present

time. The concept of 'levelling up' is not very clearly or consistently defined in national policy, but we have interpreted it here to mean narrowing the range of variation in economic growth rates between lagging regions/sub-regions of England and the faster growing regions, notably London, while not substantially denting the latter's growth. It is not clear what the scenario might or should entail in terms of housing investment strategies, although the Government appears to have somewhat modified its planning targets for housing after representations from areas seen as candidates for 'levelling up'.<sup>244</sup> While our sub-regional model is designed to explore such variant options, lack of space prevents us testing lots of variations on the theme. Figure 5.6 and Table 5.4 suggested that 'levelling up' as operationalised here would have only modest effects on core homelessness, which might be perverse in the short term and marginally favourable in the longer term. The incremental analysis in Figure 5.7 confirms that, with marginal increases in core homelessness up to 2026 and then modest gains of 5-10,000 (2-4%) from 2031 onwards.

#### London

It has been clear throughout this exercise that the more volatile elements of core homelessness (rough sleeping, unsuitable TA) are particularly associated with London. As a consequence, concerted measures to reduce core homelessness are likely to have a more dramatic impact in London. This is illustrated by Figure 5.9 below, which shows the impacts of the same set of sequentially added strategies for London. The main story is that without further measures, core homelessness would be likely to grow much more steeply in the capital than was apparent from the national picture, because of escalating housing market pressures impacting, especially

**Figure 5.9: Total core homelessness in London with the sequential addition of nine policy scenarios to reduce core homelessness in the period to 2041**



Sources: Authors estimates and projections of core homelessness elements from sources listed in Table 5.2, and described more fully in Fitzpatrick et al, 2021, Appendix 3 and Bramley 2021.

through a widening LHA gap, and impacts on TA. Again, however, concerted measures would bring it back down close to the base level.

#### 5.7 Key points

- Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the general trend picture was that core homelessness numbers (pre-COVID-19) were on a gradually rising trajectory, with overall numbers rising by 14% between 2012 and 2019
- Our central estimate of core homeless numbers in England in 2020 is about 203,400, down somewhat from 213,200 in 2019. This reduction of c. 10,000 (5%) in 2020 is primarily attributable to the Everyone In initiative, with clear reductions in

rough sleeping (down 33%) and sofa surfing (down 11%), somewhat offset by an increase in hostels, etc. forms of core homelessness because of additional hotel provision brought on stream as part of the pandemic response.

- Baseline forecasts show most elements of core homelessness and the total remaining significantly above 2020 and pre-COVID-19 levels in the early 2020s, with overall core homelessness in 2024 one-third higher than 2019 levels. Drivers of these increases include expected changes in (un)employment, incomes, poverty, house prices and rents, and prospective rates of social lettings and potential evictions in

<sup>244</sup> DLUHC local targets for housing delivery are used as an input to our modelling of new housebuilding supply, alongside other factors.

the private rented sector. Further increases in core homelessness are predicted in the longer term, particularly in London.

- Projected increases in core homelessness are in line with key stakeholder and LA expectations and anxieties regarding increased homelessness in the short-term, linked to the ending of pandemic-related protection measures, concerns about economic-recovery post-pandemic, and rising living costs.
- In the medium term, the most effective policies for reducing core homelessness would be rehousing quotas for core homeless households, large increases in welfare benefit levels and associated measures to reduce destitution, and raising the level of LHA to the level of median actual rents (and maintaining that level), with maximised prevention also making a useful contribution
- With these measures in place, rough sleeping could be greatly reduced by the Government's target date of 2024, although it would not have been completely eliminated. Clearly part of the reason for this is the lack of a policy to support homeless people with NRPF.
- In the longer term, the largest projected impact on reducing core homelessness would result from raising the LHA, rehousing quotas, consistent large scale application of Housing First accompanied by appropriate rehabilitation provision and a reduction of traditional hostel accommodation, the welfare benefit measures, and to a more moderate degree maximised prevention and raising of total and social housing supply. A successful 'levelling up' of economic performance across the English regions would also contribute to the reduction of core homelessness in the long run.

- A steady rise in core homelessness is not inevitable. A comprehensive programme of the recommended measures is shown to be capable of reducing core homelessness by 30% in 2031 and 34% in 2041, compared with what it would have been without any change in policies. This scenario would see core homeless held at around the level of 2019. Rough sleeping would be reduced against baseline trends by 66%, unsuitable TA by 80%, hostels and sofa surfing by 17%. This scenario would see overall homeless applications and total TA both be down by more than three-quarters, releasing significant cost savings to local authorities which could be redirected into even more effective prevention and post-tenancy support.

# Conclusions

## 6. Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to have significant impacts on homelessness and homelessness policy during 2021. Emergency measures responding to rough sleeping and seeking to decant night shelter accommodation are credited with having avoided significant numbers of infections, hospitalisations and deaths among those facing the most acute forms of homelessness. These measures have also achieved substantial declines in rough sleeping, accelerating progress against the Government's target of ending rough sleeping by 2024, and have fostered collaboration between the homelessness and health sectors that had been a key gap until this point. Moreover, the emergency response has gone with the grain of the aims of the Homelessness Reduction Act, and built capacity and skills in local authorities in responding more effectively to single people facing homelessness.

At the same time, the limitations of this emergency response have become clearer over the past year, and centre on the increasing variability of responses over the country and to different groups. While high-quality hotel accommodation was used in some areas and was generally considered transformational to those with long-histories of rough sleeping, poor quality accommodation and insufficient support undermined the response in others, with young people,

women and those with complex vulnerabilities being at particular risk in mixed environments. Non-UK nationals with No Recourse to Public Funds or other restricted eligibility for statutory support, while key beneficiaries of the inclusive initial response, have been particularly vulnerable to the scaling down of the Everyone In response, as the legal position on local authorities' ability to accommodate this cohort has been clarified and funding pressures intensified. How this group will be supported to avoid homelessness is an important question going forward, and the answer to it will impact profoundly on the ability of the Government to make further progress on its rough sleeping target.

The focus has now shifted to moving those assisted under Everyone In to more settled accommodation. Progress in this respect has been variable across the country and between groups, with acute challenges remaining as regards assisting those with No Recourse to Public Funds and those with complex needs. While there is no doubt that these re-housing efforts have assisted a significant number of single people facing crisis into more stable accommodation options, many local authorities have faced substantial difficulties accessing rental tenancies and supported accommodation. There are enduring concerns for those who have left emergency accommodation

with nowhere to go, or into poor quality, inappropriate or insecure accommodation, and whether such exits from homelessness are sustainable.

Supportive wider changes to welfare, housing and labour market policy were crucial in avoiding a surge in wider forms of homelessness during the pandemic. Indeed, the number of households owed a prevention or relief duty by local authorities fell by 8% in 2020/21. Key here were evictions protections that minimised homelessness precipitated by loss of rental accommodation during the pandemic. These protections played an especially important role in protecting families. It is notable, however, that the numbers actually experiencing homelessness and owed the relief duty during 2020/21 (rather than threatened with it) actually increased during 2020/21, with single person households leaving informal accommodation options and homelessness precipitated by domestic abuse a key driver here.

Given that evictions protections have now ended, it is not surprising that almost all local authorities anticipate an imminent rise in homelessness, concerns that are lent weight and specificity by our own projections analysis, which forecasts core homelessness to be one-third higher than 2019 levels by 2024 under current policy arrangements. In fact, this concerning scenario assumes – in contrast to current policy – that the Local Housing Allowance will be uprated at least by CPI because assuming a continued freeze could lead to a rapidly accelerating rise in homelessness on a fairly short time horizon.

Pertinent to these fears about a forthcoming surge in homelessness are longer-running trends in poverty, a key risk factor for homelessness. Stability over the past decade or so in relative poverty rates mask important

changes in the circumstances and profile of those experiencing it. In particular, there have been increases in child poverty and very dramatic increases in poverty among larger families. The number of households experiencing 'deep poverty' and destitution were also rising pre-pandemic. With far higher numbers in receipt of out-of-work benefits following the pandemic, long-run concerns about the generosity and administration of Universal Credit continuing, significant increases in the numbers impacted by the Benefit Cap, and a refreeze in Local Housing Allowance rates from 2020/21, these negative poverty trends are highly likely to continue or worsen, a risk that is compounded by the economic uncertainty associated with both the pandemic-recovery and Brexit.

Wider housing market trends offer little reassurance that local authorities will have more and better tools to respond to increasing homelessness pressures in the coming years. New social lettings continue to decline, and while the proportion of lets to homeless households has increased slightly, the overall number of social homes being made available remains static. Trends in the delivery and funding of affordable housing offer little hope of radically expanding settled housing options for homeless households given the Government's tenacious commitment to Affordable Rent and low-cost home ownership rather than genuinely affordable social rented homes.

In addition, while the Government's intense focus on rough sleeping both before and over the course of the pandemic to date is extremely welcome, there is a notable absence of policy development or attention in relation to wider homelessness. The narrow focus on rough sleeping is beginning to cause real concern for some key informants in light of the 'perfect storm' they perceive local authorities and low-income families to

be facing in the coming years. Indeed, temporary accommodation use continues to rise, with dramatic surges in the use of the least suitable forms of it during the pandemic and increasing concerns about length of stay and the quality of some – even self-contained – temporary accommodation. Moreover, while the Homelessness Reduction Act has vastly improved responses to single people facing homelessness, and successfully shifted culture towards 'targeted prevention', there are strains on local authorities' capacity to deliver their duties under the Act. There are also important and sizeable gaps in the safety net for single people or those deemed intentionally homeless who are not effectively assisted via prevention and relief duties.

Another notable feature of this year's analysis concerns the specific homelessness pressures that pertain in London, which remains the regional hotspot for core homelessness in England by some way. The capital also saw more marked increases in those assessed as homeless as owed the relief duty by local authorities in 2020/21 than other regions. These findings reflect the concentration of particular homelessness drivers in the city, including exposure to poverty among larger families linked to the Benefit Cap, as well as a particularly challenging housing market context. Fewer than one in ten London boroughs see new affordable housing supply as sufficient to meet the needs of homeless households and other people in housing need in their area, compared to a still low but significantly higher 22% of English authorities overall. Relevant also is the concentration of those with No Recourse to Public Funds in the city. These London-focussed homelessness pressures manifest in the much lower proportion of statutory homeless households with support needs in the capital, reflecting the role of the city's especially pressurised housing market in placing a wider cohort of

the population at risk of homelessness than is true elsewhere. This context also explains greater reliance on the private rented sector to discharge the main homelessness duty in London than the rest of England. Our projections model indicates that on baseline assumptions core homelessness is expected to increase especially steeply in London on both shorter and longer time horizons.

Upward trends in homelessness foreseen by stakeholders and predicted by our baseline model are far from inevitable. In the longer-term, the largest projected impact on reducing core homelessness would result from raising the Local Housing Allowance, rehousing quotas targeting core homeless households, consistent large scale application of Housing First accompanied by appropriate rehabilitation provision and a reduction of traditional hostel accommodation, and the welfare benefit measures. Maximised prevention and raising total and social housing supply would also make a contribution. A comprehensive and appropriately phased programme of measures could reduce core homelessness by 30% against baseline in 2031 and 34% in 2041. This scenario would also see homeless applications and temporary accommodation use reduce by more than three-quarters, releasing significant cost savings to local authorities.

On a much shorter time horizon (to 2024), substantial reductions in core homelessness can also be achieved according to our model. Focusing on rough sleeping particularly, given the Government's target, our projections model indicates that a 63% reduction is possible by the target end date via our package of recommended measures. While a number of policies would have an impact, by far the most significant gains are associated with a package of welfare benefit policies aimed at sharply reducing destitution by reinstating the £20 uplift in Universal Credit allowances, ending

of the 5-week wait, stopping debt deductions, reducing rates of Personal Independence Payment assessment fails, and lifting the Benefit Cap. This is at once a very hopeful and sobering finding in the light of the increases in destitution and deep poverty evident pre-pandemic, and in the absence of any indication that the Government's rough sleeping reduction strategy includes a focus on rebuilding a more generous social security safety net.

The 2023 monitor will provide an opportunity to assess the extent to which opportunities to prevent expected rises in homelessness are taken. Likewise, we will be able to examine whether gains made during the pandemic in terms of joint working, reduced use of night shelters, and more inclusive responses to rough sleeping, are built upon or allowed to fall away.

## Appendix 1 Key informant topic guide (2021)

### About the research

- Explain nature and purpose of research: longitudinal study exploring the impact of economic and policy developments on homelessness across Great Britain; mixed methods including administrative and survey data analysis, local authority survey and Key Informant interviews. This year we're focusing in particular on the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on homelessness and responses to it.
- This is an independent study conducted by I-SPHERE, Heriot-Watt University and funded by the charity Crisis. Participation is anonymous – you will not be identifiable from any research outputs.
- Any questions before we proceed?
- *Switch on recording and confirm consent on the record*

### 1. Introduction (IF NECESSARY)

- Their job title/role; how long they have been in that position/organisation, and specific involvement in homelessness

### 2. Trends in homelessness

- What have been the key trends in **levels** of homelessness in past year and why? Probe; trends in subgroups: single versus families; statutory homelessness vs. rough sleeping etc;
- Have there been any significant changes in the **profile** of those facing homelessness in the last year? Probe nature/complexity of need; age; household type etc.
- What changes, if any, have we seen in the **triggers** for/**drivers** of homelessness? Probe: PRS vs. relationship breakdown, etc.

### 3. Rough Sleeping and Everyone In

- How effective has the **Everyone In** response to the pandemic been over the last year in reducing/minimising levels of rough sleeping? Probe strengths/weaknesses; geographic variation and its drivers.
- How effective or ineffective have efforts been to **rehouse those accommodated through the Everyone In** programme? Probe: enablers/barriers; geographic variation; variation among sub-groups; and their drivers.
- How useful or otherwise have **Government funding streams** been in enabling effective responses to rough sleeping over the last year? Probe: recent budget announcements; RSI, RSAP, NSAP, Prevent etc.

- How have responses to those facing homelessness and with **No Recourse to Public Funds** developed over the last year? How effectively are this group being supported to avoid/escape homelessness? Probe enablers/barriers; geographic variation etc.
- To what extent have **night shelters** and other forms of shared room emergency accommodation re-opened over the last year across England? Probe: reasons for re-opening or not; variation across country and/or by shelter type (commissioned/non-comm; all year/winter); anticipated trends in shelter provision going forward; views on efficacy role of shelter accommodation.
- Any other legacies/impacts of the pandemic on responses to rough sleeping not covered here that are important? Probe: legacy of improved working with health partners; improved multi-agency working for those with complex needs (e.g. with drug/alcohol services)
- Pulling back, how would you assess implementation to date of the **Rough Sleeper Strategy** and progress towards the Governments **rough sleeping targets** (to half it by 2022 and end it by 2027)? Probe strengths and weaknesses; impact of COVID-19; geographic variation and its drivers.

#### 4. Housing First

- Do you have a view on the strengths/weaknesses/effectiveness of the three **Government-funded Housing First pilots?**
- To what extent is Housing First used across England more generally to respond to those experiencing homelessness alongside other complex needs? Probe: strengths/weaknesses of provision; variation geographically; fidelity; barriers to/enablers of effective scale up?

#### 5. Statutory homelessness responses/the Homelessness Reduction Act

- How appropriate/adequate has the **Homelessness Reduction Act** been over the last year as the legal framework within which LAs are responding to homelessness? Probe: strengths/weaknesses; variations for different groups (single vs. families), geographically; more/less helpful aspects of the legal framework.
- Have local authority responses to homelessness improved or weakened over the last year? If so, in what ways/why? Probe in relation to:
  - Ability to **prevent and relieve** homelessness – why?
  - Ability to provide **appropriate temporary accommodation**. Probe use/quality of exempt/supported accommodation if appropriate.
  - Ability to access settled **rehousing** for those owed the full rehousing duty. Probe re PRS, social housing, etc.
- **What impact, if any, has COVID-19 had on social housing allocations to homeless households?** Probe: immediate impact of lockdown; longer term changes in allocations policy or systems; differences between LA and HAs; lettings to rough sleepers/Everyone In cohort and other homeless groups; impacts on 'risk averseness' with regard with regard to financial capability checks and/or lettings to those with complex needs.

- **Are you supportive of increasing social housing allocations to homeless households?** Why/why not?
- What impact, if any, has COVID-19 had on **nominations agreements/practice between housing associations and LAs?** Probe if any changes long/short term, and if differs across the country, by type of HA etc
- How if at all have responses to those facing homelessness as a result of **domestic abuse** changed in the last year? If changes, why; for better/worse? Have Domestic Abuse Act provisions to extend automatic priority need by removing the vulnerability test impacted on people getting into settled accommodation?

#### 6. Ongoing impact of COVID-19-related welfare changes and evictions protections

- What have been the homelessness impacts of **changes made to the UK benefits system** over the past year? Probe:
  - LHA 30th refreezing
  - Temporary uplift in UC standard allowance and its removal in October 2021
  - Introduction of Household Support Fund
  - Others?
- What has been the impact on homelessness of the ending of the **evictions moratorium** in May 2021?
- What have been the homelessness impacts of changes to **immigration policy** in the last year? Probe: Ending of the suspension of EU derogation related to freedom of movement enabling LAs to accommodate EEA nationals; suspension of evictions from asylum accommodation; others?

Anything I've missed/should have asked you about/final comments/you'd like to add?

Thanks and close.

## Appendix 2 Local authority survey (2021)

Emulating similar surveys implemented as an integral component of Homelessness Monitor England fieldwork since 2014, an online survey of England's 309 local authorities<sup>245</sup> was undertaken in July-October 2021. As in earlier years a key aim was to delve beneath the routinely published statutory homelessness statistics to enhance understanding of how housing market trends and welfare reforms have impacted on (a) homelessness demand pressures, and (b) local authorities' ability to prevent and resolve homelessness.

While the starting point for this year's survey was the suite of questions posed in previous years, the survey's scope was also updated to reflect recent, ongoing and anticipated policy developments. More importantly, it was tailored to focus substantially on LA experience of managing homelessness during the COVID-19 emergency, and expectations for the immediate post-pandemic period. Survey design was also informed through consultation with national experts in the field, as well with CRISIS colleagues. A draft version of the questionnaire was kindly piloted by a case study authority contact.

An e-mail invitation to participate in the survey was sent to LA homelessness contacts (or 'Housing Options managers'). Responses were filed by 155 authorities or 50% of all authorities – see Table 1. In terms of its regional distribution the achieved sample is reasonably representative of England as a whole.

**Table A2.1: Survey response rate**

Broad region*	Responding local authorities	All local authorities	Response rate %
1 London	17	33	52
2 South	66	139	47
3 Midlands	27	65	42
4 North	45	72	63
England	155	309	50

\*In this survey we have followed the convention that the South includes the East of England as well as the South East and South West of England.

**Table A2.2: Overall number of households seeking homelessness assistance in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20 (%)**

	Significantly higher	Slightly higher	Fairly similar	Slightly lower	Significantly lower	Total	N=
1 London	53	24	12	6	6	100	17
2 South	32	38	26	3	2	100	66
3 Midlands	15	33	30	19	4	100	27
4 North	40	30	14	16	0	100	43
England	33	33	22	10	2	100	153

**Table A2.3: Perceived change in expressed demand from specific groups: 2020/21 compared with 2019/20 (%)**

	Increase	Fairly steady	Decrease	Don't know	Total	N=
Single people aged 25+	70	23	5	3	100	155
People being asked to leave family home	70	24	5	1	100	155
Sofa surfers	70	17	5	7	100	155
Rough sleepers	68	25	6	1	100	151
Survivors of domestic abuse	64	31	5	1	100	155
Prison leavers	42	45	8	5	100	154
Single people aged 16-24	41	48	8	3	100	155
EEA nationals no entitlement to benefits	27	59	7	7	100	138
Families with children	26	34	37	2	100	155
Non-EEA migrants with NRPF	25	57	6	12	100	135
People evicted from private rented sector	23	18	57	1	100	155
Newly unemployed people	20	39	3	38	100	154
People evicted from social rented sector	5	32	61	1	100	155
Repossessioned home owners	3	50	37	10	100	153

Note: Excludes respondents indicating specified cohort 'not relevant in my area'

**Table A2.4: Do you anticipate any change in the numbers of people seeking assistance from your Housing Options/homelessness service in 2021/22, as compared with 2020/21? (%)**

	Will increase	Will remain fairly steady	Will decrease	Don't know	Total	N=
People evicted from private rented sector	91	4	2	3	106	155
Families with children	79	14	1	6	103	154
Survivors of domestic abuse	64	23	5	8	111	155
People evicted from social rented sector	61	31	2	6	107	155
People being asked to leave family home	53	35	5	8	105	154
Newly unemployed people	49	24	3	24	104	152
Single people aged 25+	46	41	5	8	101	155
Repossessed home owners	46	40	0	14	109	155
Sofa surfers	46	36	5	12	110	155
Single people aged 16-24	37	50	5	8	102	155
EEA nationals no entitlement to benefits	34	40	8	18	112	143
Rough sleepers	33	51	13	4	100	150
Prison leavers	29	56	3	12	108	154
Non-EEA migrants with NRPF	24	46	8	22	113	142

Note: Excludes respondents indicating specified cohort 'not relevant in my area'

**Table A2.5: Level of homelessness prevention activity in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20 (%)**

	More active	Neither more nor less active	Less active	Don't know	Total	N=
1 London	38	38	25	0	100	16
2 South	50	18	29	3	100	66
3 Midlands	41	44	15	0	100	27
4 North	62	11	24	2	100	45
England	51	23	25	2	100	154

**Table A2.6: Likely homelessness impacts of prospective policy change**

	Significant increase	Slight increase	Little impact	Decrease	Don't know	Total	N=
Ending of eviction moratorium from June 2021	78	19	1	1	1	100	154
Renewed freeze on LHA rates	39	38	14	0	9	100	154
Removal of £20 p.w. in Universal Credit allowance Oct 2021	36	44	11	0	9	100	154
Freeze on the Benefit Cap	29	42	14	1	15	100	154
Reduced Govt support for Everyone In initiative	24	33	35	4	4	100	154
Ending of furlough scheme Sept 2021	19	51	13	0	17	100	154
Resumed evictions from asylum accom from June 2021	19	29	39	1	12	100	154
Ending of grace period for EU Settlement Scheme June 2021	7	28	45	1	19	100	154

**Table A2.7: Local provision for people with No Recourse to Public Funds and rough sleeping (or at risk of rough sleeping) – % of responding local authorities**

	1 London	2 South	3 Midlands	4 North	England
Statutory and commissioned services accommodating all with NRPF and rough sleeping or at risk of doing so	19	12	11	11	12
Statutory and commissioned services accommodating some with NRPF and are rough sleeping or at risk of doing so who were helped under 'Everyone In'	63	26	22	30	30
There is provision run by non-commissioned services for all with NRPF and are rough sleeping or at risk of doing so				7	2
There is provision run by non-commissioned services for some with NRPF and are rough sleeping or at risk of doing so		12	4	5	7
Not relevant in my area – no-one NRPF and sleeping rough or at risk of doing so	13	32	44	30	31
Other	6	5	11	9	7
Don't know		14	7	9	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>N=</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>153</b>

**Table A2.8: How easy or difficult has it been to enable access to suitable move-on accommodation for the following groups accommodated on an emergency basis during the Everyone In COVID-19-response? (%)**

	Easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Difficult	Not relevant in my area	Don't know	Total	N=
Those with low/medium support needs	18	42	39	0	1	100	153
Those with complex needs	3	6	90	0	1	100	153
Those with No Recourse to Public Funds	1	7	63	24	5	100	153

**Table A2.9: Has access to the following kinds of accommodation for homeless households become easier or more difficult in your area during the financial year 2020/21 as compared to 2019/20? (%)**

	Easier	No difference	More difficult	Total	N=
Social rented tenancies	12	31	57	100	134
Private rented tenancies	5	17	78	100	139
Supported accommodation	15	38	47	100	137

Note: Table excludes 'don't know' responses, as well as those indicating the dominance of variability during the year.

**Table A2.10: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social housing in your area? (%)**

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total	N=
Changes in LA allocation policies/practice since COVID-19 have made it easier to prevent/relieve homelessness	22	58	20	100	130
Changes in HA allocation policies/practice since COVID-19 have made it easier to prevent/relieve homelessness	9	60	31	100	129
Affordability/financial capability checks are making it difficult for homeless households to access social tenancies	59	25	16	100	141
Nomination agreements with HAs create obstacles to preventing/relieving homelessness in my area	28	46	26	100	134

Note: Table excludes 'don't knows' and 'not applicable in my area' (e.g. post-stock transfer authority)

**Table A2.11: Is sufficient new affordable housing supply being built/acquired in your area to meet the needs of homeless households and other people in housing need? (%)**

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total	N=
1 London	8	67	25	100	12
2 South	19	61	19	100	62
3 Midlands	21	46	33	100	24
4 North	33	47	19	100	36
England	22	55	22	100	134

**Table A2.12: Is there Housing First provision in your local authority area? (%)**

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total	N=
1 London	69	25	6	100	16
2 South	64	33	3	100	66
3 Midlands	44	52	4	100	27
4 North	58	42	0	100	43
England	59	38	3	100	152

## Appendix 3 Further details on updated estimates and projections of core homelessness

In Chapter 5 we presented evidence on the level of core homelessness in England up to and including the period of the Covid-19 pandemic. The estimates of core homelessness in the base period (2020/21) presented in that chapter draw on a set of data sources listed in Table 5.2, from a total of *nine* data sources overall, with each component being based on *at least four* data sources. Our approach thus entails a high degree of 'triangulation'. As will be clear from the review of sources in the 2021 Technical Report,<sup>246</sup> the sources used vary in statistical robustness in terms of coverage, definitions used and sample sizes. We used judgement of all of these aspects taken together to apply a weighting to each source in respect of each component of core homelessness, when combining the estimates. So where a data source provides good coverage of a given type of core homelessness, uses appropriate definitions, and has a larger and more representative sample it was given a higher weight when calculating the composite estimate. This process was shown in Table 1 in Appendix 3 of the 2021 Technical Report, in relation to the original base period of 2018/19, while the resulting numbers are summarised in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 in this report.

In updating the estimates for 2020/21 we have taken account of:

- a. Administrative data from the local authorities submitted through the H-CLIC system or through other routine statistical returns (two additional years available, 2019/20 and 2020/21)
- b. Additional information provided by DLUHC and National Audit Office (NAO) about the extent of special additional homelessness accommodation provided under the 'Everyone In' initiative, plus information about the throughput of households under this scheme
- c. Additional monitoring data from London Councils and CHAIN
- d. Forecast figures from the relevant forecasting models, with actual values for the predictor variables updated from their relevant secondary sources (e.g. unemployment, incomes, house prices, rents)
- e. Numbers of units of emergency temporary and transitional accommodation, and selected categories of TA (particularly Board and Lodging), occupied by recipients of Housing Benefit, obtained via Freedom of Information to DWP.

<sup>246</sup> Further detail and commentary on these sources is contained in Bramley, G. (2021). *Research on core homelessness and homeless projections: Technical report on new baseline estimates and scenario projections*. Heriot-Watt University. <https://doi.org/10.17861/fex5-jg80>

<sup>247</sup> In Chapter 5 and this Appendix, references to years such as '2020' should be taken to mean 'Financial Year 2020/21', i.e. April 2020 to March 2021, which is the normal basis for reporting homelessness statistics and many other public data.

Although there is a very substantial evidence base behind the core homelessness estimates, as summarised in Table 2 and discussed at length in the 2021 Technical report (Bramley 2021), there remain degrees of uncertainty about the coverage of different sources and the assumptions which need to be made to arrive at a common 'snapshot' basis. The estimates presented here are based on a central set of such assumptions. Additional uncertainties have arisen from the Covid disruption to services and to some data collections, and from the somewhat limited data which have been compiled and published on the exact scope of 'Everyone In' provision and how this is reflected in the routine statistics

The primary aim of these projections is to highlight the likely efficacy of different policies aimed at homelessness reduction, but also to alert stakeholders to the challenges which may lie ahead in addressing homelessness. The purpose of these projections is also in part to inform the planning and resourcing of services for homeless people. But the most important purpose of all is to explore alternative future scenarios in order to demonstrate how much impact different policy and practice changes would be expected to have on core homelessness.

This research builds on an existing modelling framework which has been used in a number of other research studies, referred to as the Sub-Regional Housing Market Model.<sup>248</sup> More information on this model was given in Appendix 3 to the 2021 Monitor and the longer Technical Report.<sup>249</sup> The model predicts levels of housing need and key homelessness numbers, for sub-regional areas in England, with a major focus on time horizons of 2023/24, 2026, 2031 and 2041. Lying behind these homelessness numbers are projections of consistent demographic and economic scenarios, and forecasts of key housing market variables like housebuilding, house prices, rents, vacancies, lettings, tenure shares, new household formation and internal migration, incomes and poverty.

For the 2022 England Monitor, selective improvements have been made to parts of the forecasting model to take account of more recent data, new data, and potential to improve model properties. As a result, revised models are in place to predict the following elements:

- Total homeless applications to LA (calibrated on 2014-20 data)
- Total households in TA (based on 2014-20 data)
- Households in unsuitable temporary accommodation (based on 2014-20 data)
- Rough sleeping, based on H-CLIC data on immediately prior accommodation over 3 years (based on 2018-20 data)

<sup>248</sup> Bramley, G. & Watkins, D. (2016) 'Housebuilding, demographic change and affordability as outcomes of local planning decisions: exploring interactions using a sub-regional model of housing markets in England', *Progress in Planning*, 104, 1-35 <http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?scp=84937510196&partnerID=8YFLogxK>

<sup>249</sup> See Bramley, G. (2021) *Research on Core Homelessness and Homeless Projections. Technical Report on New Baseline Estimates and Scenario Projections*. Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University. <https://doi.org/10.17861/fex5-jg80> See Note 1.

- Households applying to LA as homeless through eviction or other loss of private rented accommodation (based on 2014-20 data)
- Sofa surfing concealed households (usual resident basis) in English Housing Survey (based on 2009-18 data)

It should be noted that in the cases of rough sleeping and sofa surfing, the predictive functions modified in this round are only part of the input to predicting these elements.

### Covid Impacts

As has already been documented,<sup>250</sup> pandemic and associated lockdowns led to a spike in destitution and associated consequences, such as a big increase in the use of food banks, while for some the disruption of normal informal support mechanisms resulting from lockdown was seriously problematic. The modelling takes account of these effects through inclusion of destitution measures and assumptions and in other technical ways, for example through a modified unemployment variable which takes account of the documented massive spike in UC claiming.

We continue to use the numbers (stocks and flows) of people and households assisted through the Everyone In programme and legacy provision as published during 2020/21 by DLUHC and NAO, but have reconciled these with the more recent H-CLIC returns, recognising the partial inclusion of these numbers in the TA estimates but reallocating all of the special provision to the hostels, etc. category for consistency. Detailed local data from further Freedom of Information requests to DWP have helped to triangulate these numbers and their trajectory during the gradual emergence from the pandemic.

### Demographic and economic baselines

Our basic demographic scenario takes account of the dramatic drop in international migration during 2020/21,<sup>251</sup> envisaging a return to a somewhat lower level of net migration in the future. It also reflects recent evidence of somewhat higher death rates /lower life expectancy.<sup>252</sup>

Our economic scenario assumption for the period of emergence from the pandemic are mainly based on the OBR forecasts but also have regard to Treasury-published average of independent forecasts. The projection factors in the current spike in inflation and the specific events, notably the nationwide hike in house prices during 2020/21. Future economic prospects (Gross value added (GVA) and productivity growth) are modelled at sub-regional level based on a combination actual estimates for 2011-15 and model forecasts for the period to 2021 and beyond. These forecasts were provided by David Simmonds Consultancy using their DELTA Land Use and Transport Interaction model informed by Department for Transport and Experian projections. The baseline projections assume a balanced blend of national and recent/forecast sub-

250 See in particular: The Trussell Trust (2020) *Summary Findings on the Impact of the Covid-19 Crisis on Food Banks*. Online: Trussell Trust. [https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/06/APRIL-Data-briefing\\_external.pdf](https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/06/APRIL-Data-briefing_external.pdf); and Weekes, T., Spoor, E., Weal, R. & Moffett, G. (2020) *Lockdown, Loneliness and the Long Haul Ahead: The Impact of Covid-19 on Food Banks in the Trussell Trust Network*. Online: Trussell Trust <https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/09/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-food-banks-report.pdf>

251 Office for National Statistics (2021) *Modelled estimates for UK immigration, emigration and net migration, to Q4 2020*.

252 Office for National Statistics (2021) *National Life Tables – life expectancy in the UK: 2018 to 2020*. Statistical Bulletin 23 September 2021.

regional trends in overall GVA and GVA per worker. The 'levelling up' forecast is mainly weighted towards the national projection.

### Re-estimated predictive models for key elements of homelessness

#### Homeless applications model

An updated and enhanced model for predicting the annual rate of homeless applications to local authorities was estimated and applied in this round of the Monitor, building on the approach used previously. The model which is summarised in Table A3.1 uses Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression to predict the log of the annual homeless applicant decisions as a percentage of the resident households in each LA, based on a seven-year panel of data, including three post-HRA years. The model includes 14 significant predictor variables (all but three of which are time-varying) and explains 62% of the variation.

**Table A3.1: New model for log of total homeless decisions per 100 households (Local authority districts in England, annual panel 2014-20, with dummy for post-Homelessness Reduction Act years)**

Variable description	Varname	Coeffic. B	Std Coeff Beta	t stat	signif. p	Collinearity VIF
Constant	(Constant)	-1.902		-28.369	0.000	
HRA dummy	hra	1.005	0.587	22.173	0.000	3.973
Black ethnicity	pblack	0.027	0.173	8.695	0.000	2.251
Hhd on benefit cap %	pcbencap	0.226	0.051	2.336	0.020	2.745
Sick/disabled econ status	pcsick	-0.066	-0.111	-4.251	0.000	3.880
Unemployment rate %	punem	0.021	0.048	2.301	0.021	2.449
Excess rent over LHA	exrent	0.0080	0.106	6.452	0.000	1.532
Net social lettings rate % hhd	pslets	0.062	0.047	2.598	0.009	1.828
Homeless % social lets	phslets2	0.609	0.171	9.644	0.000	1.784
SMD destitution rate %	pdestsmd	1.124	0.185	8.444	0.000	2.723
General destitution rate %	pdestgen	0.583	0.090	2.151	0.032	9.875
Poor children %	ppoorchld	0.011	0.082	2.942	0.003	4.423
Hostel resid on HB %	phostelnew	0.084	0.031	1.930	0.054	1.505
2020 dummy x % share of Hless ex-PR tenant	evictban	-0.007	-0.067	-3.939	0.000	1.620
Prevention/all homeless apps	prevrat2	0.100	0.033	1.882	0.060	1.729
<b>a. Dep Var: lphldtot</b>						
<b>Weighted by hhdwgt</b>						
<b>Model Summary</b>						
	R	R Square	Adj R Sq	S E Est		
	.791a	0.625	0.623	0.539		
		Sum Sq	Degr Frdm	Mn Sq	F ratio	Sig.
Regression		1029.589	14	73.542	252.808	0.000
Residual		617.292	2122	0.291		
Total		1646.881	2136			

It can be seen from Table A3.1, particularly the column showing standardised regression coefficient (beta), that the HRA implementation had a large impact on applications. Other sizeable effects were associated with complex need destitution, the share of social lettings going to homeless households, Black ethnic population, the excess of median rents over LHA levels, the general destitution rate and child poverty. Other more moderate effects included the Benefit Cap, unemployment, hostels and the prevention share, while negative effects were associated with the long term sick/disabled economic status and a proxy for the eviction ban (2020 dummy times share of homeless from loss of private rental tenancy).

Two measures of relevant social housing supply (net social lettings rate, pslets, and homeless households as share of net social lettings, phlslets2) appear to have had a positive effect on application rates, but in the latter case in particular this may reflect some reverse causation (areas with more homelessness pressure may be expected to have more lettings going to homeless households). The apparent positive effect of the prevention variable may reflect the impact of HRA and/or the relative share of single homeless applying.

#### Households in temporary accommodation

The models for TA have also been updated in parallel with the applications model as just described, again using a seven-year panel of LA level data including three post-HRA years. The basic dynamics of this model are as in the previous rounds, with a lagged adjustment formulation whereby TA numbers in one year are strongly influenced by the previous year's level of TA, and then affected by the new inflow of homeless applications, and the outflows associated with social sector rehousing and prevention. The model has a high fit to the data, explaining 93% of the variation. All but two variables are significant at the 5% level, while two variables on the margins of significance (around 14-19% level) are retained in order to pick up factors of particular interest (prevention and Covid emergency provision). It appears that some, but not necessarily all, of the Everyone In Covid emergency accommodation was included in the H-CLIC returns.

**Table A3.2: New model for log of total households in temporary accommodation per 100 households (Local authority districts in England, annual panel 2014-20, with dummy for post-Homelessness Reduction Act years)**

Variable description	Varname	Coeffic. B	Std Coeff Beta	t stat	signif. p	Collinearity VIF
Constant	(Constant)	-0.393		-7.112	0.000	
HRA dummy	hra	-0.051	-0.017	-2.094	0.036	2.005
Log of lagged TA % hhd	lptatot_1	0.829	0.830	70.948	0.000	3.941
Log of new h'less applics % hhd	lphldtot	0.147	0.088	9.598	0.000	2.403
Real median rent level £pw 2br	rlmrent	0.0010	0.053	4.677	0.000	3.736
Excess rent over LHA £pw	exrent	0.005	0.038	5.186	0.000	1.527
Net social lettings rate % hhd	pslets	-0.035	-0.016	-2.464	0.014	1.195
Prevention into social renting	pprevsr	-0.064	-0.009	-1.301	0.193	1.230
London dummy	london	0.090	0.023	2.133	0.033	3.220
Hostel resid on HB % hhd	phostelnew	0.086	0.019	2.979	0.003	1.190
Covid emergency accom % hhd	pcovemerg	0.473	0.009	1.463	0.144	1.126
<b>DepVar: lptatot</b>						
<b>Weighted by hhdwgt</b>						
<b>Model Summary</b>						
<b>Model</b>	R	R Square	Adj R Sq	S E Est		
	0.963	0.927	0.926	0.403		
		Sum Sq	degr frdm	Mn Sq	F ratio	Sig.
Regression		4341.209	10	434.121	2666.874	0
Residual		343.146	2108	0.163		
Total		4684.355	2118			

The model suggests that HRA itself did not increase total TA, with a marginal negative effect allowing for other factors (including the rate of total applications). It is noteworthy that TA increased where market rents were high, and particularly where they exceeded LHA. The other effects were in line with expectations, including higher levels in London and in LAs with more hostel accommodation.

### Unsuitable temporary accommodation

This companion model focuses on the number of households in 'unsuitable' temporary accommodation, as a percentage of households. As summarized in Table 5.1, unsuitable TA comprises Bed and Breakfast, Private Non-self-contained Licensed/Nightly Let, and Out of Area Placements (half in London, all elsewhere). However, the DLUHC has ceased publishing the second of these categories separately for several years, although there is a corresponding category in DWP data. It appears that in 2020/21 some of the special emergency hotel accommodation used as part of 'Everyone In' was recorded as B&B; an estimate of these numbers has been transferred to the category of hostels etc in the projection model, for consistency.

**Table A3.3: New model for log of households in unsuitable temporary accommodation per 100 households (Local authority districts in England, annual panel 2014-20, with dummy for post-Homelessness Reduction Act years)**

Variable description	Varname	Coeffic. B	Std Coeff Beta	t stat	signif. p	Collinearity VIF
Constant	(Constant)	-2.306		-14.184	0.000	
HRA dummy	hra	0.243	0.057	3.720	0.000	2.021
Log difference (change) in total TA	ldta	1.151	0.225	20.422	0.000	1.048
Lagged log of rate of unsuitable TA	lpbadta_1	0.601	0.599	36.305	0.000	2.357
Log of total homeless applications % of h'hlds	lphldtot	0.238	0.096	5.868	0.000	2.326
Excess rent over LHA £pw	exrent	0.017	0.087	6.674	0.000	1.466
Net social lettings rate % hhd	pslets	-0.119	-0.037	-3.151	0.002	1.195
Private renting % hhd	ppr	0.030	0.086	5.167	0.000	2.377
Hostel resid on HB % hhd	phostelnew	0.273	0.041	3.166	0.002	1.477
London dummy	london	0.585	0.100	5.866	0.000	2.488
Business and education centres (cities)	BECent	-0.384	-0.067	-4.528	0.000	1.892
Prevention into social renting propn	pprevsr	-0.156	-0.014	-1.194	0.233	1.212
Covid emergency accom % hshlds	pcovemerg	1.856	0.024	2.128	0.033	1.135
Dep Var: lpbadta	Log of UTA as % hshlds					
Weighted by hhdwgt						
Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adj R Sq	S E Est		
	0.87	0.757	0.755	1.08294		
		Sum Sq	Deg frdm	Mn Sq	F ratio	Sig.
Regression		7675.1	12	639.596	545.376	0.000
Residual		2466.3	2103	1.173		
Total		10141.5	2115			

Table A3.3. above shows that a reasonable model could explain three-quarters of the variation in unsuitable TA by LA over this period (2014-20). The main drivers of unsuitable TA levels were the previous year's level, the change in total TA, and the rate of new homeless applications. Levels were exacerbated by a higher level of excess of market rents over LHA levels, higher shares of private renting and levels of hostel accommodation, while being reduced where available social lettings were greater. Allowing for these factors, levels were still higher in London, but lower in Business and Employment Centres (major provincial cities). Although marginal in terms of statistical significance, prevention into social renting appeared to be associated with lower levels of unsuitable TA, although the Covid emergency accommodation had a positive relationship.

### Rough Sleeping

The projections model uses three sub-models to predict levels of and changes in rough sleeping at sub-regional level. Two of these are unchanged from the previous iteration of the projections in the 2021 England monitor, based on the Public Voice and Destitution in the UK surveys. The third model, which is based on H-CLIC data at LA level, has been updated, thereby changing from a one-year cross-sectional model to a short (3-year) panel. Table A.3.4 below provides detail of this regression model, which bears some similarity to that previously developed on only one-year's data, as reported in Table D.10 in the 2021 Technical Report. However, with the benefit of three years' data it has been possible to improve the model in terms of its fit to the data, now accounting for 70% of the variation, while including a couple of additional variables of policy relevance.

In this version of the model, the strongest positive influences were the complex need destitution rate, the rate of homelessness associated with loss of PRS accommodation, and single person households, with other positive effects from general destitution rate, the local crime rate, sparsity of population, and the excess of market rent over LHA. Stronger negative effects included the London dummy variable, hostel numbers, adults with no qualifications, with some negative effects from evictions ban, the relative share of prevention, and being a Business and Education Centre.

In the simulation model, this predictive function is combined with two existing models, one based on the 2019 Destitution in the UK Survey of users of crisis services, and the other based on retrospective experiences in the 2020 Public Voice survey of UK adult population (Tables D.8 and D.9 respectively in the 2021 Technical Report).

**Table A3.4: New model for log of rough sleeper etc\* applications per 100 households (Local authority districts in England, annual panel 2018-20)**

Variable description	Vaname	Coeffic. B	Std Coeff Beta	t stat	signif. p	Collinearity VIF
	(Constant)	-4.718		-22.225	0.000	
Single person % hhd	sing	0.044	0.219	4.115	0.000	4.062
Excess rent over LHA £pw	exrent	0.004	0.048	1.586	0.113	1.317
Crime rate per 1000	crimratept	0.003	0.123	2.536	0.011	3.357
Hostel resid on HB % hhd	phostelnew	-0.652	-0.257	-7.674	0.000	1.611
Complex need destitution rate % hhd	pdestsmd	1.581	0.277	4.531	0.000	5.344
Destitution general rate %	pdestgen	0.935	0.126	2.702	0.007	3.121
Adults no qualifications %	pnoqual	-0.053	-0.215	-6.092	0.000	1.785
London dummy	london	-0.767	-0.332	-9.039	0.000	1.933
Business & Educ centres	BECent	-0.153	-0.068	-1.827	0.068	1.964
LA sparsity level (ha/pers)	laspars	0.197	0.078	2.348	0.019	1.597
Homeless ex-PRS % hhd	phlendrent	1.011	0.235	8.317	0.000	1.141
Evictions/Hless apps x 2020 dummy	evictban	-0.006	-0.084	-2.993	0.003	1.117
Prevention/all Hless Applies	pprevacc	-0.406	-0.066	-2.358	0.019	1.109
<b>Dep Var: lphclicsprox</b>	log of (RS + 0.5*NFA) from H-CLIC as % of hshlds					
<b>Weighted by hhdwgt</b>						
<b>Model Summary</b>						
	R	R Square	Adj R Sq	S E Est		
	0.59	0.348	0.339	0.702		
		Sum Sq	Degr Frdm	Mn Sq	F ratio	signif
	Regression	246.133	13	18.933	38.396	0
	Residual	460.563	934	0.493		
	Total	706.696	947			

Note: \* Dependent variable is log of homeless applicants previously rough sleeping plus half of 'no fixed abode', as % of resident households.

**Loss of private rental accommodation**

A new function to predict homelessness associated with the loss of private rental accommodation was developed, using LA level data from the statutory system, replacing a previous micro model based on the UK Household Longitudinal Survey survey, as reported in Table D.15 of the 2021 Technical Report. The new model is an OLS regression on LA level data for England over seven years 2014-2020, as shown in Table A.3.5. This had a reasonable fit to the data, explaining 63% of the variation.

**Table A3.5: New model for log of homeless households leaving private rental accommodation per 100 resident households (Local authority districts in England, annual panel 2014-20, with dummy for post-Homelessness Reduction Act years)**

Variable description	Vaname	Coeffic. B	Std Coeff Beta	t stat	signif. p	Collinearity VIF
Constant	(Constant)	-4.008		-36.963	0.000	
HRA dummy	hra	1.722	0.707	34.346	0.000	2.557
Black ethnicity	pblack	0.038	0.169	8.702	0.000	2.280
Welfare Reform benefit cuts £ph	wrcut	0.008	0.132	8.334	0.000	1.523
Benefit Cap % of hhd affected	pcbencap	-0.277	-0.044	-2.123	0.034	2.614
Excess rent over LHA £pw	exrent	0.021	0.197	12.907	0.000	1.413
Private renting % hhd	ppr	0.021	0.104	6.178	0.000	1.697
Adults no qualifications %	pnoqual	-0.018	-0.073	-4.132	0.000	1.861
Prevention ratio to all hless applicn	prevrat2	0.300	0.070	4.168	0.000	1.679
Evictions/Hless apps x 2020 dummy	evictban	-0.005	-0.036	-2.444	0.015	1.296
<b>Dep Var: lphlendrent</b>	Log of homeless hhd leaving PRS % all hhd					
<b>Weighted by hhdwgt</b>						
<b>Model Summary</b>	R	R Square	Adj R Sq	S E Est		
	0.797	0.635	0.633	0.750		
		Sum Sq	degr frdm	Mn Sq	F ratio	Sig.
	Regression	2159.870	9	239.986	426.116	0.000
	Residual	1241.839	2205	0.563		
	Total	3401.709	2214			

Apart from the implementation of the HRA in 2018, variables with a relatively strong positive impact on this stream of homelessness included the excess of market rent over LHA, Black ethnicity, the local extent of welfare reform benefit cuts, and the size of the private rented sector, with some positive effect from prevention activity. More modest negative effects were associated with adults with no qualifications, the Benefit Cap and the evictions ban of 2020.

### Sofa Surfing

The last model which has been updated is that for sofa-surfing, based on the English Housing Survey, pooled over 10 years (2009-18), and referring to sofa surfing involving usual resident household members (not including temporary household members).<sup>253</sup> This involves only modest changes from the model reported in Table D.17 of the 2021 Technical Report, with one more year of data and the omission of a couple of variables which had previously been insignificant and/or with the 'wrong' sign. The fit of the model as shown in Table A.3.6 is marginally improved.

**Table A3.6: Revised logistic regression model for sofa surfing based on English Housing Survey (2009-18)**

Variable descriptions	Varname	Coeff B	Wald	Signif (p)	Odds Ratio Exp(B)
Aged under 30	ageu30	-1.511	35.369	0.000	0.221
Aged 65 & over	age65ov	-0.578	9.513	0.002	0.561
Lone parent household	lpfam	1.525	3.527	0.060	4.593
Multi-adult household	mult	6.362	182.482	0.000	579.141
Full time employed HRP	hrpftemp	0.298	4.484	0.034	1.347
Long term sick/disabled	ltsick	0.304	5.594	0.018	1.356
High occupational class	hisec	-0.643	5.103	0.024	0.526
Log of net equiv hhd income after housing cost	lahceqinc	-0.123	4.377	0.036	0.885
Social renter	tensr	0.484	10.419	0.001	1.623
Private renter	tenpr	0.312	3.770	0.052	1.366
Asian ethnicity	asian	1.172	64.308	0.000	3.229
ID deprivation deciles (1=worst)	imddc	-0.072	8.678	0.003	0.931
Real market rent, 2br, £w	rlmrent	0.001	2.567	0.109	1.001
Unemployment rate %	punem	-0.051	3.657	0.056	0.951
Constant	Constant	-8.967	195.159	0.000	0.000

Model	Chi-square	degr frdm	Sig.	
	1686.071	14	0.000	
Measures of fit	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square	
	2654.65	0.015	0.393	
		Predicted sofasurf2	Percentage Correct	
Actual		.00	1.00	
sofasurf2	.00	110023	0	100.0
	1.00	317	0	0.0
Overall Percentage				99.7

<sup>253</sup> This additional sub-category of sofa surfing was introduced in the 2021 analysis as discussed on p.8 of Bramley, G., (2021) *Research on Core Homelessness and Homeless Projections. Technical Report on New Baseline Estimates and Scenario Projections*. Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University. See Note 1.

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