

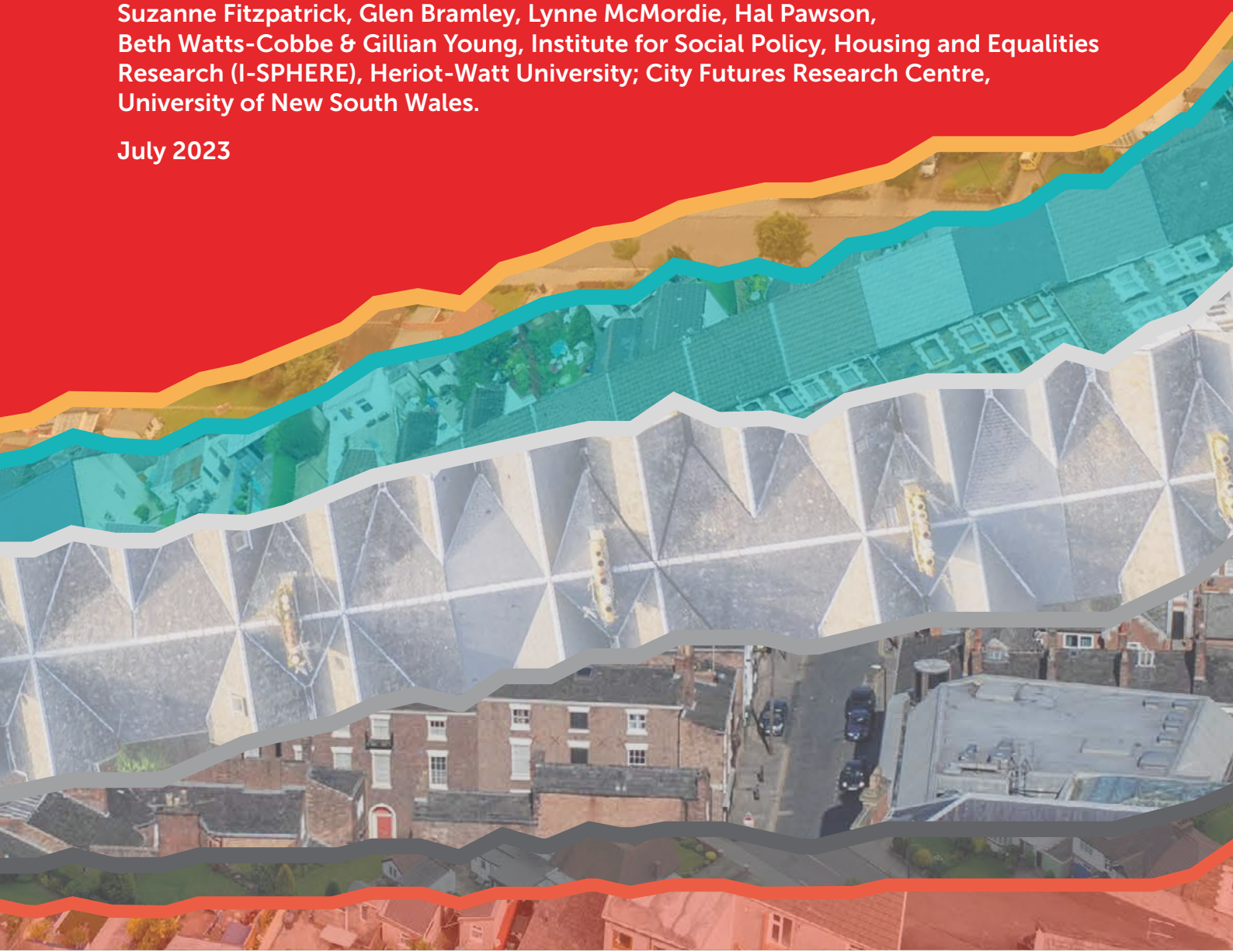


Together  
we will end  
homelessness

# The homelessness monitor: England 2023

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

July 2023



## 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 eleventh annual report updates our account of how homelessness stands in England in 2023, or as close to 2023 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 people experiencing homelessness. 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.

## About the authors

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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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# Foreword

The homelessness system in England is at breaking point. This annual study is the strongest evidence yet of how the cost-of-living crisis, rising rents and widespread destitution are driving homelessness levels and making it harder for councils to provide people with effective support.

At the centre of this is a dysfunctional housing market which leaves the people on the lowest incomes being squeezed the hardest. Decades of failure to build the social homes we need, coupled with rising interest rates and surging rents in the private rented sector is making it impossible for local authorities to house people experiencing homelessness in some areas of the country, with the overwhelming majority (97%) of local authorities stating they have struggled to source private rentals over the past year.

As this year's Homelessness Monitor analysis documents, the consequences of this is nearly a quarter of a million households across England (242,000) are now experiencing the worst forms of homelessness, including sleeping on the streets, spending night after night on friends and families' sofas or stuck in unsuitable temporary accommodation like nightly paid B&Bs. With councils running out of suitable longer-term housing options, they are increasingly reliant on temporary accommodation – with the number of households living in such accommodation at the highest level in 18 years.

This forces councils to rely on inappropriate forms of accommodation as a solution, meaning thousands of people - including families with children - live for long periods of time in B&Bs or nightly paid accommodation, often far away from their families and communities in out-of-borough placements. Often in poor condition and without necessities like cooking and washing facilities, it is estimated that the number of households in unsuitable temporary accommodation has tripled over the past ten years. Worryingly, the research forecasts that the number of households living in unsuitable temporary accommodation is expected to almost double over the next twenty years if the Westminster Government doesn't take action to address the challenges councils are facing.

We do know there are solutions to reverse this, for the fifth year in a row the projections modelling shows us the levers that can be implemented to bring homelessness levels down dramatically. In the shorter term these include allocating significant proportions of social lettings to homelessness households and increasing focus on prevention. In the long term we need to increase Local Housing Allowance to meet the cost of rents and increase housing supply.

The evidence in the report is a stark warning to Government that unless it starts to act now, we will see a rise in homelessness over the coming year – let's make sure we all work together to stop this being a reality.



Matt Downie  
Chief Executive, Crisis



# Executive summary

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 eleventh annual Homelessness Monitor England updates our account of how homelessness stands in 2023, or as close to 2023 as data availability allows. This year's report focuses in particular on the homelessness impacts of the current cost of living crisis, and also on rough sleeping and responses to it, a major Government policy priority in recent years. The report also includes a comprehensive analysis of Homelessness Reduction Act processes and outcomes and updated modelling estimates and forward projections of extreme forms of 'core' homelessness.

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

- Following several years of decline, the number of people seen sleeping rough in England grew in 2022. At 3,069 in November of that year, recorded rough sleeping was 26% up on the equivalent figure twelve months earlier. London-specific data also indicates rising rough sleeping since 2021, with around half of those sleeping on the streets of the capital non-UK nationals, many of whom will have No Recourse to Public Funds or other restricted eligibility for statutory support.

- Some 290,000 eligible households sought help from local authorities on grounds of homelessness in 2021/22. While those judged at risk of homelessness within 56 days increased by 10% over the year, applicants assessed as actually homeless fell by 4%. Nonetheless a large majority of local authority survey respondents (85%) perceived that homelessness service 'footfall' had increased in the preceding year, with almost half (49%) reporting a 'significant' increase. These local authority perceptions of a deteriorating situation are consistent with our core homelessness statistical analysis (see below).

- After falling sharply during the height of the pandemic, homelessness applications involving family households rose in 2021/22, with two-parent family applicants growing in number by 76% to stand substantially higher than in the pre-pandemic year of 2019/20 (25,020 compared with 21,240). Single adult applicants, by contrast fell back in the latest year.
- While Homelessness Reduction Act provisions give far better protection to single homeless households than the previous legal framework, some homeless people still navigate – and exit – the system without having secured a long-term accommodation offer. Thus, in 2021/22 nearly 19,000 homeless households were deemed as either not in priority need or intentionally homeless, and therefore not owed the main rehousing duty.
- Since bottoming out in 2010/11, total temporary accommodation placements had more than doubled to over 100,000 households by 31st December 2022. Within this, Bed and Breakfast hotel placements have risen more than five-fold since their 2009 nadir. Having increased sharply during the early part of the pandemic, Bed and Breakfast placements once again climbed steeply during 2022, up by 32% in the year to Q4 2022. The homelessness impacts of the Ukrainian and Afghan refugee crises, and wider asylum dispersal pressures, were said to be ratcheting up existing temporary accommodation pressures on local authorities.
- 'Core homelessness'<sup>2</sup> in England – a concept which captures the most acute forms of homelessness – is estimated to have totalled 242,000 in 2022, compared to 206,000 people affected a decade ago.
- Baseline forecasts show core homelessness rising significantly in the immediate future, with overall core homelessness in 2024 one fifth higher than 2020 levels. Current drivers of these increases relate primarily to inflation squeezing real incomes and increasing poverty and destitution, alongside rising private rents and evictions, and declining social rented lettings. Further rises are projected in the longer term, particularly in London, with core homelessness rising by 37% above 2020 levels to 303,000 by 2041.
- In the shorter term, the most effective policies for reducing core homelessness would be allocation of a significant proportion<sup>3</sup> of social lettings to core homeless households, increasing the level of the Local Housing Allowance, and maximising prevention activity to the level of the higher performing local authorities.
- In the longer-term, the largest projected impacts on reducing core homelessness would result from increasing the Local Housing Allowance, increasing housing supply, a higher proportion of social lettings allocated to core homeless households, and large-scale expansion of Housing First accompanied by appropriate rehabilitation provision and a reduction of traditional hostel accommodation. A comprehensive programme of the recommended measures is shown to be capable of reducing core homelessness by 37% in 2031 and 47% in 2041, compared with what it would have been without any change in policies.

<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>

<sup>2</sup> 'Core homelessness' includes people sleeping rough, but also those 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).

<sup>3</sup> Allocating up to 20% of net social lettings to core homeless households, where appropriate, on an ongoing basis.

- The launch of a refreshed Rough Sleeping Strategy in September 2022 was welcomed by key informants, particularly with regard to its confirmation of sustained investment in the Rough Sleeping Initiative. However, acute concerns remain about addressing rough sleeping amongst people with No Recourse to Public Funds or other restricted eligibility to statutory support, as pandemic-associated emergency accommodation options for this group have contracted sharply after the ending of specialist public health funding in April 2022.
- Three-quarters (74%) of respondents to our local authority survey reported that the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme had improved their ability to prevent and alleviate rough sleeping, and the new Single Homeless Accommodation Programme was also roundly welcomed. However, there were some question marks over the sustainability of the accommodation associated with both programmes beyond the current revenue funding timeframes.
- Notwithstanding continuing support for the framework of the Homelessness Reduction Act, key informants reported that opportunities for upstream prevention are contracting because of sustained cuts to public services, a reduction in the supply of affordable rental properties, and a squeeze on household budgets. Deep cuts to Discretionary Housing Payments have further constrained the ability of local authorities to prevent homelessness. While the Household Support Fund, which runs until March 2024 has the potential to help offset a proportion of these cuts, there is little evidence that it has done so.
- Four in ten local authority respondents to our survey reported the existence of problematic exempt accommodation in their locality. The Supported Housing Improvement Programme was therefore welcomed and there was also firm support for the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill which aims to provide for stronger regulation of this problematic sector. However, some key informants voiced a note of caution about the need to guard against any potential for the proposed legislation to have unintended impacts on supported accommodation more generally.
- Rapidly rising mortgage costs and private rents have made it ever more difficult for low-income households to access the private housing market over the past year. At the same time, the continued decline in social lettings has severely squeezed access to this sector. Growing pressure on social landlords to address dampness and mould and to de-carbonise existing homes, the lack of new social rented homes being delivered through the Affordable Housing Programme, and the continuation of the Right to Buy, suggest that access to social rented housing will become even tighter going forward.
- The rapid rise in eviction action by private landlords, and in particular 'no fault' cases since the end of 'pandemic-related' eviction measures in May 2021 is increasing calls for the Government to raise Local Housing Allowance rates to reflect the real cost of rent and to quicken the pace of private rental reform. The overwhelming majority (82%) of local authorities surveyed this year viewed the refreezing of Local Housing Allowance rates as 'very challenging' in the context of their efforts to prevent or alleviate homelessness.
- The UK economy's road to recovery from the COVID-19 related recession is proving long and difficult. During 2022 the economy flat lined as higher energy and food prices saw inflation reach double digits, outstripping wages, and social security benefit

rates. Although the UK economy has so far narrowly avoided recession, the Office of Budget Responsibility expects that real household disposable income will continue to fall in 2023/24 and will be no higher than pre-pandemic levels by 2027/28.

- Lower income households have been particularly exposed to the 'cost of living crisis' as a high share of their spending is on food, energy, and other necessities. In response, the UK Government has introduced various measures including the near universal energy price guarantee, and payments targeted at specific groups, including those on Universal Credit (and the legacy benefits and tax credits it is replacing). But few of the surveyed local authorities thought that these measures would substantially mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis on homelessness.
- Social security payments and the benefit cap were uprated by 10.1% in April 2023, in line with inflation. However, cuts and freezes to social security benefits since 2010 have seen social security benefits for many working age households fall below the level required to avoid severe material hardship. Along with benefit sanctions and 'other' deductions from their benefit, this has contributed to rising levels of problem debt, destitution, and food bank dependency, as well as homelessness.

### Trends in homelessness

#### Rough sleeping

Following several years of decline, the number of people seen sleeping rough in England grew in 2022. At 3,069 in November of that year, recorded rough sleeping was 26% up on the equivalent figure twelve months earlier. There

was some geographical variation here, with London numbers up by 34% over the period, while the North of England total grew by 15%.

Recent trends should be seen within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus the sharp drop in rough sleeping registered in Autumn 2020 is likely to have reflected the extraordinary action taken during the early part of that year under the Everyone In programme to shelter people at risk of sleeping rough during the height of the public health crisis. As the health crisis subsided during 2021 and into 2022, Everyone In arrangements began to lapse in many areas (see below). Rising rough sleeping numbers in the year to November 2022 may well reflect this contraction in support.

London-specific (CHAIN)<sup>4</sup> data also indicates rising levels of rough sleeping. Since 2019, a marked reduction in CHAIN-recorded numbers during the height of the pandemic has been succeeded by a recently renewed upward trend, with total quarterly observations rising by 21% over the latest year. This data also indicates that around half of those sleeping on the streets in London are non-UK nationals, many of whom will have No Recourse to Public Funds.

#### Statutory homelessness

Some 290,000 eligible households sought help from local authorities on grounds of homelessness in 2021/22 – similar to the numbers recorded in the years since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act framework in 2018. Applicants assessed as actually homeless (and therefore owed the relief duty) fell by 4% over the year, while those judged at risk of homelessness within 56 days increased by 10%.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> These data are collated via the Greater London Authority's CHAIN system managed by St Mungo's. Because this method enumerates people who have slept rough during a given period (financial year) the resulting figures cannot be directly compared with the 'point in time' snapshot numbers produced under the DLUHC national monitoring methodology.

<sup>5</sup> DLUHC Homelessness Statistics

By comparison with the Housing Act 1996 regime and its associated non-statutory prevention and relief activity, far fewer statutory homelessness applicants now 'progress' through the system as far as a Main Duty decision. Thus the number of households accepted as owed the Main Duty and entitled to rehousing – at 42,120 in 2021/22 – remained well below the 57,000 recorded in 2017/18, albeit that this was the highest number recorded under the Homelessness Reduction Act regime to date.

After falling sharply during the height of the pandemic, as a result largely of the evictions moratorium, homelessness applications involving family households rose in 2021/22, with two-parent family applicants growing in number by 76% to stand substantially higher than in the pre-pandemic year of 2019/20 (25,020 compared with 21,240). Single adult applicants, by contrast fell back in number in the latest year.

While Homelessness Reduction Act provisions give far better protection to single homeless households than the previous legal framework, some homeless people still navigate – and exit – the system without having secured a long-term accommodation offer. Thus, in 2021/22 nearly 19,000 homeless households were deemed as either not in priority need or intentionally homeless, and therefore not owed the main rehousing duty.

Pressures on temporary accommodation emerged as a central concern of key informants this year, with continuing concerns that government is excessively focussed on addressing rough sleeping to the detriment of homelessness in its wider sense and in particular to tackling the number

of families and children in temporary accommodation.<sup>6</sup> Significant increases in the use of nightly paid temporary accommodation and Bed and Breakfast were reported by key informants, alongside increased reliance on poorer quality provision, including problematic 'exempt' accommodation (see below).

This chimes with the official temporary accommodation statistics, with placements more than doubling since bottoming out in 2010/11 to exceed 100,000 households in the latest available figures (for 31st December 2022). Within this, Bed and Breakfast hotel placements have risen more than five-fold since their 2009 nadir. Having increased sharply during the early part of the pandemic, Bed and Breakfast placements once again climbed steeply during 2022, up by 32% in the year to Q4 2022. At 29% of the national placement total, the proportion of out-of-area placements has remained fairly stable in recent years, although much higher than the 11% recorded in 2010/11.<sup>7</sup>

### Core homelessness

The concept of 'core homelessness' captures some of the most severe and immediate forms of homelessness, which includes people sleeping rough, but also those staying in places not intended as residential accommodation, living in homeless hostels, refuges and shelters, placed in unsuitable temporary accommodation, and sofa surfing.

We estimate that the number of people affected by core homelessness in England in 2022 to be about 242,000. This is up from 221,000 in 2020, 224,000 in 2018 and 206,000 in 2012. There seems to have been some narrowing in the regional differences in core homelessness rates, particularly

between the North and Midlands and London over the period 2012-22. This partly reflects the greater scale of 'Everyone In' provision in London, as well as the different timing of housing market fluctuations.

Baseline forecasts show most elements of core homelessness and the total rising significantly in 2023/24 above 2022 and earlier levels, with overall core homelessness in 2024 21% higher than 2020 levels. Current drivers of these increases relate primarily to inflation squeezing real incomes and increasing poverty and destitution, while private rents are rising alongside evictions, and social rented lettings are declining. Should the policy landscape remain fairly stable, further increases are projected in the longer term, particularly in London, with core homelessness rising by 37% above 2020 levels to 303,000 by 2041.

The most effective policies for reducing core homelessness in the short-term would be significant allocation of social lettings to core homeless households, increasing the level of Local Housing Allowance to cover the typical level of actual rents (and maintaining that level through indexation), and maximising prevention activity to the level of the higher performing local authorities. With these and other measures in place, core homelessness could be reduced by 21% to around 2020 levels in 2024 and by 27% in 2026.

In the longer-term, the largest projected impacts on reducing core homelessness would, again, be linked to increasing the Local Housing Allowance and allocating significant social lettings to core

homeless households, but also increasing housing supply, and large-scale expansion of Housing First accompanied by appropriate rehabilitation provision and a reduction of traditional hostel accommodation. Other significant contributors would be more effective prevention, achieving higher economic growth, improving the working age welfare benefits system, effective levelling up of economic performance across regions, and limiting evictions from private renting. A comprehensive programme of recommended measures is shown to be capable of reducing core homelessness by 37% in 2031, and by 47% in 2041, compared with what it would have been without any change in policies.

### Economic and policy impacts on homelessness

In 2021 the UK economy began to recover from the shock of the pandemic, but by the latter half of 2022, inflation had soared to over 10%,<sup>8</sup> with the poorest households often worst hit due to the large share of their budget spent on food, energy, and other essentials. The Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts suggest that while the UK economy may avoid a technical recession in 2023, it will not return to pre-pandemic growth levels until mid-2024,<sup>9</sup> with the outlook gloomier than for any other major global economy.<sup>10</sup> Taking wages, personal taxes, state benefits and inflation into account, the Office for Budget Responsibility expect real household disposable income to fall by 7.1% between 2021/22 and 2023/24, the sharpest fall in household disposable income since 1945.<sup>11</sup> The UK Government announced plans in November 2022 to reduce public spending by £30 billion by 2027/28.

6 Leppänen, A. (2022) 'Homelessness in London'. *London Councils*. 22nd December. Online: London Councils. <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/40105>

7 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2023) Live Tables: Statutory Homelessness Q4 2022 Table TA1. Online: DLUHC. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1155378/StatHomeless\\_202212.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1155378/StatHomeless_202212.ods)

8 Office for National Statistics (2022) *GDP First Quarterly Estimate Time Series*. London: ONS <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/datasets/secondestimateofgdp>

9 Office for Budget Responsibility (2022) *Economic and Fiscal Outlook – March 2023*. Online: OBR <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-march-2023/>

10 International Monetary Fund (2023) *World Economic Outlook – Update January 2023*. USA: IMF <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2023/01/31/world-economic-outlook-update-january-2023>

11 Office for Budget Responsibility (2022) *Economic and Fiscal Outlook – November 2022*. Online: OBR <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-november-2022/>



Outside of priority areas, much of the public sector will therefore have to make real terms savings over the next two years.<sup>12</sup> Key informants reported that opportunities for upstream prevention are shrinking, in large part because of sustained cuts to public services, now exacerbated by a cost of living-related squeeze on resources, meaning that much of the prevention work undertaken by local authorities tends to be crisis intervention.

Around 22% of people in England (12.4 million) live in relative poverty after housing costs.<sup>13</sup> Even though this rate changed little in the decade to 2021,<sup>14</sup> many more children and working adults now face poverty, especially members of large families with three or more children. Food insecurity and destitution have also escalated, with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation cost of living tracker indicating that, by November 2022, some 3.7 million households in England were doing without essentials, including 3 million that were food insecure.<sup>15</sup>

Social security payments and the benefit cap were uprated by 10.1% in April 2023, in line with inflation. However, cuts and freezes to social security benefits since 2010 have seen the basic rates of social security benefits for working age households

fall below the level required to avoid destitution.<sup>16</sup> Along with benefit sanctions, which have again been tightened,<sup>17</sup> and 'other' deductions from benefit,<sup>18</sup> this has contributed to rising levels of severe poverty, problem debt, and food bank dependency.<sup>19</sup> While the UK Government has introduced a range of measures to address the impact of the cost of living crisis, including the near universal energy price guarantee, and payments targeted at households in receipt of means-tested benefits, fewer than one in ten local authorities responding to our survey considered any of these measures likely to play any substantial role in mitigating the homelessness effects of the crisis.

Deep cuts to Discretionary Housing Payments have also constrained the ability of local authorities to prevent homelessness. The Department for Work and Pensions reduced the Discretionary Housing Payments allocation for England and Wales from £179.5 million to £140m in 2021/22 and by a further £40m to £100m in 2022/23, the lowest allocation in cash (nominal) terms for a decade.<sup>20</sup> While the Household Support Fund, which runs until March 2024 has the potential to help offset a proportion of these cuts, there is little evidence, one way or another, that it has done so.<sup>21</sup>

At the same time, only around two-thirds of all councils responding to our survey confirmed that they had a Local Welfare Assistance fund operating in their area. Considering that most local authority survey respondents in areas with such schemes said they were at least moderately important in mitigating homelessness, it is concerning that these crisis funds are absent in so many areas.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile housing market conditions continue to deteriorate for those on the lowest incomes. Over the course of 2016-21 just 31,580 out of the 257,929 affordable housing completions were for social rent. A further 59,175 new affordable homes were completed in 2021/22, but this included just 7,528 for social rent. It remains to be seen whether the recent commitment to deliver 32,000 social rented homes through Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26 will be achieved.<sup>23</sup> There is also uncertainty around the replacement of Section 106 developer contributions by the 'infrastructure levy' set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.<sup>24</sup> Alongside growing financial and political pressure on social landlords to address dampness and mould and to de-carbonise existing homes, and the continuation of the Right to Buy, suggest that access to social rented housing will become even tighter.

In the four years to 2021/22, local authority lettings to households new to the social housing (i.e., excluding transfers) fell by almost 20% from 64,000 to 52,000, driven mainly by a lack of new homes to replace Right To Buy sales. In the decade to 2020/21, the proportion of general needs

lettings to new social tenants allocated to statutory homeless households by all social landlords increased from 20% to 31%. But this has been driven more by the sharp drop in lettings than by an increase in the numbers of homeless households allocated a social tenancy. In the three years to 2020/21, the number of general needs lettings to homeless households averaged 42,000 while the number of lettings to new social tenants fell from 174,000 to 143,000. Three-quarters (74%) of respondents to our local authority survey reported that it had become more difficult to secure social rented tenancies for homeless households and those at risk over the past year.

At the same time an overwhelming majority of respondents to our local authority survey (97%) reported that it had become more difficult to source private rentals for households experiencing or at risk of homelessness over the past year. Growing demand for a dwindling flow of advertised private lets has contributed to a rapid rise in rents, with commercial indices suggesting that advertised rents increased by up to 12% in 2022.<sup>25</sup> The continued freeze of the Local Housing Allowance at April 2020 rates has reduced the support available to help with housing costs, with potentially just 8% of private properties now available to rent at Local Housing Allowance rates or below.<sup>26</sup> The vast majority of local authorities responding to our survey (81%) reported that the re-freezing of Local Housing Allowance rates had been 'very challenging' in relation to efforts to manage and reduce homelessness.

12 Public Services Committee (2022) *Fit for The Future? Rethinking The Public Services Workforce*. London: House of Lords <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5803/ldselect/pubserv/48/48.pdf>

13 Individuals that live in a household with an income equivalent to 60% or less of median household income

14 The UK wide AHC rate fell by 1% i2020-21, but this was not statistically significant.

15 Earwaker, R (2022) *Going Under And Without: JRF's Cost Of Living Tracker- Winter 2022/23*. York: JRF <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/going-under-and-without-jrfs-cost-living-tracker-winter-202223>

16 Bramley, G. (2023) *Destitution in the UK: income thresholds for October 2022*. York: JRF <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/destitution-uk-income-thresholds-october-2022>

17 Pattaro, S., Bailey, N., Williams, E., Gibson, M., Wells, V., Tranmer, M., & Dibben, C. (2022) 'The Impacts of Benefit Sanctions: A Scoping Review of the Quantitative Research Evidence.' *Journal of Social Policy*, 51(3): 611-653 <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-social-policy/article/impacts-of-benefit-sanctions-a-scoping-review-of-the-quantitative-research-evidence/9272BC857236795930DCD6AB7B8E04A1>

18 Lloyds Bank Foundation (2022) *Deductions: The Driver of Poverty*. London: LBF <https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/media/h1adbmu/deductionsreport.pdf>

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

20 Department for Work and Pensions (2022) *Discretionary Housing Payments statistics*. Online: DWP <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/discretionary-housing-payments-statistics>

21 Department for Work and Pensions (2022) *Household Support Fund Management Information For 6 October 2021 to 31 March 2022*. Online: DWP <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-support-fund-management-information-6-october-2021-to-31-march-2022>

22 Trussell Trust (2022) *Local Lifelines: Investing in Local Welfare During and Beyond Covid-19*. London: Trussell Trust [https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/10/LWAS\\_1020\\_v3.pdf](https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/10/LWAS_1020_v3.pdf)

23 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good: September 2022*. London: DLUHC <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ending-rough-sleeping-for-good/ending-rough-sleeping-for-good#annex-b-summary-of-commitments-and-policies>

24 Centre for Social Justice (2022) *Levying Up - Ensuring Planning Reform Delivers Affordable Homes*. London: CSJ <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/library/levying-up>

25 Donnell, R. (2002) *UK Rental Market Report*. London: Hometrack <https://www.hometrack.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/UK-rental-market-Dec-22-FINAL-PM-HT.pdf>

26 Crisis (2022) *Falling Short - Housing Benefit and the Rising Cost of renting in England*. London: Crisis [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/247716/zoopla\\_briefingv6.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/247716/zoopla_briefingv6.pdf)



A rapid rise in eviction action by private landlords, and in particular 'no fault' cases since the end of 'pandemic-related' eviction measures in May 2021 is increasing calls for the Government to raise Local Housing Allowance rates to reflect the real cost of rent and to quicken the pace of private rental reform. Key informants to this study were unanimous in their support for the Renters Reform Bill, which was published on 17th May<sup>27</sup>, with the repeal of Section 21 'no fault' evictions being considered of particular importance.

The Government's overwhelming focus within homelessness policy in England in recent years has been on addressing rough sleeping. The Everyone In initiative, launched in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, saw the easing of restrictions on eligibility criteria to allow people at risk of sleeping rough to be accommodated in hotel or similar accommodation. However, by late 2022, as reported by many key informants, emergency accommodation options for people at risk of sleeping rough have since been subject to rapid shrink-back, with notable increases in rough sleeping now evident, particularly in London, as noted above.

A 'refreshed' Rough Sleeping Strategy was launched in September 2022, *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good*, underpinned by ongoing ambition to meet the 2024 target to 'end' rough sleeping as per the 2019 Conservative Party election manifesto commitment.<sup>28</sup> The new Strategy was broadly welcomed by research participants in this year's Monitor, with three-quarters (77%) of local authority respondents to our survey

indicating that it was at least 'somewhat helpful'. The Strategy sets out a definition of what it means to end rough sleeping, "which is that it is prevented wherever possible, and where it does occur it is rare, brief and non-recurrent".<sup>29</sup> Views on the definition were mixed: while most key informants considered it a realistic and helpful measure, some were concerned that it represents a weakening of the 2024 target. It was also widely noted by key informants that the new Strategy fails to resolve a fundamental tension between current immigration and homelessness policy in a context where over half of all people sleeping rough in London are non-UK nationals, many of whom will have No Recourse to Public Funds or other restricted eligibility for statutory support.

What was universally welcomed was the confirmation of sustained investment in the Rough Sleeping Initiative, which has increased from £30 million in 2018/19 to the most recent allocation of £500 million across three years. Predating the new Rough Sleeping Strategy, the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme, running from 2021 and now extended to 2025, was widely endorsed by our key informants as a useful mechanism for expanding the move-on options for those at risk of sleeping rough. This view was backed by three-quarters (74%) of respondents to our local authority survey, who reported that the programme had improved their ability to prevent and alleviate rough sleeping. The new Single Homeless Accommodation Programme,<sup>30</sup> which opened for bidding in January 2023, and intends to support up to 2,400 vulnerable young people and adults

sleeping rough or at risk of doing so to access supported accommodation, was also roundly welcomed. That said, some frustrations remained around the sustainability of accommodation associated with both programmes beyond the revenue funding timeframes. Also welcomed was the extension of the three Housing First regional pilots to 2024,<sup>31</sup> although again there is ongoing uncertainty over how the open-ended nature of the support required under Housing First will be funded in the long-term.

Beyond rough sleeping, there were few positive policy developments on homelessness emerging from this year's analysis, with concerns expressed that the strategic focus of government is overly- dominated by rough sleeping to the detriment of homelessness in its wider sense.<sup>32</sup> In particular, key informants reported that opportunities for upstream homelessness prevention<sup>33</sup> are shrinking because of sustained cuts to public services, now exacerbated by the cost of living-related crisis.<sup>34</sup> Consistent with this, large-scale longitudinal research by Crisis found that, while the Homelessness Reduction Act has opened up support and assistance for significantly more single adults than had hitherto been the case,<sup>35</sup> acute housing access pressures, coupled with insufficient staffing and service funding, meant

that many local authority staff felt it was challenging to deliver appropriate support under the Act. Concerningly, among those research participants whose contact with Housing Options had ended, nearly half (46%) remained homeless after going to the local authority for support.

Narrowing housing options for low income households are reflected in growing homelessness pressures as experienced by local authorities. It was particularly notable in this year's local authority survey that, in contrast to the fairly static picture presented by official statistics on statutory homelessness assessments (see above), a large majority of respondents (85%) perceived that homelessness service 'footfall' had increased in the preceding year; almost half (49%) reported a 'significant' increase. A higher proportion of respondents reported increasing demand than in any other Homelessness Monitor survey since 2015. As noted above pressures on temporary accommodation emerged in as a central concern of key informants this year, with new demands associated with the Ukrainian<sup>36</sup> and Afghan<sup>37</sup> refugee crises, together with wider asylum dispersal pressures, said to be ratcheting up the existing difficulties faced by local authorities, with no clear solutions for longer-term accommodation for these groups.

27 Renters (Reform) Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament

28 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping For Good: September 2022*. Online: DLUHC [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1102408/20220903\\_Ending\\_rough\\_sleeping\\_for\\_good.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf) p. 16.

29 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping For Good: September 2022*. Online: DLUHC [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1102408/20220903\\_Ending\\_rough\\_sleeping\\_for\\_good.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf) p. 10.

30 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2023) *Guidance: Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme: prospectus and guidance (outside of Greater London)*. Online: DLUHC <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/single-homelessness-accommodation-programme/prospectus-and-guidance-outside-of-greater-london>

31 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Evaluation of the Housing First Pilots: Third Process Report*. Online: DLUHC [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1102005/Housing\\_First\\_Evaluation\\_Third\\_process\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102005/Housing_First_Evaluation_Third_process_report.pdf) Online: DLUHC p.1

32 Leppänen, A. (2022) 'Homelessness in London'. *London Councils*. 22nd December. Online: London Councils. <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/40105>

33 Fitzpatrick, S., Mackie, P., & Wood, J. (2021) Advancing a Five-Level Typology of Homelessness Prevention. *International Journal on Homelessness*. 1(1): 79–97 <https://doi.org/10.5206/ijoh.2021.1.1334> p. 87

34 Kerslake Commission (2022) *The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: A new way of working: ending rough sleeping together: Progress Report*. Online: Commission on Rough Sleeping. <https://www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/progress-report-2022/> p. 19

35 Sutton-Hamilton, C., Allard, M., Stroud, R., & Albanese, F. (2022) 'I hoped there'd be more options' *Experiences of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018-2021*. Online: Crisis <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/247390/hra-report-2022.pdf>

36 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP (2022) 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme launches 14th March. Online: gov.uk <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-launches>

37 UK Visas and Immigration and Home Office (2021) Afghan citizens resettlement scheme. 18th August. Online: gov.uk <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Linked with growing pressures on both temporary and supported accommodation has been the emergence of a problematic form of 'exempt' accommodation,<sup>38</sup> which lacks regulatory oversight and has been associated with exploitative practices and extremely poor quality of both accommodation and support. Four in ten (39%) of local authority respondents to our survey reported the existence of problematic exempt accommodation in their locality. Various actions have been taken by Government in recent years in response to concerns around this sector, including the publication in October 2020 of a national "statement of expectations" around supported housing, and the establishment of 'Oversight Pilots' focused on improving the quality and oversight of exempt supported accommodation in five areas<sup>39</sup> (now extended under the auspices of the Supported Housing Improvement Programme).<sup>40</sup> But a parliamentary select committee inquiry,<sup>41</sup> reporting in October 2022, noted ongoing exploitation of the system for profit by rogue providers.<sup>42</sup> This agenda has now been taken up in the form of a Private Members Bill - the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill - which aims to provide for stronger regulation of this problematic sector. Key informants welcomed the Bill but sounded some notes of caution about the need to avoid any unintended impacts of the proposed legislation on the supported accommodation sector more

generally, and flagged the unresolved issue of inadequate revenue funding for the sector.

### Conclusion

In the midst of the worst cost of living crisis for decades, Government policy on homelessness in England is overwhelmingly focussed on meeting the 2024 target to 'end' rough sleeping, but with little sense of how the tension with immigration policy that leaves so many people with No Recourse to Public Funds on the streets will be resolved. At the same time, the temporary accommodation system is facing unprecedented pressures, as access to affordable settled accommodation in both the social or private rented sector progressively narrows, and concerns mount about growing reliance on problematic 'exempt' accommodation in certain parts of the country. Looking ahead, the Homelessness Monitor series will continue to interrogate homelessness policies, trends and outcomes in England and the other two Great Britain jurisdictions until at least 2026. By next year's Monitor we should have a fuller picture of the homelessness impacts of the cost of living crisis, and also be closer to knowing whether the Government is likely to come anywhere near to meeting its rough sleeping target in 2024.

38 Wilson, W. (2022) Supported exempt accommodation (England). Research Briefing: House of Commons Library. Number CBP09362. Online: House of Commons Library <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9362/CBP-9362.pdf>

39 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Evaluation of the Supported Housing Oversight Pilots*. Online: DLUHC [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1068653/Evaluation\\_of\\_the\\_supported\\_housing\\_oversight\\_pilots.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1068653/Evaluation_of_the_supported_housing_oversight_pilots.pdf) p.1

40 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Supported Housing Improvement Programme: list of funding awards to local authorities*. Online: DLUHC <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-housing-improvement-programme-prospectus/supported-housing-improvement-programme-list-of-funding-awards-to-local-authorities>

41 UK Parliament Committees (2021) Levelling Up Committee launches inquiry into exempt accommodation. Online: UK Parliament <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/1688/exempt-accommodation/news/159501/levelling-up-committee-launches-inquiry-into-exempt-accommodation/>

42 House of Commons, Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee (2022) *Exempt Accommodation*. Online: HoC <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/30512/documents/175989/default/> p. 3

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