Annual Review 2023

Homeless Link

Support for single homeless people in England

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Produced by
Homeless Link Research Team

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Executive summary

For the past sixteen years, Homeless Link's national study on support delivered by the homelessness sector in England has provided crucial evidence to inform policy and practice. By exploring key trends in single homelessness[1] and the nature and availability of support, this sixteenth edition of our *Support for Single Homeless People in England: Annual Review 2023* makes an important contribution to the evidence base on single homelessness provision in England. The research aims to help service providers, commissioners, policy makers, and local authorities understand and respond to the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

The findings are based on four key data sources including a survey of 241 accommodation providers and 61 day centres from across England, data from the Homeless England database, and national government statistics. The comprehensive nature of this analysis allows us to assess not only the current state of single homelessness provision, but to identify and analyse historic trends.

Homelessness trends

2023 was a year marked by significant increases in all forms of homelessness as continued pressures on the economy pushed more and more people into homelessness. Local authorities are facing extremely high levels of demand leading to record highs in number of households in temporary accommodation and causing ripple effects through the rest of the system. Policy decisions made in other government departments also had a big impact on trends in 2023, particularly amongst newly recognised refugees.

- 324,990 households were at risk of or experienced homelessness from April 2023 to March 2024, an 8% increase on 2022-23, and a 21% increase from 2018-19 when the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) was first introduced. This includes:
    - 146,430 households threatened with homelessness within 56 days and owed a prevention duty, a 3% increase from 2022-23, and a 1% decrease from 2018-19.
    - 178,560 households experiencing statutory homelessness and owed a relief duty, a 12% increase from 2022-23, and a 47% increase from 2018-19.
- 57,340 households (39%) owed a prevention duty due to the end of an assured shorthold tenancy in the private rented sector, the most common cause of prevention duty owed.

[1] The term 'single homelessness' is a commonly used term in the homelessness sector. It does not denote relationship status and is shorthand for 'people who have no dependent children in their household and who are not owed a statutory homelessness duty by a local authority.' The term can cover couples. Throughout this report we refer to single homelessness, and single homeless people. In both cases, this is the group to which we refer.

- 53,200 households (30%) owed a relief duty because friends and family were no longer willing or able to accommodate, the most common cause of relief duty owed.
- Due to changes in Home Office policy and processing of asylum decisions leading to increased evictions from asylum accommodation, there was a 251% increase from 2022-23 on people owed a relief duty as a result of being required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support.
- The 2023 rough sleeping snapshot found that 3,898 people were estimated to be sleeping rough on a given night, a 27% increase from 2022 and a 120% increase since 2010. Rough sleeping increased in every English region compared with 2022.
- As of 31 December 2023, there were 112,610 households in temporary accommodation. This is a 12% increase on the previous year, and a 35% increase compared to 2018/19 when the HRA was first introduced.

Availability of and access to homelessness services

This report finds that the homelessness sector, and particularly accommodation provision, has been steadily contracting since 2008 when this research series began, and at a rate that is at odds with the increases in homelessness and rough sleeping seen across England.

- In 2023 there are 907 accommodation projects for single homeless people in England.
- The number of accommodation services has marginally decreased by 0.4% from last year, but is still 30% lower than a decade ago in 2013, and 48% lower than 2008 when this data series began.
- There are 32,466 bedspaces in England, a decrease of 2% from 2022, an 18% decrease from 2013, and a 45% decrease since 2008.
- With growing pressure on services 67% of accommodation projects reported having to turn someone away from support because their project was full.
- 81% of accommodation projects are mixed gender, with 10% men only and 9% women only.
- 38% (343) of accommodation projects are youth specific services.
- 6% (55) of accommodation projects are able to support people with high or complex needs.
- A total of 168 day centres operate throughout England as of 2023. This is a slight decrease compared to 2022 when there were 173 day centres.

Support needs and support services available

There is evidence that since the pandemic the level and visibility of support needs of people accessing homelessness services has increased substantially. Despite most accommodation providers offering low to medium support needs provision, almost all services are now supporting people with a range of overlapping needs. Barriers to statutory services, in particular health and social care, remain the biggest challenges in terms of ensuring people are accessing the support they need.

- 83% of day centres are seeing an increase in people experiencing homelessness for the first time, as are 46% of accommodation providers.
- Both day centres and accommodation providers also reported big increases in people who have recently lost their job, at 59% and 60% respectively.
- Accommodation providers and day centres also reported substantial increases in refugees accessing their services, at 60% and 67% respectively. This is alongside a 48% increase of people with no recourse to public funds in both accommodation services and day centres.
- Mental health remained the most commonly reported support need amongst accommodation providers (95%) in 2023, a 14% increase since 2022 and a 2% decrease compared to 2021. Compared to 2017, there was a 61% increase.
- Mental health was also the most commonly reported support need amongst day centres (98%).
- Day centres also reported high levels of addiction related support needs, both drug dependency (94%) and alcohol addiction (94%), as well as dual diagnosis (94%).
- Access to mental health support remains the biggest barrier for both accommodation providers and day centres (92% and 91% respectively).
- Accommodation providers also reported barriers in accessing physical health care services (64%) and drug and alcohol support services (61%).
- 69% of day centres reported barriers in accessing immigration advice.

Funding

Since the lifting of the Supporting People ringfence in 2008, the funding model of the sector has changed substantially. There has been a remarkable drop off in the number of accommodation providers supporting people experiencing single homelessness who are funded primarily through their local authority. Instead, there has been a steady rise in Housing Benefit as the main source of funding, and this took over as the most dominant funding source in the sector in 2017. Since the end of the Supporting People ringfence in 2008 there has been a 1700% increase in Housing Benefit as a funding source for homelessness accommodation and a 71% decrease in local authority commissioned services.

- Housing benefit is the most commonly cited main source of income for accommodation providers (35%), and 82% of all providers receive Housing Benefit as part of their overall income.

- 54% of those who receive Housing Benefit as a main income source are in receipt of Enhanced Housing Benefit
- Since the end of the Supporting People ringfence in 2008 there has been a 1700% increase in Housing Benefit as the main funding source for homelessness accommodation providers and a 71% decrease in local authority commissioned contracts.
- Income for day centres is heavily reliant on fundraising, grants and philanthropy with income from these sources the main funding for 48% of providers. This is most commonly through grant funding (20%) and individual giving (16%).
- 26% of accommodation providers stated that their income had decreased since the previous year, with 44% stating there was no change to their income, and 29% reporting an increase.
- 31% of day centres stated that their income had decreased since the previous year, with 33% stating there was no change to their income, and 35% reporting an increase.
- 41% of accommodation providers and 33% of day centres reported they risk service closures as a result of rising costs, and 36% of accommodated providers stated they have already reduced their provision.

Move on from accommodation

The main aim of most homelessness services is to support people to develop the skills and abilities to move on from homelessness and into independent living, but accommodation providers are facing increasing barriers to be able to support people into secure, sustainable housing.

- 29% (2,908) of people currently being accommodated are waiting to move on from their current provision into more secure, sustainable housing.
- 54% (1,584) of people waiting to move on have been waiting for six months or longer.
- Lack of available social housing (86%) and the lack of private rented sector (PRS) accommodation at Local Housing Allowance rate (63%), are the two main barriers to move on from homeless accommodation.
- Of those who do move on from their accommodation, most leave to positive destinations. On average, 39% of residents move on to social housing, 20% move on to supported housing, and 13% move on to PRS.
- In contrast, only 4% move on to rough sleeping, 4% move on to prison, and 4% turns to sofa surfing.

Conclusion

2023 has been an interesting year in the homelessness sector. Although for many working with single homelessness populations, the security of a three year funding cycle from Government in 2022 meant that there was greater financial certainty than previous yearly rollovers, increasing inflation and the rising cost of living placed enormous financial pressures onto the frontline. Increased energy bills, costs of repairs and maintenance, and the cost of general provisions for services have all impacted on the day-to-day offer available.

At the same time, we continue to see an increase in demand from diverse populations and causes of homelessness, including sharp increases in affordability and poverty driven homelessness. As services feel the pressure of increased costs at the same time as demand is rising, the homelessness sector is under enormous strain and we are starting to see the impact of over a decade of underinvestment in single homelessness provision as rough sleeping continues to rise.

There were an estimated 3,898 people sleeping on the streets on a given night in 2023, a 27% increase on 2022. Meanwhile there are record numbers of households in temporary accommodation, and the number of households owed a statutory duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act are also at the highest since current records began. At the same time, the number of accommodation providers and bedspaces available have both decreased from 2022, and are the second lowest numbers on record.

Homeless Link began tracking the size and scale of the single homelessness sector in 2008. Since then, the number of accommodation providers has reduced by 48% and the number of bedspaces has reduced by 45%. Despite increases in all forms of homelessness over the last sixteen years, the homelessness sector has seen a steady contraction as funding sources and policy priorities have shifted.

The change in the main funding source for accommodation providers is a notable trend over the Annual Review data series, with the transition from almost all providers (86%) being funded primarily through local authority commissioned contracts or grants (Supporting People at the time) in 2008, to only 25% of accommodation providers reporting local authorities as their primary funding source in 2023.

The ongoing impact of rising inflation and the increased cost of living also continues to be evidenced. 66% of accommodation providers and 30% of day centres reported that they have services that are no longer financially viable, and over a third of accommodation providers reported that they had already reduced their service offer to cover increased costs.

Despite these budget pressures, 2023 continues the trend of people presenting to services with increased complexity of needs. There were high levels of providers supporting people with mental and physical health needs, substance misuse and addiction needs, and history of offending behaviour. While health and social care related needs are the most prominent, providers are also working with people who been affected by sexual abuse or exploitation, learning disabilities and modern-day slavery.

Despite this, only 9% of accommodation providers state they are suited to supporting people with a high or complex needs and 60% reported they had rejected a referral because the individual's needs were too high or complex. The diversity and severity of people accessing homelessness accommodation services is profound and the level of specialism necessary to provide appropriate support must be acknowledged.

Ongoing pressures caused by lack of affordable housing are also demonstrated throughout this report. 29% of people currently accommodated across the homelessness sector are waiting to move on from their current provision into more secure, sustainable housing but are unable to due to a lack of suitable options. Lack of available social housing (86%) and the lack of private rented sector (PRS) accommodation at Local Housing Allowance rate (63%) are the two main barriers to move on from homeless accommodation.

The 2023 Annual Review of Support for Single Homeless People highlights a system facing enormous challenges. Increased financial pressures and precarity coupled with rising demand are exposing systematic challenges in the sector. Despite this, regional variation tells us that there are examples of local areas working to reverse these trends, to increase capacity and to find ways of providing the support needed by people experiencing homelessness.

Chapter 1. Introduction

For the past sixteen years, Homeless Link's national study on support provided by the homelessness sector in England, has provided crucial evidence to inform policy and practice. By exploring key trends in single homelessness and the nature and availability of support, this sixteenth edition of *Support for Single Homeless People in England: Annual Review 2023* makes an important contribution to the evidence base on single homelessness provision in England. The research aims to help service providers, commissioners, policy makers, and local authorities, understand and respond to the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

Methodology

The findings for this report are drawn from four key data sources:

1. Telephone and online survey from 241 accommodation providers (27% response rate) conducted between November 2024 and January 2025

2. Telephone and online survey from 61 homelessness day centres (36% response rate) conducted between November 2024 and January 2025.

The sample structure was a vital part of this survey. Homeless Link ensured that the profile of the projects interviewed closely represented the profile of the sector as a whole. For this survey, we achieved 90% confidence intervals of ±5% for the survey results from accommodation providers as a discrete group, and we achieved a 95% confidence interval of ±5% from the aggregated grouping of accommodation providers and day centres. Appendix 1 providers further detail on our survey methodology.

3. Homeless England database figures on projects and bed space availability.

This database is managed by Homeless Link and holds information about homelessness services in England. Although the data is not live, it is updated regularly and considered to be the most accurate data source on homelessness services in England. Data on the availability of services and bed spaces are extracted from Homeless England, allowing a comparative analysis with previous publications of the Annual Review. Overall comparisons of accommodation projects, day centres and bed spaces can be given from 2008. Changes in methodology mean detailed breakdowns are from 2014 onwards.

4. Existing data on homelessness trends, including national statutory homelessness and rough sleeping figures as published by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Data accuracy

In line with all Annual Reviews since 2017, the survey asked services to provide data for the period of April 2022 – March 2023, allowing for a year-on-year comparison with the previous year's report. Some questions, such as those related to funding, have consistently asked for information on the last financial year and therefore allow for comparison over a longer time period. Changes to questions over time mean that trend comparison is not always possible. Certain questions ask for snapshot data relating to records of "last night", "last month" last year". Within different homelessness services, amounts and methods of data collection tend to vary however, and some survey questions may therefore be based on informed estimates provided by the responding organisation, rather than exact figures (Table 1.1.). For this report, the majority of accommodation providers (62%) and day centres (46%) provided mostly exact figures.

Table 1.1. Quality of data provided by respondents

	Accommodation providers	Day centres
All exact figures	17%	21%
Mostly exact figures	62%	46%
About half and half	9%	15%
Mostly estimates	11%	13%
All estimates	1%	4%

*accommodation providers N=170; day centres N=52

Table 1.2 below reflects the distribution of accommodation providers and day centres by region. The sample size of day centres is too small to be able to provide representative regional breakdowns.

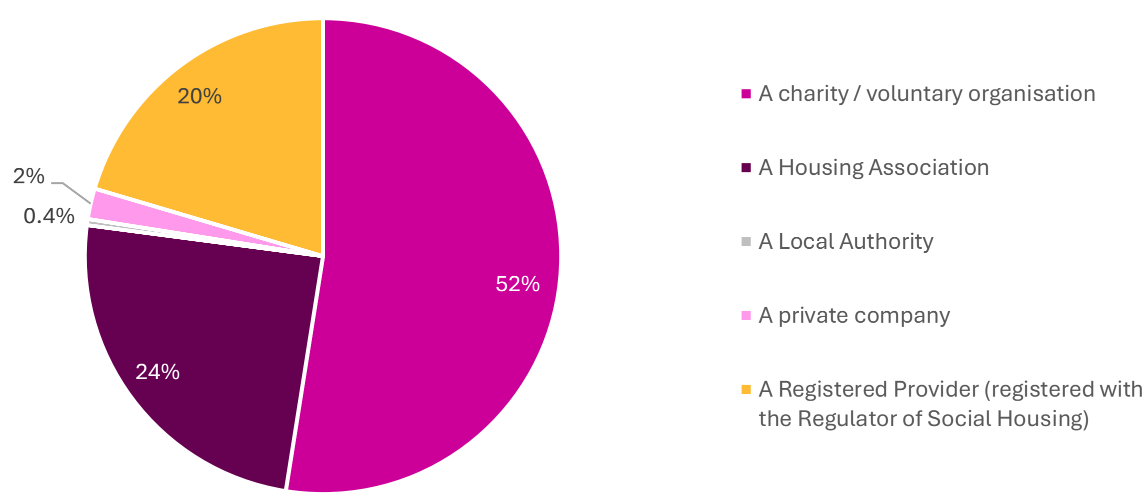
Table 1.2. Survey response rates by region

	Accommodation Providers		Day Centres	
	N	%	N	%
East of England	42	17%	6	10%
East Midlands	13	5%	4	7%
London	27	11%	9	15%
North East	16	7%	3	5%
North West	32	13%	8	13%
South East	37	15%	13	21%
South West	35	15%	6	10%
West Midlands	16	7%	6	10%
Yorkshire and the Humber	23	10%	6	10%
Total	241		61	

Accommodation provider respondents

Chart 1.1. shows the breakdown of types of accommodation providers that responded to the survey. Half of respondents were charities or voluntary organisations (52%, 126), followed by Housing Associations (24%, 59) and Registered Providers (20%, 49). A small proportion of respondents represented private companies (2%, 5) and local authority accommodation (0.4%, 1).

Chart 1.1. Accommodation provider survey respondents 2023



N=241

Chapter 2. Single homelessness in England

This chapter provides context for the 2023 report. It explores the different categories of homelessness and then looks at the existing evidence on the numbers and distribution of people experiencing homelessness in England. The evidence is drawn from government figures on statutory homelessness and rough sleeping, published by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Key headlines

- 324,990 households were at risk of or experienced homelessness from April 2023 to March 2024, an 8% increase on 2022-23 and a 21% increase from 2018-19 when the HRA was first introduced. This includes:
    - 146,430 households threatened with homelessness within 56 days and owed a prevention duty, a 3% increase from 2022-23, and a 1% decrease from 2018-19
    - 178,560 households experiencing statutory homelessness and owed a relief. duty, a 12% increase from 2022-23, and a 47% increase from 2018-19.
- 57,340 households (39%) were owed a prevention duty due to the end of an assured shorthold tenancy in the private rented sector, the most common cause of prevention duty owed.
- 53,200 households (30%) were owed a relief duty because friends and family were no longer willing or able to accommodate, the most common cause of relief duty owed.
- Due to changes in Home Office policy and processing of asylum decisions leading to increased evictions from asylum accommodation, there was a 251% increase from 2022-23 on people owed a relief duty as a result of being required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support.
- The 2023 rough sleeping snapshot found that 3,898 people were estimated to be sleeping rough on a given night, a 27% increase from 2022 and a 120% increase since 2010. Rough sleeping increased in every English region compared with 2022.
- As of 31 December 2023, there were 112,610 households in temporary accommodation. This is a 12% increase on the previous year, and a 35% increase compared to 2018/19 when the HRA was first introduced.

Types of homelessness

The term 'homelessness' comprises a range of different temporary and long-term circumstances that extend beyond sleeping rough or being housed in temporary accommodation by a local authority. The legal definition of homelessness derives from the Housing Act 1996 and states that an individual is classified as 'homeless' if they do not have accommodation that: (a) they can legally occupy, (b) is accessible to them, (c) is 'physically available to them (and their household), and (d) is reasonable for them to live in.

Statutory homelessness

The term 'statutory homelessness' refers to households — classified as either families (those with dependents) or individuals (single homelessness) — that have a legal entitlement to a homelessness duty by their local authority. Until the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2018 this was limited to those owed a Main Duty, and were therefore deemed to be both unintentionally homeless and in priority need, which included anyone who was: pregnant; living with dependent children; homeless as a result of fire, flood or other disaster; aged under 18, a care leaver aged 18 to 20; and/or assessed as vulnerable.[2] The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced people who are made homeless as a result of fleeing domestic abuse as an additional priority need category.[3]

The vulnerability assessment includes those with physical disabilities and mental health needs. However, assessments for vulnerability meant that decisions were at local authority discretion and led to many single homeless applicants being excluded from statutory support.

One of the goals of the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) was to address the inconsistency in access to support for single people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Expanding the statutory duties on local authorities ensured that support was provided regardless of priority need decisions. Eligibility entitlements based on immigration status still apply to all duties under the HRA.

Under the HRA there are three duties under which the local authority can grant applicants accommodation and/or support:

Prevention duty: Local authorities must help prevent households deemed to be threatened with experiencing homelessness in the next 56 days from becoming homeless. If, during this period, the household experiences homelessness, they will be moved to a relief duty.[4]

Relief duty: Local authorities 'must take reasonable steps' to relieve homelessness within 56 days, primarily through securing alternative accommodation.[5]

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[2] The Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002, extended the definition of ‘vulnerable’ to include: mental health problems; physical or learning disabilities; old age; leaving prison or the Armed Forces; care leavers; being at risk of violence (or threats of violence); other special reasons.

[3] s.189(1)(e) Housing Act 1996 as inserted by s. 78 Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

[4] This is defined in Section 195 of the 1996 Act. Available here: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/section/4#section-4-2.

[5] This is defined in Section 189B of the 1996 Act. Available here: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/section/5#section-5-2.

Main duty: If, at the end of the 56 day relief duty period, a household is: (a) still deemed to be homeless, (b) in priority need, (c) eligible for assistance, and (d) not intentionally homeless, they are entitled to accommodation from the local authority. The local authority should conduct an assessment and provide temporary accommodation until more permanent accommodation can be provided.[6]

Single homelessness[7]

This term covers individuals or couples without dependent children who are homeless. People experiencing homelessness within his category are less likely to meet the priority need criteria of homelessness legislation (see above) and therefore often do not qualify under the main duty of the HRA which would guarantee them housing under local authority statutory duty. As mentioned above, being considered 'vulnerable' is particularly significant for single homeless people, as it is the primary way they are found to be in priority need. Consequently, this population are often not eligible for statutory temporary accommodation despite frequently experiencing some of the most extreme forms of homelessness, including rough sleeping. There is however a substantial network of services and support that are focussed specifically on supporting this population, which although often integrated with local authority provision can often sit outside of the statutory homelessness offer.

This report explores how these homelessness support services provide an alternative source of support for single homeless people in these circumstances. Many people experiencing single homelessness will stay in supported accommodation and/or short term accommodation (e.g. hostels, shelters and temporary supported accommodation) provided by the voluntary homelessness sector, while others may end up trapped in street homelessness or end up 'hidden' from the system.[8]

Hidden homelessness

Due to difficulties accessing support, personal circumstances or lack of understanding about the support available, many single homeless people end up what is termed 'hidden homeless'. Living in squats, sleeping on someone's floor, sofa-surfing with friends, sleeping on night buses/underground trains/airports or sleeping rough in concealed locations, these individuals are often not 'visible' on the streets or to services and as a

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[6] See DLUHC's *Homelessness data: notes and definitions* (2018). Available at; https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions

[7] The term 'single homelessness' is a commonly used term in the homelessness sector. It does not denote relationship status and is shorthand for 'people who have no dependent children in their household and who are not owed a statutory homelessness duty by a local authority.' The term can cover couples. Throughout this report we refer to single homelessness, and single homeless people. In both cases, this is the group to which we refer.

[8] Crisis (2017) *Moving on: Improving Access to Housing for Single Homeless People in England,* https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237833/moving_on_2017.pdf

result will not receive the advice and support that they need.[9] Although the introduction of the Relief Duty through the HRA means that since 2018 many of these people are entitled to some statutory support, this is a population that is traditionally less visible and, as a result, more likely to be disengaged from services and support.

The lack of visibility means that people experiencing hidden homelessness are less likely to be captured in official statistics, making an accurate capture of the scale of hidden homelessness difficult. However, there are increasing data available to help better understand the hidden homeless population.[10] In 2018/19 the English Housing Survey included a new question on sofa surfing which showed that 541,000 households had someone living with them in the last 12 months who would otherwise be homeless.[11]

Rough sleeping

The term 'rough sleeping' refers to the experience of people who sleep outside or in buildings or places that are unfit for human habitation (e.g., car parks, cars, stations, doorways). Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness and is a dangerous and isolating experience that has a severely detrimental impact on an individual's physical and mental health and life expectancy.[12]

To estimate the numbers of people sleeping rough in England on any given night, local authorities conduct an annual snapshot estimate to approximate rates and trends in rough sleeping across the country. The current methodology for the rough sleeping snapshot was introduced in 2010 and uses a specific and defined definition of what rough sleeping means: *'People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes")'.*

The snapshot approach is not intended to provide a complete figure of the number of people rough sleeping in England and is by definition a best estimate count of street homelessness. In conducting these estimates, local authorities are expected to consult with local agencies, such as the police, voluntary sector, and outreach teams, to ensure

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[9] Reeve, K. and Batty, E. (2011) *The hidden truth about homelessness. Experiences of single homelessness in England,* https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/236815/the_hidden_truth_about_homelessness.pdf

[10] ONS (2023) *"Hidden" homelessness in the UK: evidence review*. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/hiddenhomelessnessintheukevidencereview/2023-03-29

[11] DLUCH. (2020). *English Housing Survey 2018 to 2019: sofa surfing and concealed households - fact sheet*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2018-to-2019-sofa-surfing-and-concealed-households-fact-sheet

[12] Aldridge R.W., et al. (2019). *Causes of death among homeless people: a population-based cross-sectional study of linked hospitalisation and mortality data in England*. Wellcome Open Res, 4(49)

they have the most accurate information on who is likely to be sleeping rough on a given night and where they are likely to be found.

Rough sleeping policy context

After rough sleeping figures rose from 2010 through to 2017, the Government launched a new Rough Sleeping Strategy with the goal of halving rough sleeping by 2024 and permanently ending it by 2027.[13] This was to be accomplished through a focus on prevention, intervention, and recovery. The following year, the Government increased this goal with the new aim to end rough sleeping by 2024.

Interventions to support the Rough Sleeping Strategy include the creation of the Rough Sleeping Initiative in March 2018. The most recent round of funding was announced in September 2022, and includes up to £500 million for 2022-25, which will be distributed in 303 areas.[14] This is the first time that the RSI funding has provided multi-year funding settlements. Alongside RSI Government also introduced the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) and the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP).

In 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic introduced a significant change in rough sleeping policy and intervention with unprecedent support for people experiencing street homelessness. Everyone In was the main government initiative marking this period, whereby all people who were experiencing or at risk of rough sleeping were offered private accommodation. Approximately 37,000 people were housed through this campaign,[15] leading to dramatic reductions in rough sleeping across the country and over 26,000 people being placed in longer-term accommodation.[16]

For the first time in England’s history, Everyone In meant that nearly every person living in this country had access to accommodation, including single people without priority need and those with limited or no recourse to public funds. While these measures began at a clear point in time on 26 March 2020, the end of this provision has been less clear, and regional variation started to appear throughout the latter stages of 2020 and into 2021. By 2022 almost all measures enacted during the pandemic had ended.

In September 2022 the government released an updated Rough Sleeping Strategy, “Ending Rough Sleeping for Good” including for the first time a definition for ending

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[13] MHCLG. (2018). *Rough Sleeping Strategy.* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy_WEB.pdf

[14] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-initiative-2022-to-2025-funding-allocations

[15] MHCLG. (2021). Government continues drive to end rough sleeping, building on success of Everyone In. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-continues-drive-to-end-rough-sleeping-building-on-success-of-everyone-in.

[16] Wilson, W. and Barton, C. (2022). Rough sleeping (England). *House of Commons Library.* Available at: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN02007/SN02007.pdf.

rough sleeping: it is prevented wherever possible, and where it does occur it is rare, brief and non-recurrent.[17]

As part of this new strategy MHCLG introduced a new rough sleeping output framed around the Ending Rough Sleeping Data Framework. The framework introduced a series of indicators that measure local areas success towards achieving the definition of ending rough sleeping, which is that it is prevented wherever possible, and where it does occur it is rare, brief, and non-recurring. This framework introduces monthly data capture from local authorities across five indicators:

- Number of new people sleeping rough
- Number of people sleeping rough after being discharged from institutions
- Number of people sleeping rough
- Number of people sleeping rough long term
- Number of people returning to rough sleeping

In addition to the long-term trends afforded by the rough sleeping snapshot, the new data framework allows for a richer understanding of the profile of people sleeping on our streets.

Despite the impact of the Everyone In scheme and investment made by the Government through RSI, RSAP, SHAP and other funding streams, in 2022 and 2023 pressures caused by increasing pressures on the affordable housing market and increased cost of living, driven by rising inflation, led to increased numbers of rough sleeping. This was also compounded by particular policy drivers such Streamlined Asylum Process that led to a surge of newly recognised refugees experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping in the second half of 2023.

Homelessness trends

For a range of reasons, it has been challenging to measure and assess homelessness trends in England. This includes the lack of a clear, consistent definition of homelessness, the use of a variety of different approaches to measuring single homelessness, and the wide prevalence of hidden homelessness.

The HRA presented a vital opportunity in our ability to estimate the scale of homelessness and, in particular, single homelessness. This change in legislation led to the replacement of the P1E data returns with a new system – the Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC) in April 2018. With the shift in the definition of homelessness beyond those in priority need, this has greatly expanded our ability to assess the scale of single

[17] DLUHC (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good.* Available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ending-rough-sleeping-for-good

homelessness however it does mean that most of our trend data now starts in April 2018 and is not comparable with historic data.

The statutory statistics collected by MHCLG includes a much greater level of detail on the reasons people are experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness, their support needs, their length of time in temporary accommodation, and the outcomes of prevention duties. - However, it is still vital to note that whilst this data helps us understand the wider trends, it does not tell us about those not engaging with support, people experiencing more hidden forms of homelessness, or those not entitled to support because of immigration restrictions.

Statutory homelessness

According to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) 2023-24 annual statutory statistics, 324,990 households were at risk of or experienced homelessness during this period and owed either a prevention or relief duty.[18] This is an 8% increase on 2022-23,[19] and a 21% increase from 2018-19[20] when the HRA was first introduced.

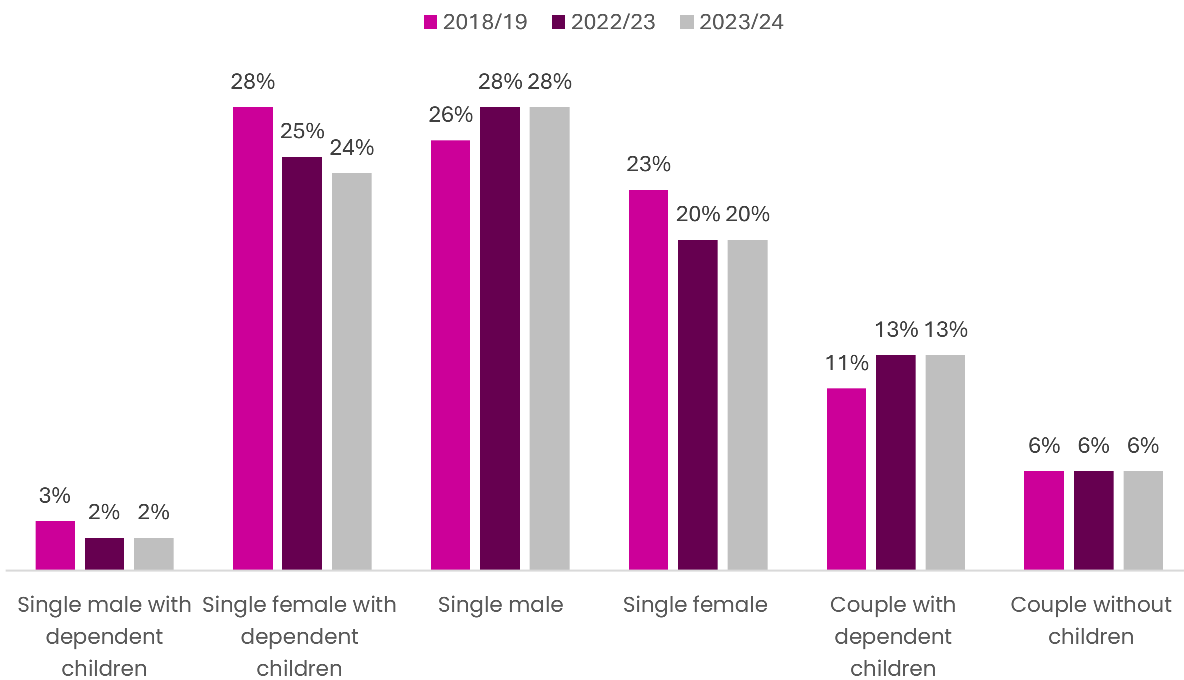
Prevention duty

In 2023-24, 146,430 households were threatened with homelessness within 56 days and owed a prevention duty. While this is a 3% increase from 2022-23, it is a 1% decrease from 2018-19. This may look encouraging in terms of a reduction in number of households at risk of homelessness, but this must be understood in context with a significant increase in households owed the relief duty over the same period, and therefore may suggest instead that households are accessing help too late.

The profile of households owed a prevention duty has remained very consistent with the previous year, with single males without dependents making up the highest proportion of households (41520, 28%), followed by single female parents (35,310, 24%), and single females without dependents (29,810, 20%). Compared with 2018-19 when the HRA was first introduced there have been some changes to the profile of those owed a prevention duty, when single female parents made up the largest proportion (28%). Chart 2.1 below sets out the changing profile of those owed a prevention duty between 2018-19, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

[18] MHCLG (2024) *Detailed local authority level tables: financial year 2023-24*
[19] MHCLG (2023) *Detailed local authority level tables: financial year 2022-23*
[20] MHCLG (2019) *Detailed local authority level tables: financial year 2018-19*

Chart 2.1. Profile of households owed prevention duty 2018/19, 2022/23, 2023/24



Of those owed a prevention duty, the most common reason was due to the end of an assured shorthold tenancy (AST) in the private rented sector, with 57,340 households making up 39% of the total proportion owed the duty. This is a 5% increase from 2022-23 and a 27% increase from 2018-19. Breaking down the reason for end of an AST:

- 37,040 households were owed a prevention duty because their landlord was selling or re-letting the property. This is a 5% increase on 2022-23 and a 54% increase on 2018-19.
- 8,070 households were at risk of homelessness due to rent arrears, a 5% decreased on 2022-23 and a 28% decrease on 2018-19.
- However, within that there has been a 92% increase from 2022-23 in people in rent arrears due to an increase in rent, and a 227% increase since 2018-19.
- Of those at risk of homelessness due to the end of an AST, 26,150 households had a valid section 21 notice, a 7% increase on 2022-23, and a 35% increase since 2018-19.

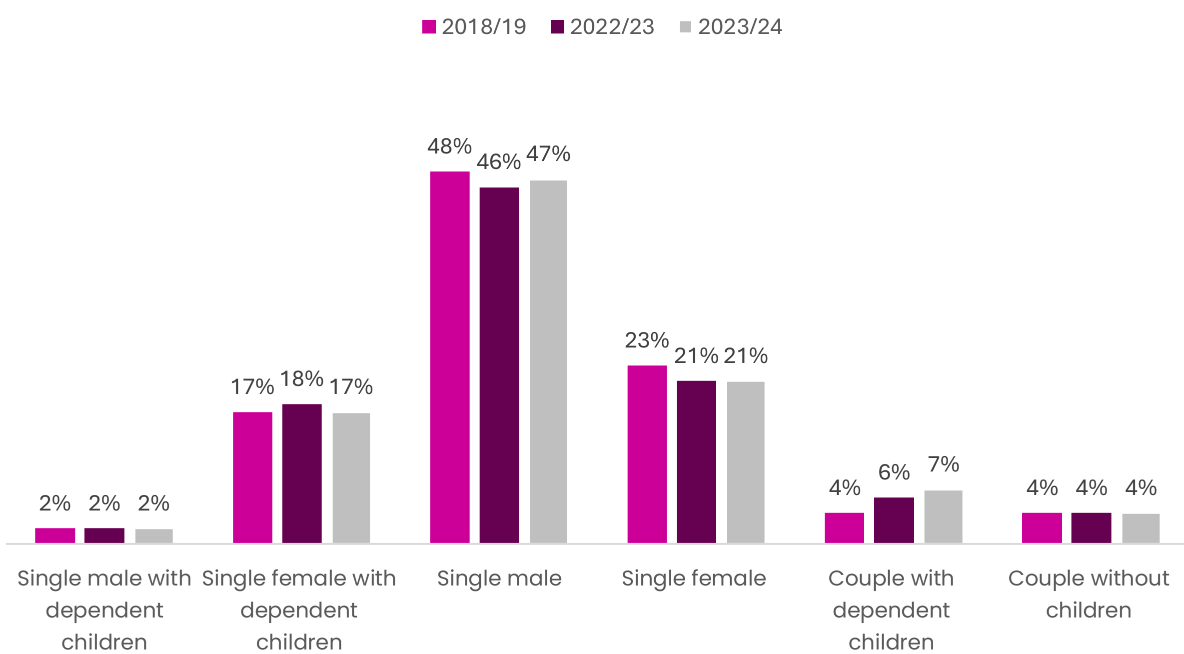
135,180 households ended their prevention duty in 2023-24. Of those 68,930 households had a positive outcome and secured accommodation for 6+ months. Whilst this is a 16% increase on 2018-19, it is a 0.4% decrease compared with the previous year. This decline in successful homelessness prevention outcomes is also evidenced when looking at comparative proportion of the total households whose duty ended with a successful outcome. In 2023-24, 51% of duties ended resulted in secured accommodation, compared with 53% in 2022-23 and 58% in 2018-19. In contrast 35,370 households ended their prevention duty homeless, a 10% increase on 2022-23 and 57% increase from 2018-19. This is also an increase in terms of proportions increasing from 24% of the total number of duties ended in 2022-23, and from 20% in 2018-19 to 26% in 2023-24.

Relief

In 2023-24,178,560 households were experiencing statutory homelessness and owed a relief duty. This is a 12% increase from 2022-23, and a 47% increase from 2018-19. The profile of households owed a relief duty has remained relatively consistent with the previous year with single males without dependents making up the highest proportion of households by a substantial margin (84,400, 46%). This is an increase in actual households from both 2022-23 (16% increase), and 2018-29 (45% increase). Single females make up the next largest group owed the relief duty (36,880, 21%), followed by single females with dependent children (29,670, 17%).

Since 2018/19 the biggest increases in households owed the relief duty are seen amongst those with dependent children, increasing by 62%, compared to an increase of 42% amongst households without dependent children. However, between 2022-23 and 2023-24 there was a reversal of the trend with the biggest increase seen amongst households without dependent children increasing by 14%, compared with 8% amongst households with dependent children.

Chart 2.2 Profile of households owed relief duty 2018/19, 2022/23, 2023/24



Of those owed a relief duty, the most common reason was friends or family no longer willing or able to accommodate, with 53,200 households making up 30% of the total proportion owed the duty. This is a 5% increase from 2022-23 and a 67% increase from 2018-19. Experiencing homelessness as a result of domestic abuse was the next main reason given at 27,760 households (16% of those owed relief duty). This is a 4% increase on 2022-23 and an 97% increase on 2018-19. The third most common reason was due to the end of an AST at 22,160 households (12% of those owed relief duty), a 9% increase from 2022-23 and a 63% increase from 2018-19.

The most significant and dramatic change in reasons for being owed a relief duty that presents in the 2023-24 data is the increase in homelessness as a result of being required to leave accommodation provided by the Home Office as asylum support. In 2023-24, 13,520 households were owed a relief duty after eviction from asylum support, a 251% increase on the previous year, and a 673% increase from 2018/19 (1,750 households).

199,120 households ended their relief duty in 2023-24. Of those, 64,010 households had a positive outcome and secured accommodation for 6+ months. Whilst this is a 57% increase on 2018-19 and 1% increase compared to the previous year, as a comparative proportion of the total households whose duty ended there is a reduction compared to previous years. In 2023-24, 32% of duties ended resulted in secured accommodation, compared with 36% in 2022-23 and 42% in 2018-19. In contrast, 97,280 households ended their relief duty still homeless at the point that 56 days elapsed, a 24% increase on 2022-23 and a 210% increase from 2018-19. This is also an increase in terms of proportions increasing from 45% of the total number of duties ended in 2022-23, and from 33% in 2018-19 to 49% in 2023-24.

Rough sleeping

Local authorities in England carry out an annual snapshot count or estimate of the number of people sleeping rough on a single ‘typical’ night in Autumn (October to November). These statistics provide a snapshot figure of those sleeping rough across local authorities in England. Local authorities decide which approach to use to determine the number of people sleeping rough in their local area on a single night.[21] All of the available methods record only those people seen, or thought to be, sleeping rough on a single ‘typical’ night. They do not include everyone in an area with a history of sleeping rough, or everyone sleeping rough in areas across the October-November period.

[21] Details on the approach options for the rough sleeping count are available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2023/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2023

Table 2.1. Annual comparison of rough sleeping in England with 2023

	Number of rough sleepers	% change (with 2023)	Numerical change (with 2023)
2010	1,768	120%	+2,130
2011	2,181	79%	+1,717
2012	2,309	69%	+1,589
2013	2,414	61%	+1,484
2014	2,744	42%	+1,154
2015	3,569	9%	+329
2016	4,134	-6%	-236
2017	4,751	-18%	-853
2018	4,677	-17%	-779
2019	4,266	-9%	-368
2020	2,688	45%	+1,210
2021	2,443	60%	+1,455
2022	3,069	27%	+829
2023	3,898	-	-

In Autumn 2023, there continues to be an increase in the number of rough sleepers for the second year in a row since 2022, with 3,898 people counted or estimated by local authorities to be sleeping rough.[22] This represents a 27% increase from 2022 (Table 2.1), and a 120% increase since the current methodology for measuring rough sleeping was introduced in 2010.

Regional trends in rough sleeping

There are regional variations in the numbers of people seen sleeping rough. As seen in Chart 2.3 below, London, the North West and the Yorkshire and the Humber saw the greatest increase in the number of people seen rough sleeping in 2023 when compared to 2022. The lowest increase was seen in West Midlands. No region saw a decrease in rough sleeping compared to 2022.

[22] DLUHC (2023) Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2022. Available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2022

Chart 2.3. Regional change in rough sleeping count, 2022 and 2023

In terms of overall distribution of rough sleeping across England as seen in Table 2.2 below, London (29%), the South East (17%) and South West (13%) reported the highest proportion of rough sleeping, with the North East (2%) reporting the lowest proportion of rough sleeping in England.

Table 2.2. Proportion of rough sleeping in England by region, 2023

East Midlands	7%
East of England	9%
London	29%
North East	2%
North West	9%
South East	17%
South West	13%
West Midlands	7%
Yorkshire and The Humber	7%

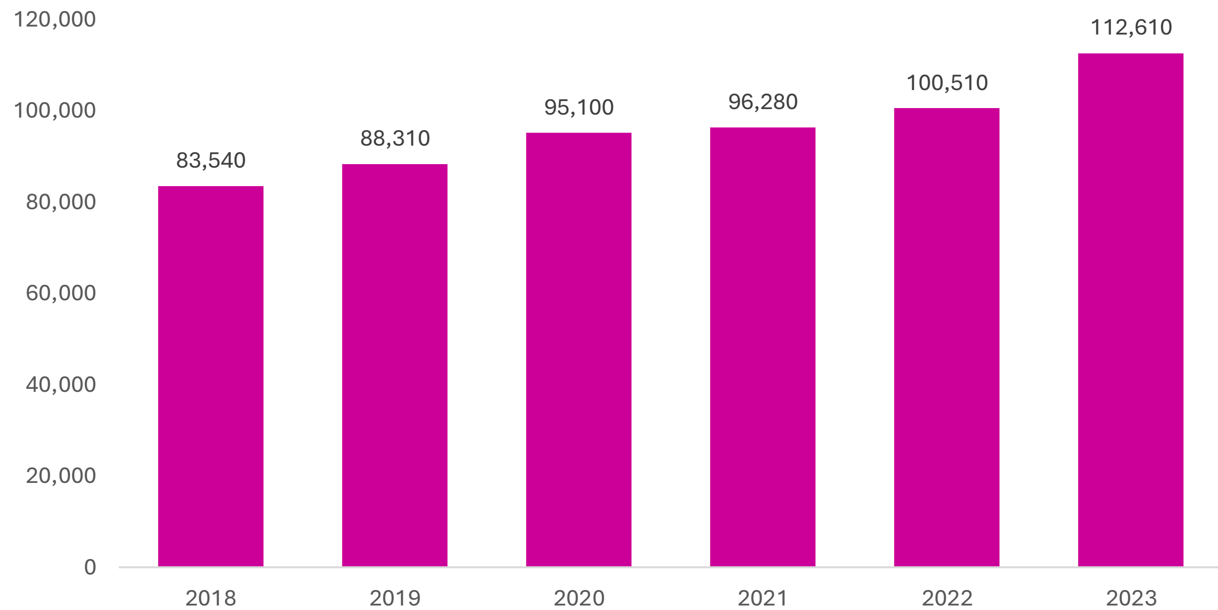
Temporary accommodation

Local authorities have a duty to accommodate any household who is in priority need. Temporary accommodation (TA) may be provided for as long as it takes to find permanent housing. Local authorities may also provide emergency accommodation whilst they are looking into a housing situation pending decision on priority need and main duty decision.

Not everyone owed a prevention or relief duty will be given temporary accommodation by their local authority as part of their statutory support.[23]

As of 31 December 2023, there were 112,610 households in temporary accommodation, a 12% increase on the previous year, and a 35% increase compared to 2018/19 when the HRA was first introduced. Chart 2.4 below sets out the number of households in TA as of 31 December since the introduction of the HRA. The total households in TA at the end of 2023 represent the highest number of households since current records began.

Chart 2.4. Total households in temporary accommodation 2018 -2023



Source: MHCLG (2024) *Statutory homelessness live tables*

For the second year in the row, most households in TA were accommodated in nightly paid, private lets (29,390 households) with the majority of these families with dependent children (20,030 households). This is one of the most costly and disruptive forms of temporary accommodation. Use of local authority or Housing Association stock is the second most common form of TA (27,390 households, of which 18,600 had dependent children), closely followed by PRS (26,700 households, of which 19,970 had dependent children). 15,950 households were in B&Bs. This is the highest number of households in B&Bs since records began, surpassing the previous peak of 13,950 in 2002. 33,320 households had been accommodated in TA outside of their local authority area, a 14% increase on 2022.

[23] Shelter (2023) *Temporary housing when homeless.* Available here: https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness/temporary_housing_when_homeless

Chapter 3. Availability and access to homelessness services

This chapter explores the availability of accommodation services and day centres in England. Drawing on findings from analysis of the Homeless England database and the survey with services from across England, it discusses key characteristics of existing provision and changes in this provision over the past year.

Key headlines

- In 2023 there are 907 accommodation projects for single homeless people in England.
- The number of accommodation services has marginally decreased by 0.4% from last year, but is still 30% lower than a decade ago in 2013, and 48% lower than 2008 when this data series began.
- There are 32,466 bedspaces in England, a decrease of 2% from 2022, an 18% decrease from 2013, and a 45% decrease since 2008.
- With growing pressure on services, 67% of accommodation projects reported having to turn someone away from support because their project was full.
- 81% of accommodation projects are mixed gender, with 10% men only and 9% women only.
- 38% (343) of accommodation projects are youth specific services.
- 6% (55) of accommodation projects are able to support people with high or complex needs.
- A total of 168 day centres operate throughout England as of 2023. This is a slight decrease in day centres compared to 2022 (173).

Definitions

Homelessness provision is described in various ways, and accommodation providers and day centres differ in size and in the level and nature of support offered. The following definitions cover the key features of both forms of provision:

Accommodation providers provide both short and long-term accommodation and generally aim to support people to prepare for independent living. Examples of accommodation projects include foyers, supported housing schemes, and hostels. The level of support, access criteria, and target groups vary between projects. Those able to live independently may be placed in accommodation with lower levels of support, while those with other types of support needs may need to live in accommodation that provides support to meet these needs.

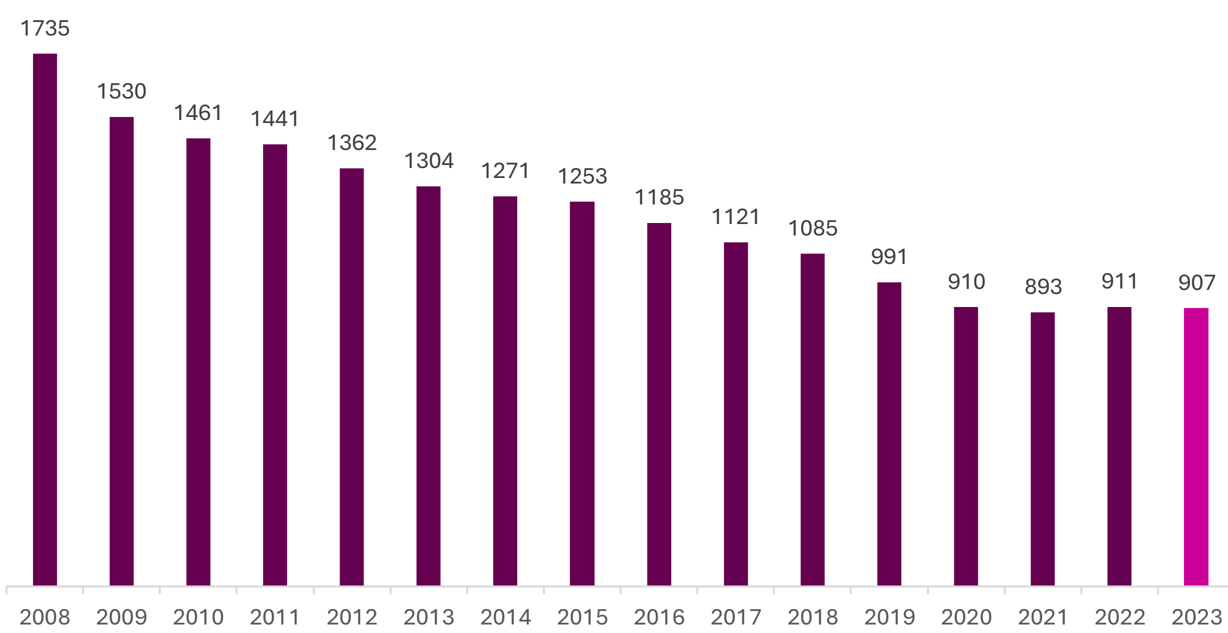
Day centres offer non-accommodation-based support for those sleeping rough and/or who are either experiencing or at risk of other forms of homelessness. Day centres are usually provided and run by voluntary, faith, or community organisations[24] and have often emerged in response to a local need.

Availability of homelessness accommodation services

Homeless Link has been tracking the availability of homelessness accommodation services since 2008, following the announcement of that the Supporting People ringfence would be lifted.

Data from the Homelessness England database identifies 907 accommodation projects for single people who are homeless in England in 2023, representing a marginal decrease of 0.4% from the previous year's figure of 911. The number of accommodation projects in 2023 is 30% lower compared to 10 years ago in 2013, and 48% lower than in 2008 when this data series starts. The data suggests that after a long period of reduction in the number of accommodation providers since 2008, that this decrease has stalled and the numbers have stayed relatively static since 2020.

Chart 3.1. Number of accommodation providers, 2008 - 2023



Source: Homeless England database, N=907.

[24] Findings from a survey of 124 day centres, showed that the majority were run by voluntary sector homelessness organisations (43%) or religious organisations (27%). https://www.kcl.ac.uk/scwru/pubs/2005/Crane-et-al-2005-Homeless.pdf

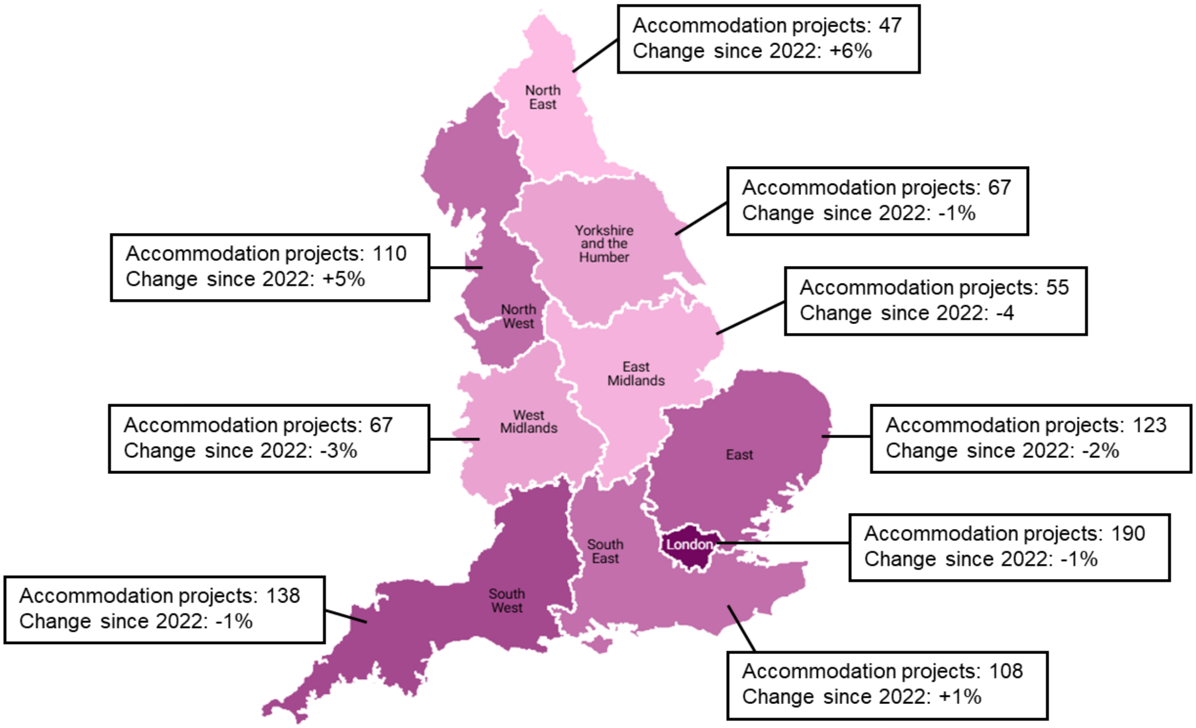
As seen in Chart 3.2 below, there is a slight increase in the number of accommodation providers between 2022 and 2023 for most regions: East England, East Midlands, London, South West, West Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber. For the remaining regions of North East, North West, and South East, there is a slight decline in the number of accommodation providers. Looking back over five years, and despite this being the period of the RSI programme, alongside the Rough Seeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) and the Supported Housing Accommodation Programme (SHAP) all regions in 2018 (with the exception of London) had higher number of accommodation providers compared to 2023.

Chart 3.2. Change in number of accommodation providers by region, (2018, 2022, 2023)

Source: Homeless England database

Map 3.1 below shows the geographical diversity when it comes to the distribution of accommodation projects.

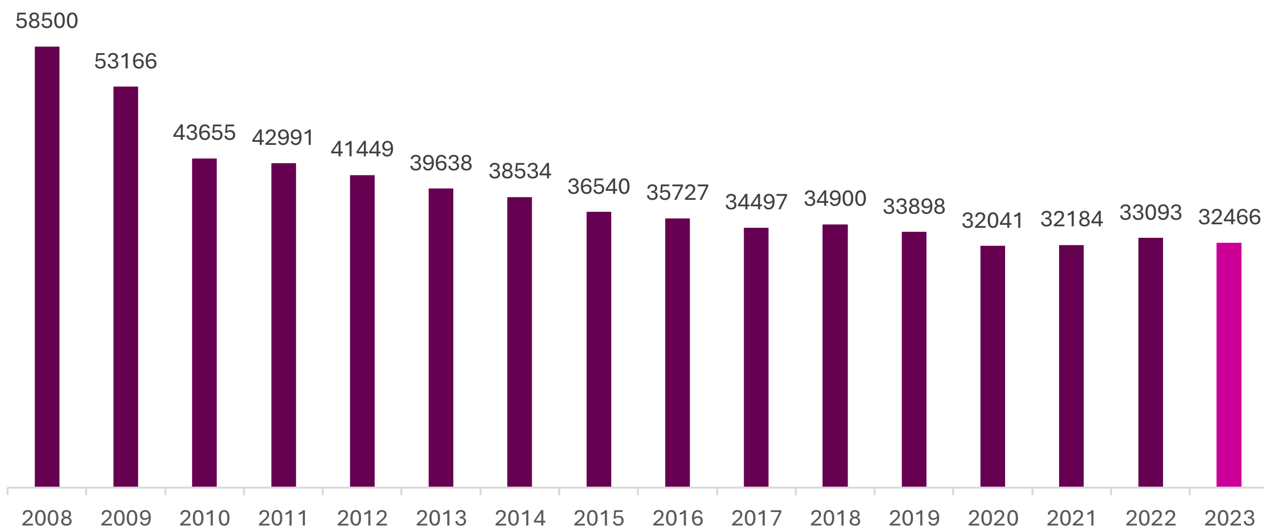
Map 3.1. Regional distribution of homelessness accommodation projects, 2023



Source: Homeless England database

As seen in Chart 3.3 below, there are 32,466 bedspaces in England in 2023, a decrease of 2% from the previous year in 2022, and a 18% decrease from 10 years ago in 2013. This year’s figure also represents a 45% decrease since 2008.

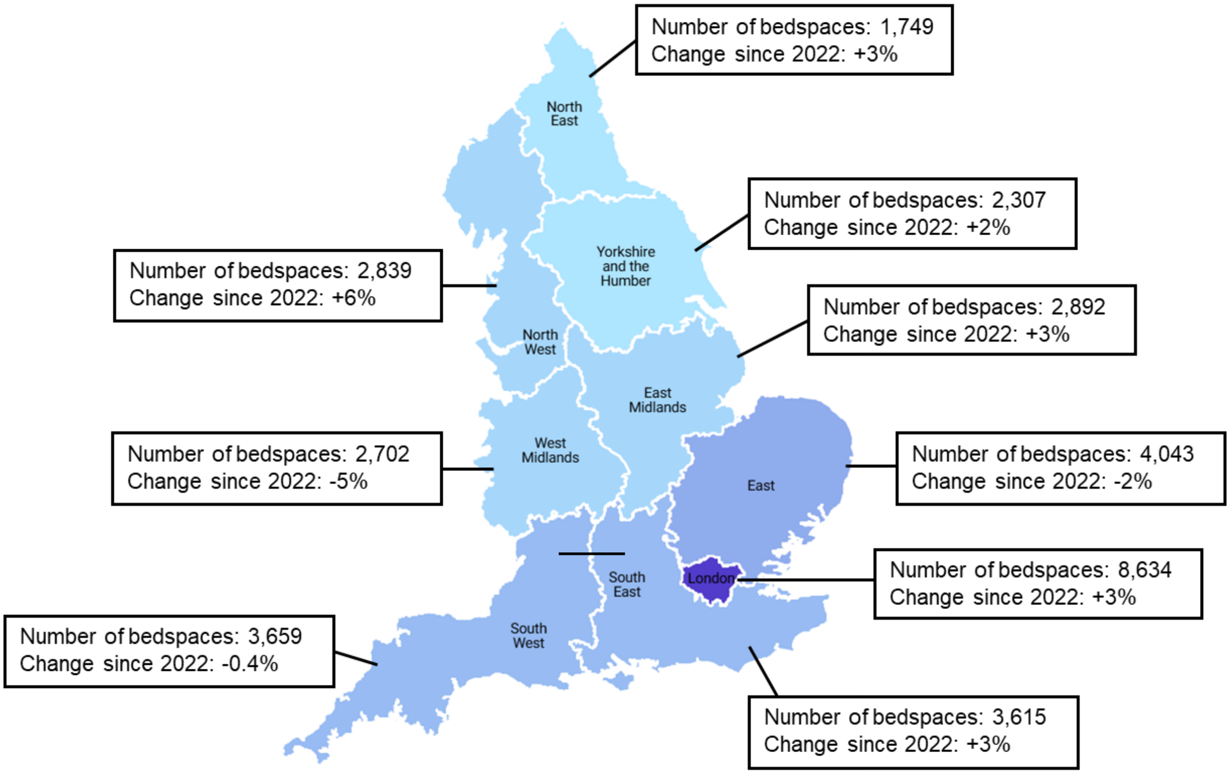
Chart 3.3 Number of bedspaces available in England, 2008 – 2023



Source: Homeless England database

Map 3.2 below shows the regional distribution of bedspaces. The majority of the regions saw an increase in the number of bedspaces between 2022 and 2023, with the exception of the West Midlands, East of England and the South West.

Map 3.2. Regional distribution of bedspaces, 2023

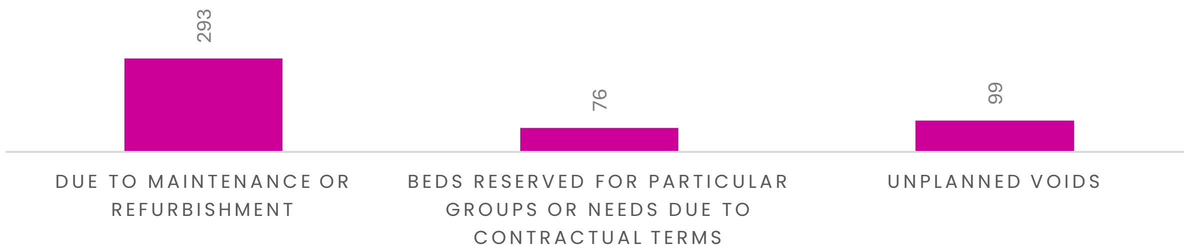


Bed night voids

To create a picture of the level of demand, the accommodation survey asked respondents whether they had any voids (empty beds). 148 projects (61% of respondents) reported a total of 656 voids. This represents 6% of reported available bedspaces that night. As per previous Annual Review findings this suggests that providers are running at high capacity.

The reason for voids can vary, ranging from planned voids due to maintenance of refurbishment, beds being reserved for specific groups or needs based on contractual obligations or unplanned voids. Chart 3.4 below illustrates the total number of voids based on these reasons. The most cited response behind their voids were due to maintenance or refurbishment (63%, 293 voids).

Chart 3.4. Reasons for voids

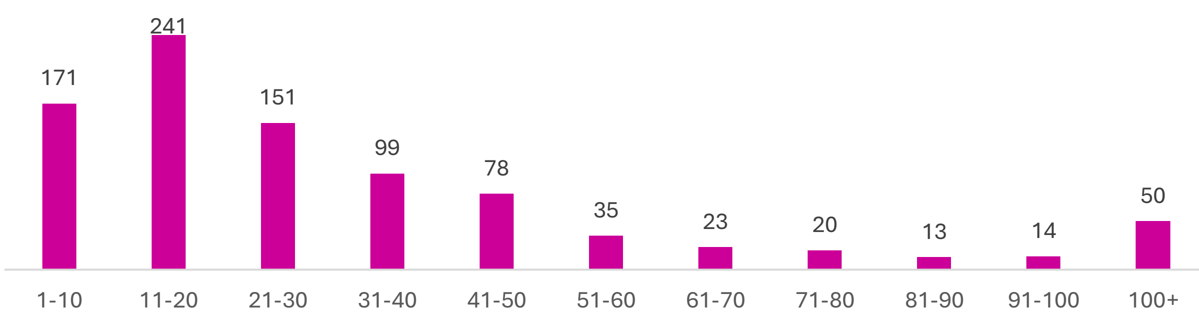


Source: Accommodation providers survey, N=238

Size of accommodation projects

In 2023, 46% of accommodation projects provided up to 20 bedspaces within their service. Conversely 12% of accommodation projects provided over 50 bedspaces within their service. There is an average of 23 bedspaces per provider.[25]

Chart 3.5. Accommodation projects by maximum bedspace capacity



Source: Homeless England database, N=895 (excludes unknowns)

Since the 1980s, homelessness accommodation projects had followed a general trend of downsizing accommodation provision into smaller scale projects with a recognition that smaller project can offer a more personalised approach.[26] This aligns with more recent practice developments including trauma-informed approaches and Psychologically Informed Environments.[27]

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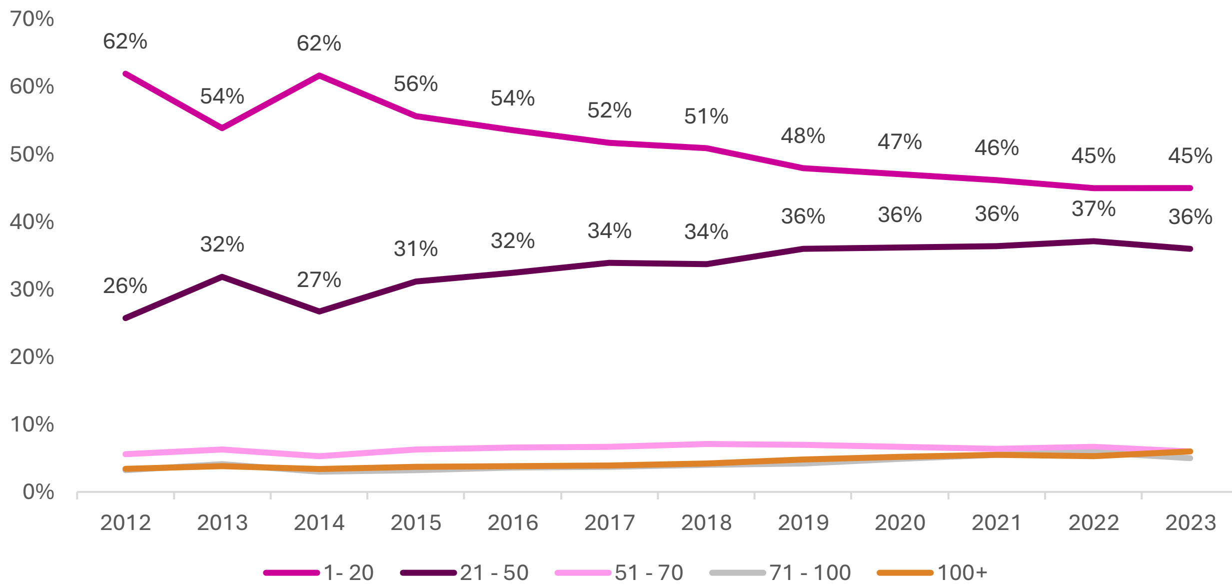
[25] 23 is the median number of bedspaces. The mean is 36 and is impacted by a small number of extremely large scale providers.

[26] May, J., Cloke, P. and Johnsen, S. (2006) *Shelter at the margins: New Labour and the changing state of emergency accommodation for single homeless people in Britain*, Policy and Politics, 34, 711-729

[27] DLUHC (2023) *Trauma-informed approaches to supporting people experiencing multiple disadvantage, A Rapid Evidence Review*; Irving, A. & Harding, J. (2022) *The Prevalence of Trauma among People who have Experienced Homelessness in England*

As seen in Chart 3.6 below, since 2014, there is a general gradual upward trend of the proportion of medium providers (between 21 – 50 bed spaces), while there is a downward trend seen in the proportion of small providers (between 1 – 20 bed spaces). This seems to align with the changes in the main sources of funding for accommodation projects since 2014, where there is a decline in local authority commissioned contracts and a rise in Housing Benefits (see Chapter 5).

Chart 3.6. Accommodation projects by size, 2012 – 2023



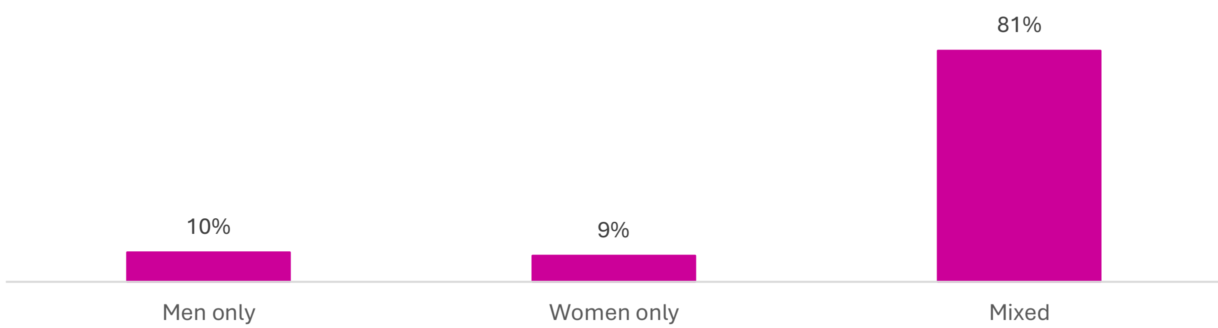
Source: Homeless England database

Availability of accommodation for specific populations

Gender

In 2023, 775 (81%) accommodation projects offer mixed gender accommodation, while 10% (99) of projects offer male only accommodation and 9% (87) of projects offer female only accommodation. Compared to 2022, there is a slight increase in the proportion of mixed gender accommodation (79% to 81%), a slight decrease in male only accommodation (11% to 10%) and a slight increase in female only accommodation (9% to 10%).

Chart 3.7. Accommodation projects by gender

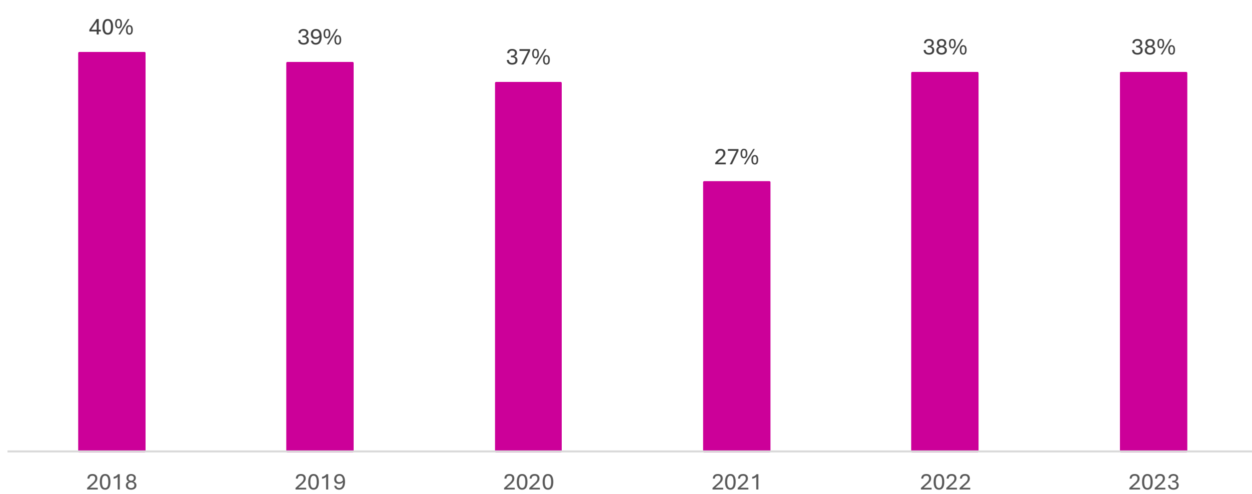


Source: Homeless England database, N=907. Note projects may offer gender specific and mixed gender accommodation within the same service.

Young people

Young people here refer to people aged between 16 – 25. A total of 343 accommodation projects are dedicated to young people, representing 38% of all accommodation projects in England. This has not changed since 2022, and is comparable with the proportion found over the last six years, bar an anomalous figure in 2021.

Chart 3.8. Proportion of accommodation provision that is youth specific



Source: Homeless England database

Support needs

611 (67%) of the accommodation provided is supported accommodation, as opposed to emergency or direct access accommodation. The latter is typically less specified on different support needs, with criteria being more focussed around currently or at

immediate risk of rough sleeping. While some providers are better suited to certain needs such as substance misuse or mental health needs, providers rarely identify a specific level of need that they are able to accommodate.

Conversely, supported accommodation providers are explicit about the level of support needs they are able to accommodate. Of the 611 supported accommodation providers, 90% (548) offer accommodation for low to medium support needs. Only 10% (63) of projects are able to support individuals with high or complex needs. This shows little change from 2022 where 91% of supported accommodation across England caters to low to medium support needs, and 9% of projects were able to support those with high and complex needs.

There is significant regional variation apparent with accommodation suited to different support needs. In London, 27% of accommodation providers able to support those with high needs compared with 1% in East of England and none in the North East. Across all regions less than a fifth of accommodation is suited to low or general needs provision.

Chart 3.9. Proportion of accommodation provision available for different support needs by region

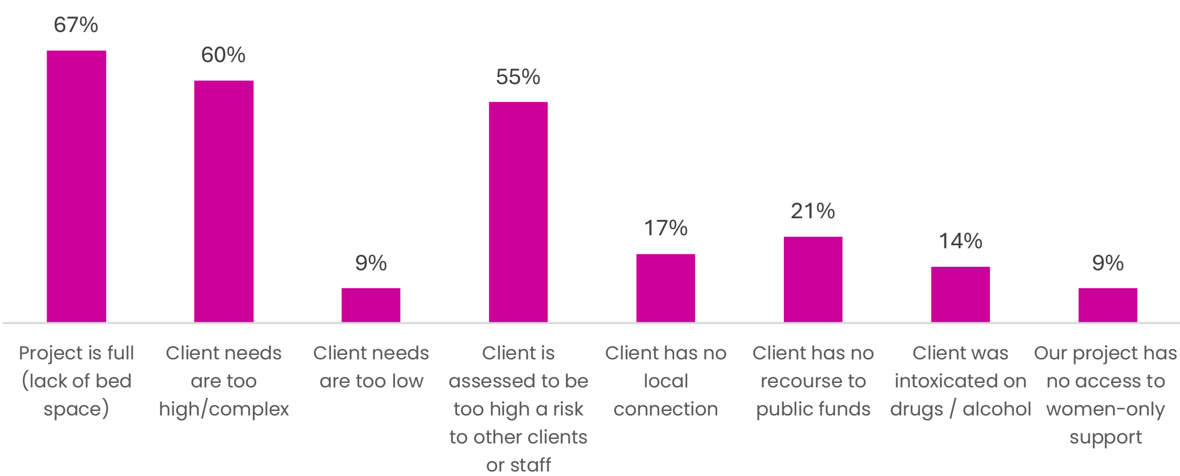
Source: Homeless England database, N=611

Accessing accommodation services

Survey respondents were asked how many people were accommodated in their project on a given night, and how many had been accommodated cumulatively over a 12-month period (between April 2022 and March 2023). There were 9,921 people accommodated on a given night and 22,396 people accommodated over the 12-month period. On average providers accommodated 2.2 times their capacity over a year period i.e. the move on rates were such that they were able to provide support for over double the number of beds that they have available.

187 respondents reported that they had refused access or referrals to their project at some point during the 12-month period. The most prevalent main reason for someone to be turned down from an accommodation project is because of capacity i.e. the project is full (67%). This is followed by rejecting referrals because an individuals support needs were too high or too complex for the service to manage (60%) or because the client was assessed to be too high a risk to staff or other residents (55%).

Chart 3.10. Main reasons for rejected referrals to accommodation providers

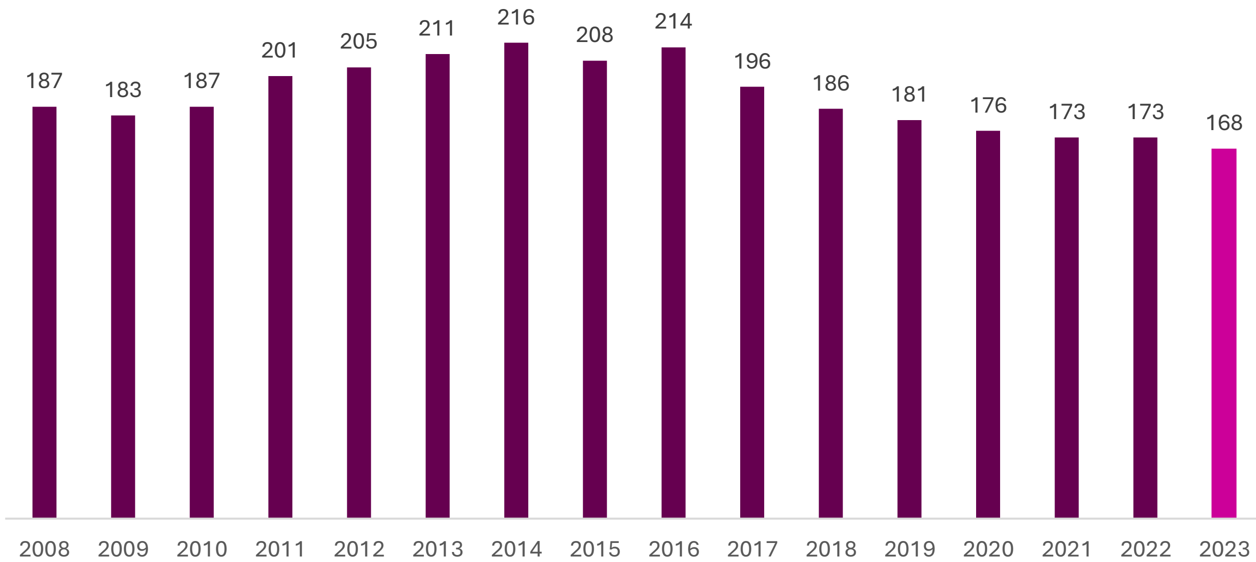


Source: Accommodation providers survey, N=187

Availability of day centres

Data from the Homeless England database identified 168 day centres for people experiencing homelessness in England. This marks a slight decline from the preceding year, continuing a downward trend that has been seen since 2016, following flucuating numbers between 2008 and 2015.

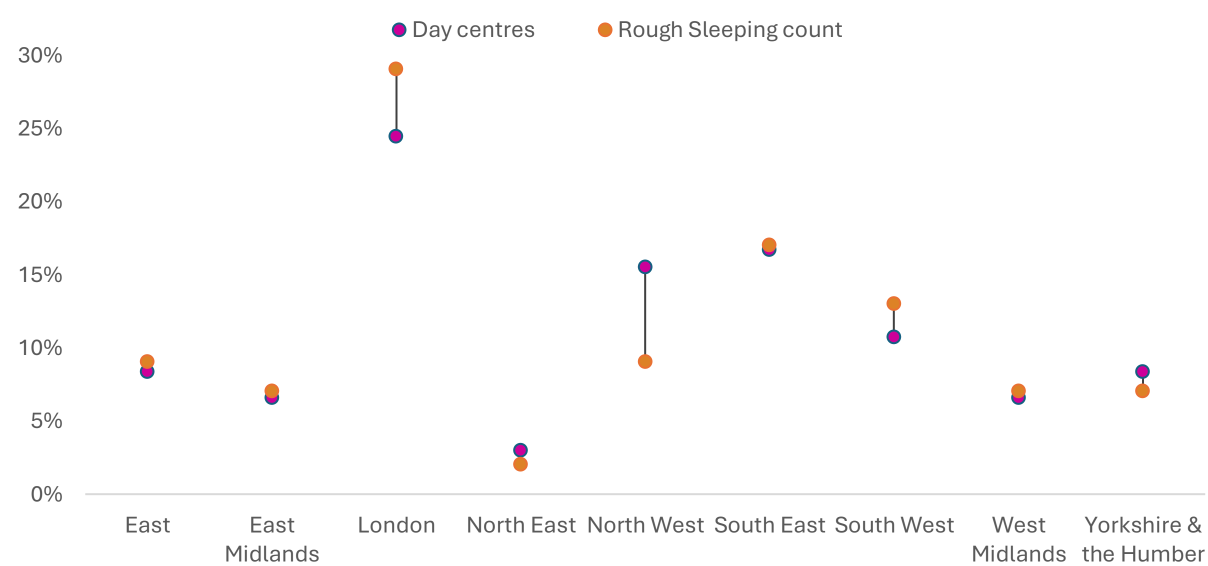
Chart 3.11. Number of day centres, 2010 – 2023



Source: Homeless England database

This trend broadly mirrors the rough sleeping count numbers, which climbed steadily until 2017 before starting to fall slowly, and then dropping sharply due to COVID-19 rough sleeping interventions. This suggests that the provision of day centres responds to levels of rough sleeping need. However, in recent years day centre capacity has not kept pace with the rise in rough sleeping, and there is a 3% decline in the number of day centres compared to 2022, against a 27% increase in rough sleeping in the same time period.

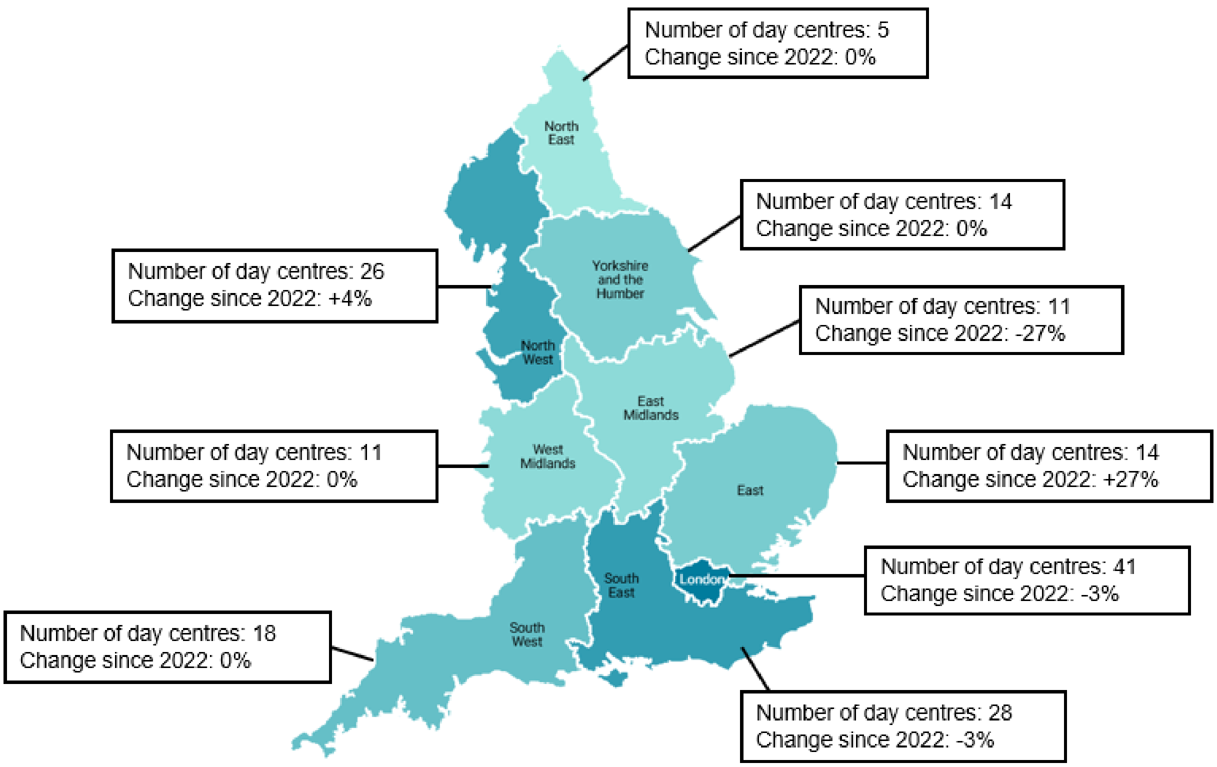
Chart 3.12. Regional proportion of rough sleepers and day centres



Source: Homeless England database and 2023 Rough sleeping count snapshot

There is a decrease in the number of day centres between 2022 and 2023 in three regions: East Midlands, the South East and London. There is an increase in the number of day centres between 2022 and 2023 in two regions: East of England and the North West. The number of day centres remains unchanged for the rest of the regions.

Map 3.3. Regional distribution of day centres, 2023

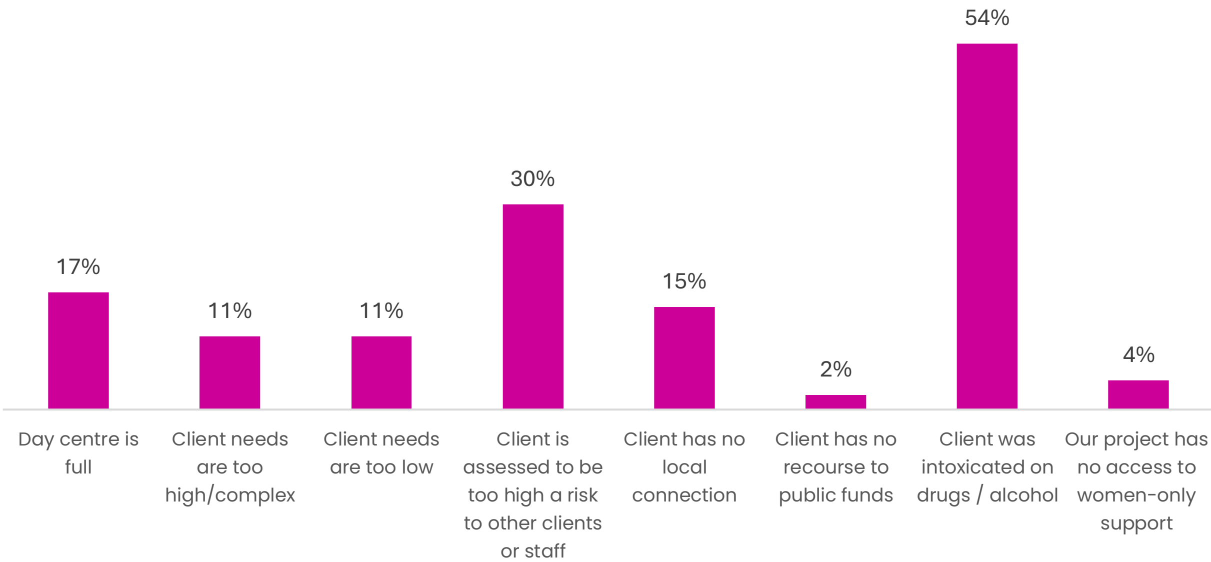


Accessing day centre services

Survey respondents reported a snapshot count of 3,376 people being supported by a day centre on a given day, and an estimated 127,486 people over a course of a year (between April 2022 and March 2023).

46 (73%) respondents reported that they had refused access or referrals to their project at some point between April 2022 and March 2023. The most prevalent main reason for someone to be turned down was due to being intoxicated on drugs or alcohol (54%), followed by them being assessed to be too high a risk to other clients or staff (30%).

Chart 3.13. Main Reasons for refused access to day centres



Source: Day centre survey, N=46

Chapter 4. Support needs and support services available

This chapter explores the characteristics and support needs of people accessing single homelessness services. Drawing on findings from the accommodation provider and day centre surveys, this chapter will look at the profile of those accessing support, the main services provided by homelessness organisations, and barriers to accessing support.

Key headlines

- 83% of day centres are seeing an increase in people experiencing homelessness for the first time, as are 46% of accommodation providers.
- Both day centres and accommodation providers also reported big increases in people who have recently lost their job, at 59% and 60% respectively.
- Accommodation providers and day centres also reported substantial increases in refugees accessing their services, at 60% and 67% respectively. This is alongside a 48% increase of people with no recourse to public funds in both accommodation services and day centres.
- Mental health remained the most commonly reported support need amongst accommodation providers (95%) in 2023, a 14% increase since 2022 and a 2% decrease compared to 2021. Compared to 2017, there was a 61% increase.
- Mental health was also the most commonly reported support need amongst day centres (98%).
- Day centres also reported high levels of addiction related support needs, both drug dependency (94%) and alcohol addiction (94%), as well as dual diagnosis (94%).
- Access to mental health support remains the biggest barrier for both accommodation providers and day centres (92% and 91% respectively).
- Accommodation providers also reported barriers to accessing physical health care services (64%) and drug and alcohol support services (61%).
- 69% of day centres reported barriers in accessing immigration advice.

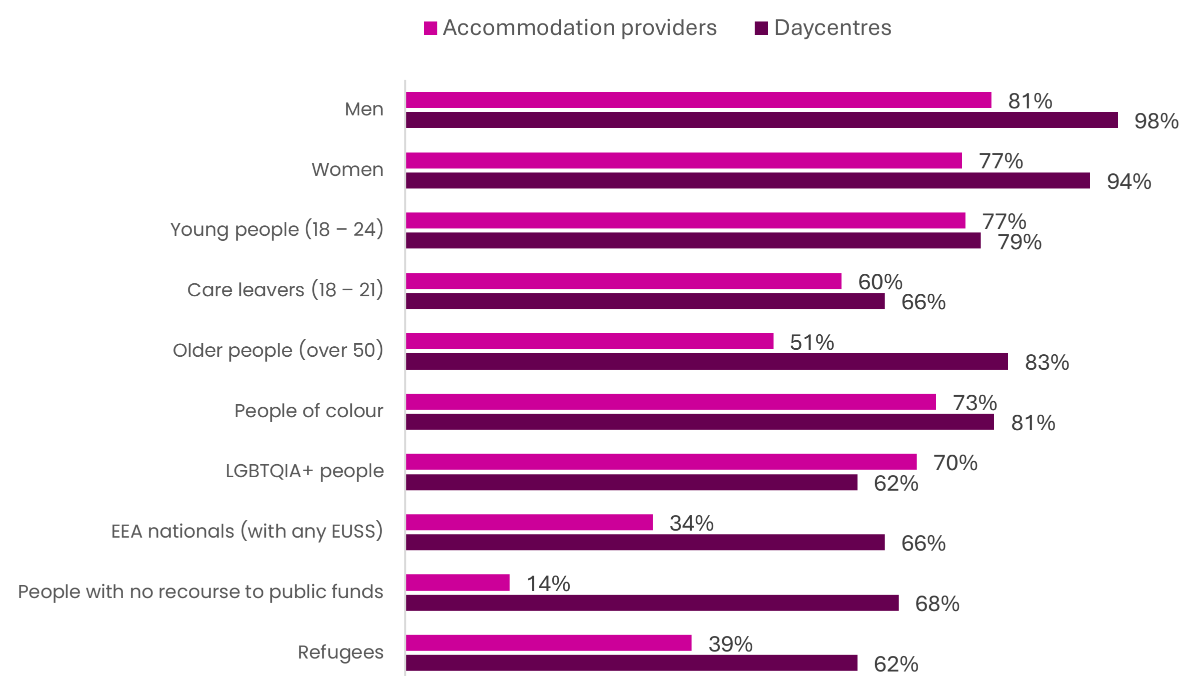
Profile of people accessing homelessness services

While there is a huge diversity of people experiencing homelessness, some populations are less well served by existing provision that may not reflect specific needs or ways of working, and may feel the impact of services that were not originally set up to reflect diverse needs.

We now know that women,[28] young people,[29] people from the LGBTQIA+ community,[30] people of colour or from minorities communities,[31] people with a history of the asylum system,[32] and people with multiple disadvantage[33] have both different experiences that may lead to them becoming homeless and also different needs once homeless. It is important to understand the diversity of people supported by homelessness services, including trends amongst groups that may be more likely to have particular vulnerabilities.

Accommodation providers and day centres were asked about the populations that visited 'last night' to capture a snapshot of the profile of the people they support. Chart 4.1. shows the proportion of providers who supported or accommodated at least one person from each of the populations.

Chart 4.1. Snapshot of the profile of people supported by homelessness services on a single day or night



Source: Accommodation survey, N=223; day centre survey, N=53

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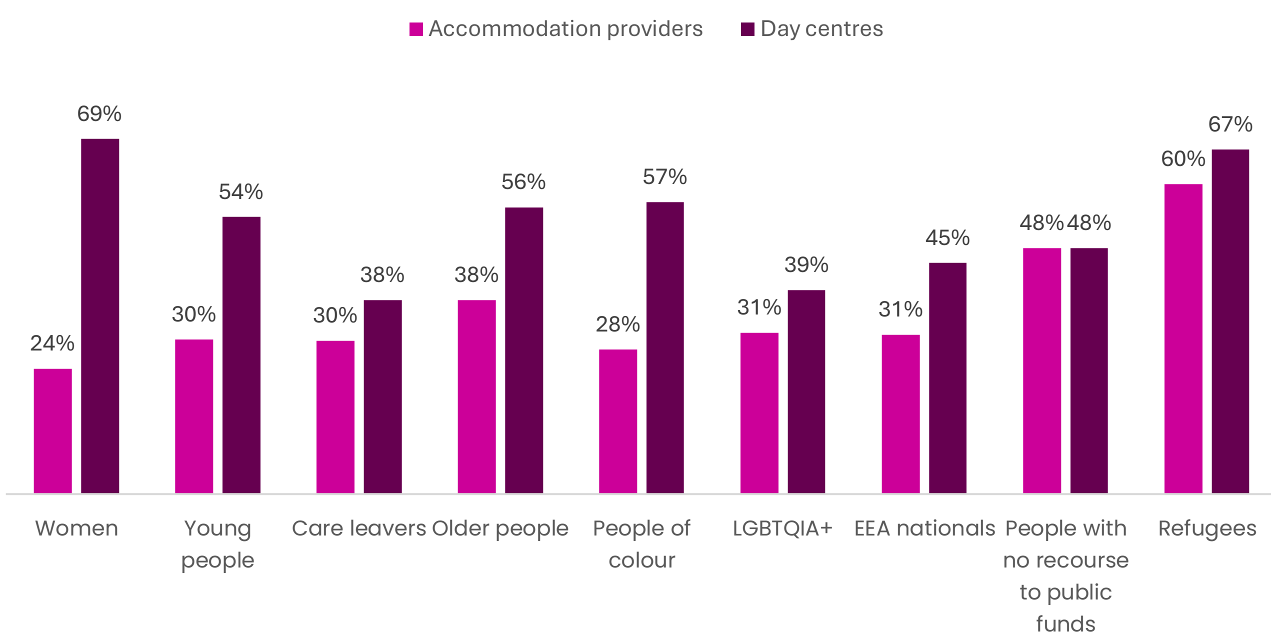
[28] Bretherton, J. & Pleace, N. (2018) *Women and Rough Sleeping: A Critical Review of Current Research and Methodology.* University of York
[29] Homeless Link (2018) *Young and Homeless 2018*; Homeless Link (2020) *Young and Homeless 2020.*
[30] AKT (2021) *The LGBTQ+ youth homelessness report.* 1
[31] Allard, M., D'Souza, S., and Leith, G. (2024). 'Where do I belong, where is home?': Experiences of racism and homelessness. London: Crisis
[32] Homeless Link (2022) *Unlocking the Door: A roadmap for supporting non-UK nationals facing homelessness in England*.
[33] CFE research (2022) '*More than a roof*' *- addressing homelessness with people experiencing multiple disadvantage.* Available at:

Unsurprisingly, due to their direct access nature, across the board day centres are supporting a high number of people from many different populations. Accommodation providers have a high number of projects supporting young people (79%), which echoes the findings set out in Chapter 3. showing the high proportion of providers who are either dedicated to youth support or are able to support young people within their service. Due to immigration restrictions preventing access to housing benefit or accommodation entitlements, it is not surprising that most accommodation providers are not supporting migrants with limited or restricted eligibility (14%), but the contrast with the 68% of day centres who are providing support to this population shows the disparity in needs being met. Likewise, there is a substantial difference in the percentage of older people accessing day centres (83%) compared with those in an accommodation setting (51%).

Change in the profile of people accessing homelessness services

Whilst the section above explores whether providers have supported anyone from specific populations in the last year, this section looks at whether providers have seen a change in the numbers of people from different populations that they have supported compared to the previous year.

Chart 4.4. Proportion of homelessness services who have seen an increase in the number of people they are supporting from specific populations



Source: Accommodation survey, N=218; day centre survey, N=52

In all cases, both accommodation providers and day centres have seen an increase in the number of people from different populations in need of their services and support. Day centres reported seeing the biggest increase amongst women accessing their services

(69%). Both day centres and accommodation providers have seen large increases in the number of refugees accessing their services, which is reflective of the increase in refugee homelessness during 2023 as a consequence of the Streamlined Asylum Processing and associated increased in evictions from Home Office asylum accommodation.

Day centres are seeing more acute increases amongst different groups, which aligns with anecdotal evidence that suggests that due to being so close to the immediate needs of street homelessness, they are likely to be amongst the first to pick up on new and emerging trends.

Reflecting the ongoing financial pressures on households and concerns that this is driving increases in homelessness, the survey asked about changes in the number of people needing support who were experiencing homelessness: for the first time; due to employment and unemployment related reasons; directly because of the cost of living crisis.

Chart 4.5. Proportion of providers seeing an increase in people needing support due to cost of living crisis

Source: Accommodation survey, N=218; day centre survey, N=52

Across both accommodation providers and day centres there is a big increase in the number of people who require support who are experiencing homelessness for the first time, at 46% and 83% respectively. There are also indications of a concerning rise in in-work homelessness amongst those in low-income jobs. 55% of accommodation providers and 45% of day centres stated they have seen an increase in people who are currently in low paid jobs needing their support.

Support needs of people accessing homelessness services

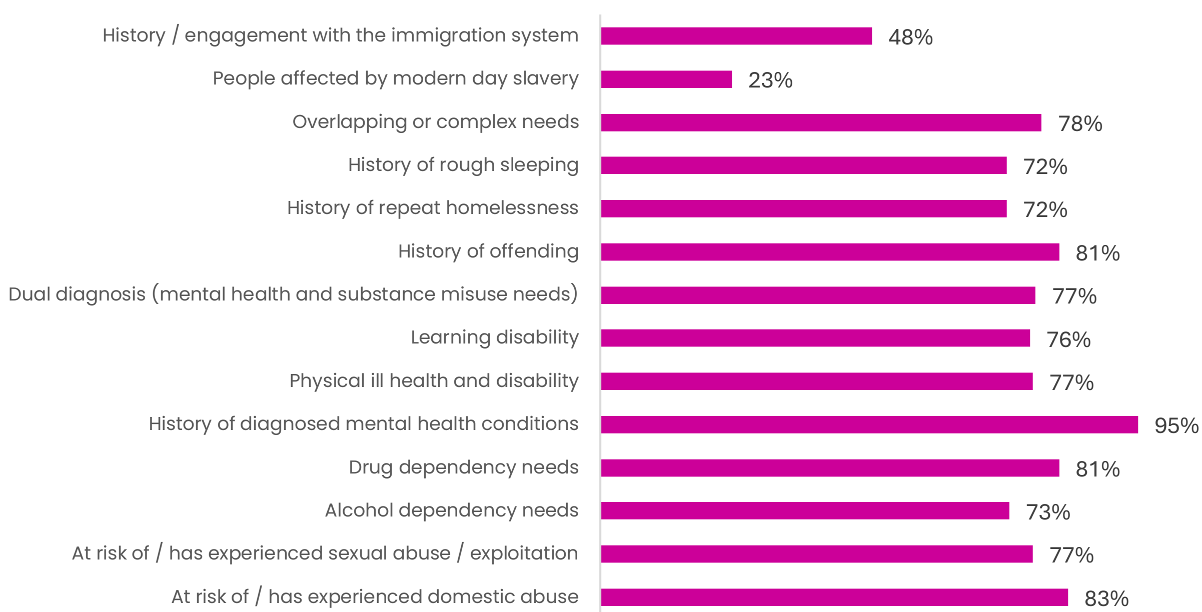
Service providers were asked for information on the support needs of people accessing their services and how this has changed compared to the previous year. Across both accommodation providers and day centres there were no residents who had no support need beyond housing. This follows the trend emerging in 2021, which showed a significant increase in the level of support needs seen across providers compared with previous years.

Accommodation Providers

Accommodation providers were asked whether the clients who are currently being accommodated in their service have any support needs. The most common response is having history of mental health diagnoses (95%), followed by needs related to risk of and/or experiences of domestic abuse (83%), drug dependency needs (81%) and a history of offending (81%).

Whilst health and social care related needs are the most prominent, accommodation projects are also working with people who have been affected by sexual abuse or exploitation (77%), learning disabilities (76%) and modern day slavery (23%). The diversity and severity of people accessing homelessness accommodation services is profound and the level of specialism necessary to provide appropriate support must be acknowledged.

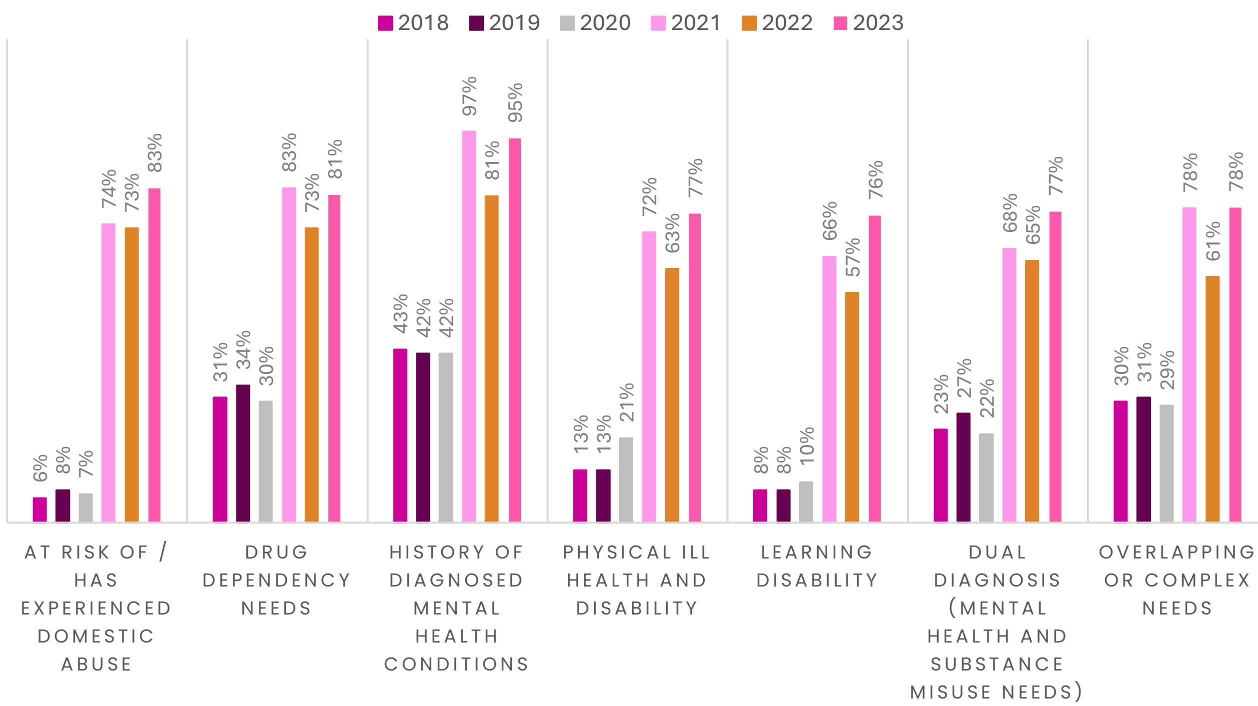
Chart 4.6. Support needs of accommodation project residents



Source: Accommodation survey, N=193

Since 2021, there has been a sharp increase across all the support needs being witnessed by accommodation projects. This trend suggests that there has been a shift in the profile of people accessing support, and that people are presenting with much greater level and greater complexity of need.

Chart 4.7. Change in accommodation project support needs, 2018 – 2023

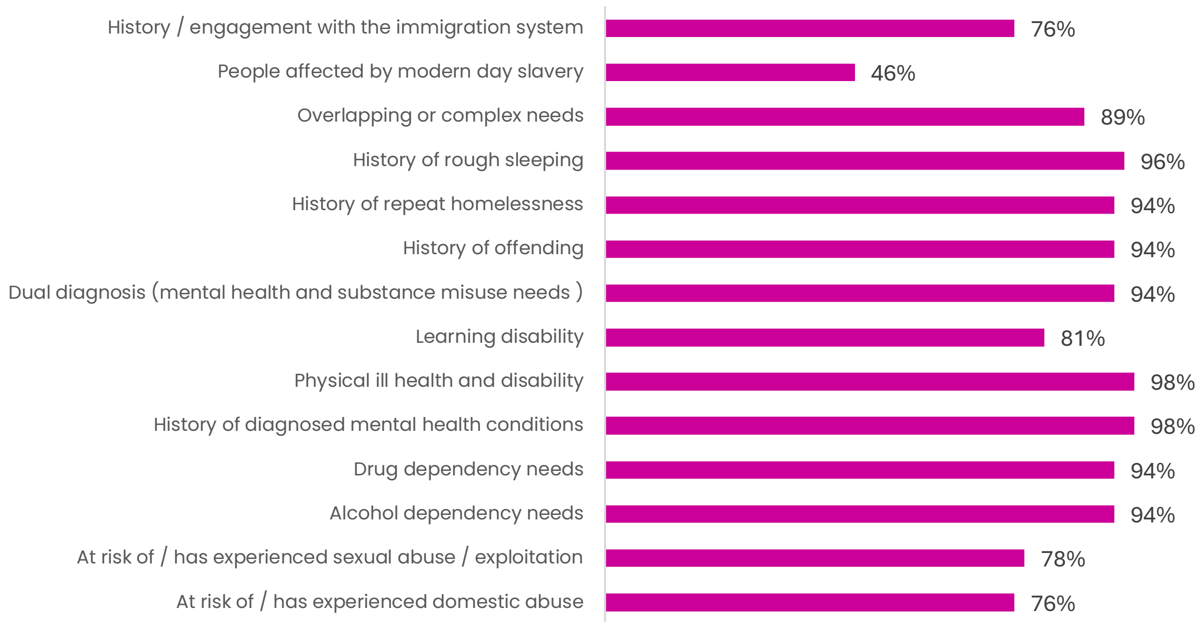


Source: Accommodation survey N= 218; Homeless Link *Support for single homeless people in England, Annual Review 2018 - 2022*

Day Centres

Support needs related to poor mental health (98%) were the most commonly reported support needs amongst day centres. There were high levels of addiction related support needs, both drug dependency (94%) and alcohol addiction (94%), as well as dual diagnosis (94%), and overlapping or complex needs (89%). As with accommodation providers, day centres are supporting people with a range of diverse support needs, and engaging people with a high level of often overlapping, complex needs and trauma.

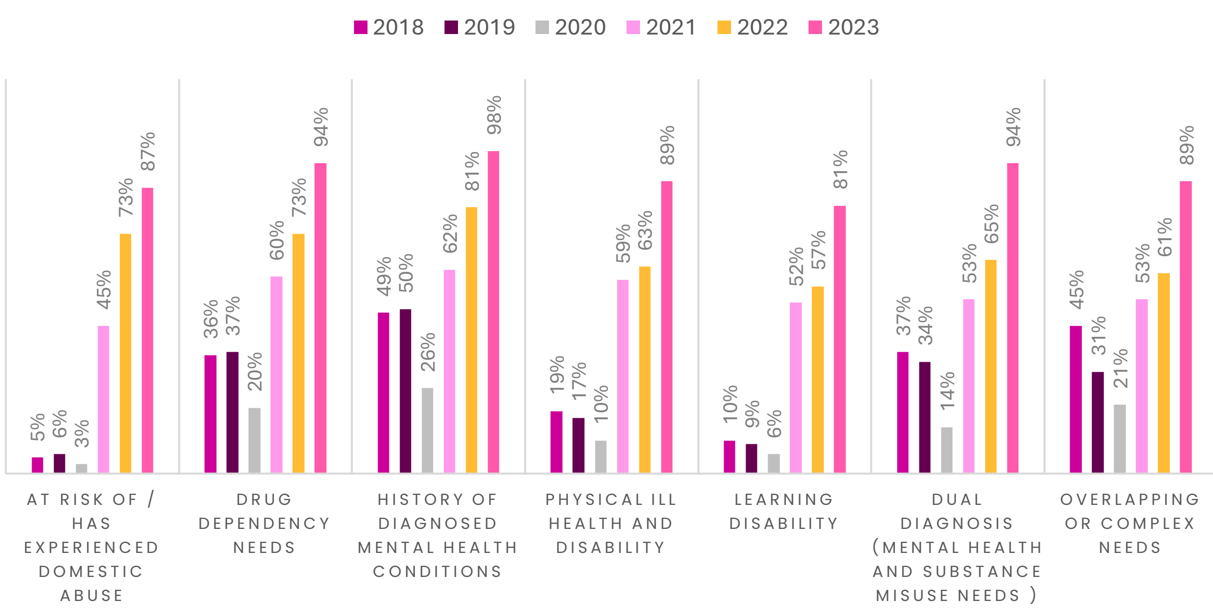
Chart 4.8. Support needs of day centre users



Source: Day centre survey, N=54

As with accommodation providers, there was a significant increase in the proportion of day centres seeing people with a range of support needs in 2021, and this trend has continued in 2023 with annual increases observed across all support needs.

Chart 4.9. Change in support needs of day centre users, 2018 – 2023



Source: Day centre survey N= 52; Homeless Link *Support for single homeless people in England, Annual Review 2018 - 2022*

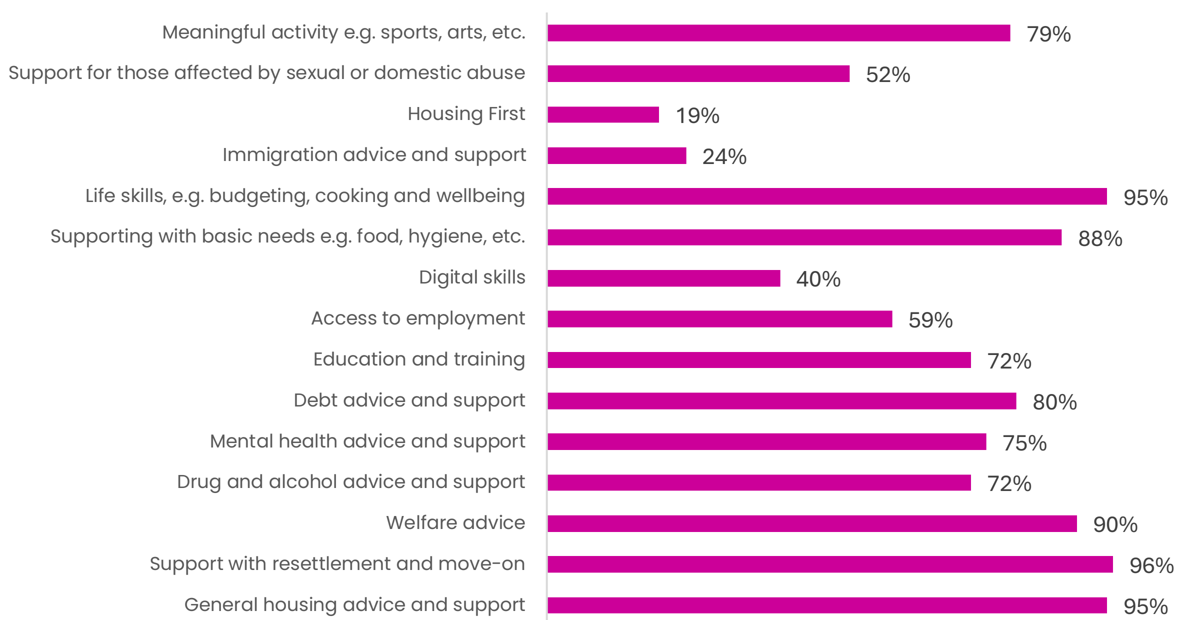
Support services provided by homelessness services

Accommodation providers and day centres deliver a range of services to help people experiencing homelessness address their support, care, and practical needs in addition to their housing needs. These services can be provided in-house at the services' premises, externally at another service, or both.

Accommodation providers

Accommodation providers were asked what support services are available for their projects. Unsurprisingly for accommodation providers the most commonly reported services provided relate to general housing advice and support (95%) and support with move on and resettlement (96%). Life skills support including budgeting and cooking is offered by 95% of providers, and support with basic needs including food and hygiene by 88%. Over two thirds of providers are offering support related to health and social care including mental health advice and support (75%) and substance misuse support (72%). The diversity of provision available is clear with the range of different offers available through projects.

Chart 4.10. Service provision within accommodation projects

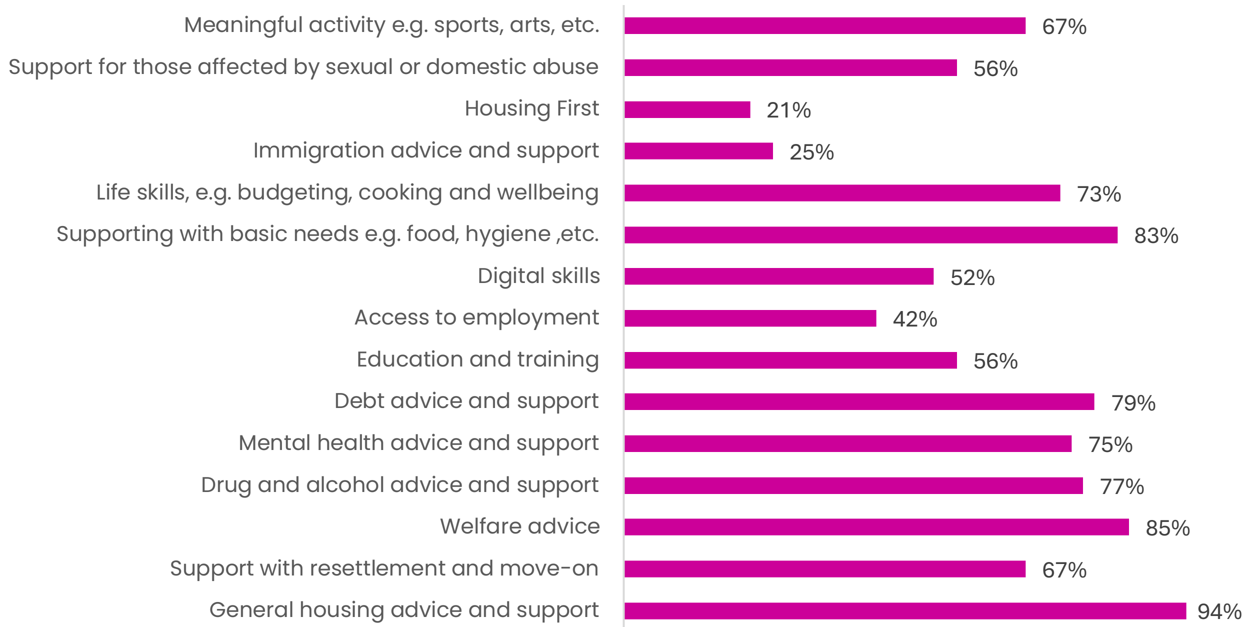


Source: Accommodation survey N= 194

Day centres

Day centres were asked what additional support their service provides for those accessing them. As with accommodation providers, all day centres provide a range of different support offers as part of their service, with an average of 11 different additional services or support available within their provision. Support focussed on immediate needs was more prevalent amongst day centres, with 94% of providers offering general housing advice and support, and 83% support with basic needs including food and hygiene. Providing advice and support related to welfare (85%), mental health (75%), and substance misuse (77%) are also all very common amongst day centre provision.

Chart 4.11. Service provision within day centres



Source: Day centre survey N= 52

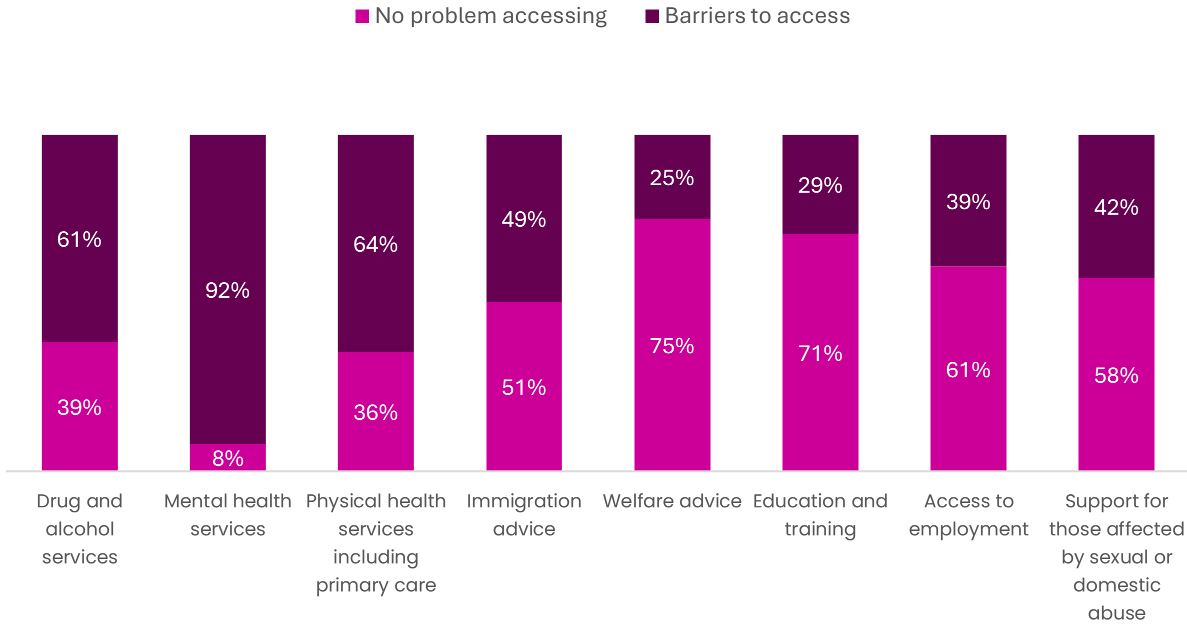
Barriers to accessing services

Not all support is, or should be, available internally to providers, and more significant needs or those that need to be managed by wider statutory support are reliant on the wider system and public services infrastructure. Providers were asked about whether they experience barriers in accessing external services for the people they support, and where barriers exist what they typically relate to.

Accommodation providers

For accommodation providers access to mental health support remains by far the most challenging with 92% of respondents stating they have a problem accessing mental health services. This is followed by physical health services (64%) and drug and alcohol services (61%).

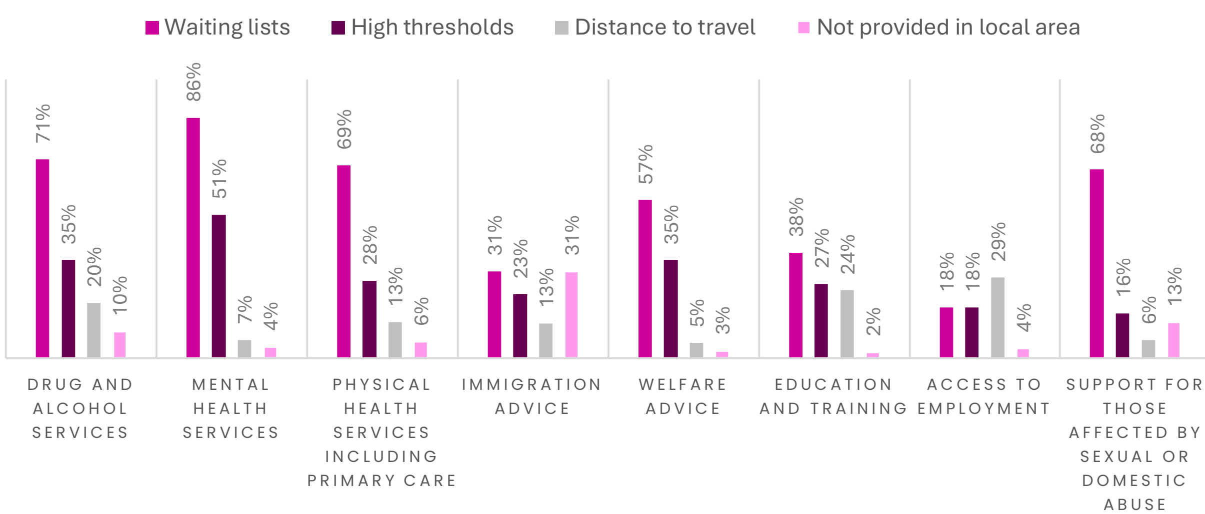
Chart 4.12. Services accommodation providers experience accessibility barriers



Source: Accommodation survey, N=188

When looking at why providers experience barriers, challenges related to waiting lists remain the biggest challenge in terms of access to other services, with 86% of providers saying waiting lists are a barrier to mental health services, and 71% for drug and alcohols services. Lack of provision locally is a particular challenge for access to immigration advice, something that has been identified through evidence on immigration advice deserts across the country.

Chart 4.13 Reasons accommodation providers face barriers to services

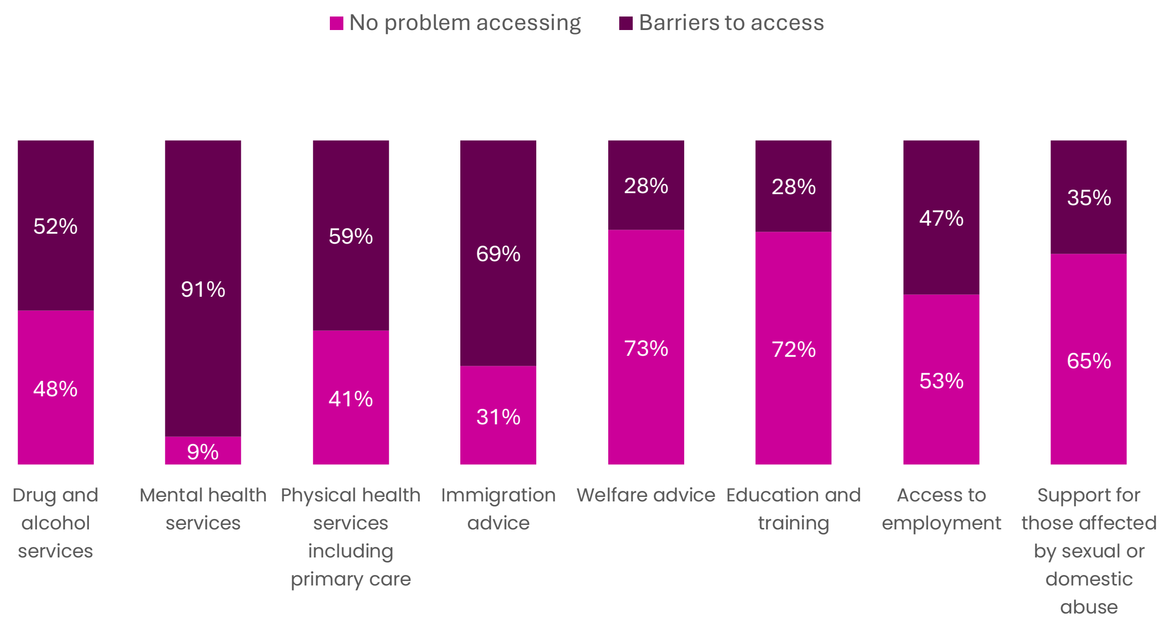


Source: Accommodation survey, N=188

Day centres

For day centres access to mental health services (91%) is also the biggest barrier faced, followed by access to immigration advice and support (69%), and physical health services (59%).

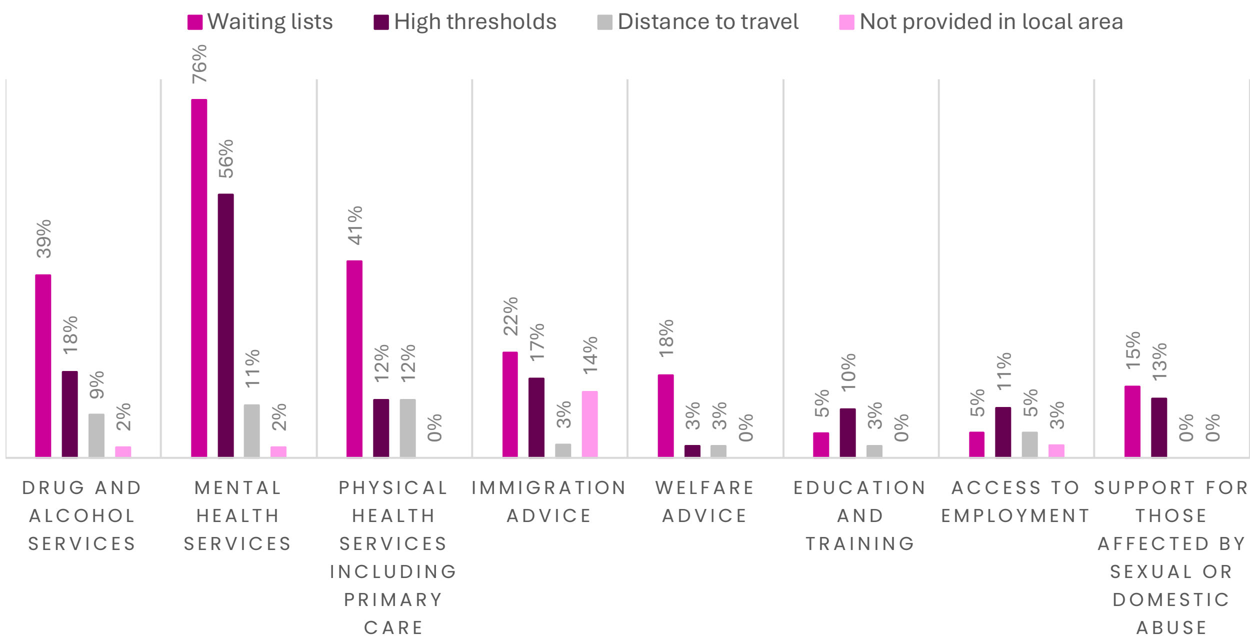
Chart 4.14. Services day centres experience accessibility barriers



Source: Day centre survey, N=46

When looking at why providers experience barriers, with the exception of access to employability related supported including education and training, and access to employment support in which thresholds are the biggest challenge, waiting lists remain the biggest challenge in terms of access to other services. 76% providers state waiting lists are a barrier to mental health services and 41% for physical health services.

Chart 4.15. Reasons day centres face barriers to services



Source: Day centre survey, N=46

Chapter 5. Funding

Over the last sixteen years this research has tracked how homelessness services are funded and how this has changed over time.

Key headlines

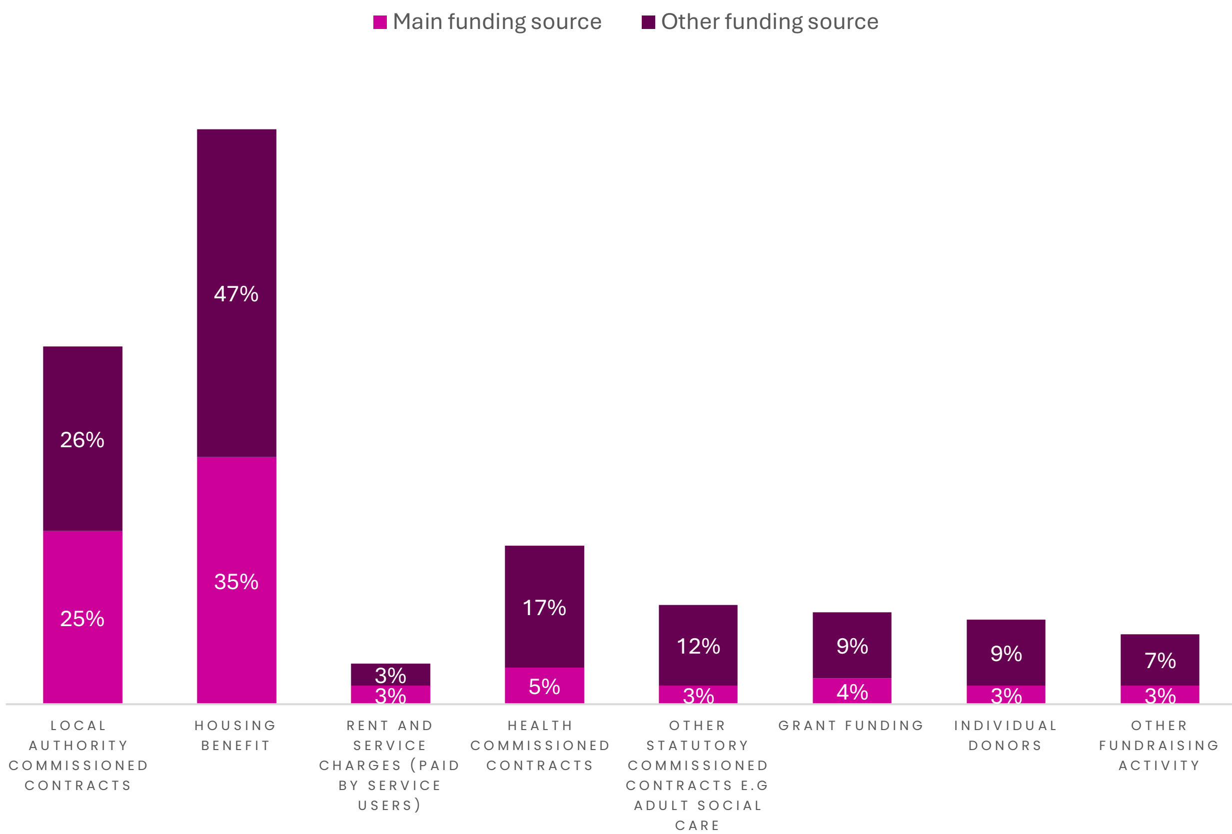
- Housing benefit is the most commonly cited main source of income for accommodation providers (35%), and 82% of all providers receive Housing Benefit as part of their overall income.
- 54% of those who receive Housing Benefit as a main income source are in receipt of Enhanced Housing Benefit.
- Since the end of the Supporting People ringfence in 2008 there has been a 1700% increase in Housing Benefit as the main funding source for homelessness accommodation providers and a 71% decrease in local authority commissioned contracts.
- Income for day centres is heavily reliant on fundraising, grants and philanthropy, with income from these sources the main funding for 48% of providers. This is most commonly through grant funding (20%) and individual giving (16%).
- 26% of accommodation providers stated that their income had decreased since the previous year, with 44% stating there was no change to their income, and 29% reporting an increase.
- 31% of day centres stated that their income had decreased since the previous year, with 33% stating there was no change to their income, and 35% reporting an increase.
- 41% of accommodation providers and 33% of day centres reported that they risk service closures as a result of rising costs, and 36% of accommodation providers stated they have already reduced their provision.

Accommodation providers funding sources

Accommodation providers were asked to rank their funding sources. Chart 5.1 below illustrates the main sources of funding (i.e. the top ranked funding out of all sources asked in the survey for accommodation providers.) The findings show that the main sources of funding for accommodation providers are the Local Authority commissioned contracts (which also includes Rough Sleeping Initiative funding) (36%), followed by Housing Benefit through exempt accommodation regulation (30%) and Housing Benefits and/or Universal Credit paid directly to services (26%).

The sources that are ranked lowest for the main funding source are rent and service charges paid by service users (3%), individual donors (5%) and other fundraising activity (5%).

Chart 5.1. Accommodation providers funding sources



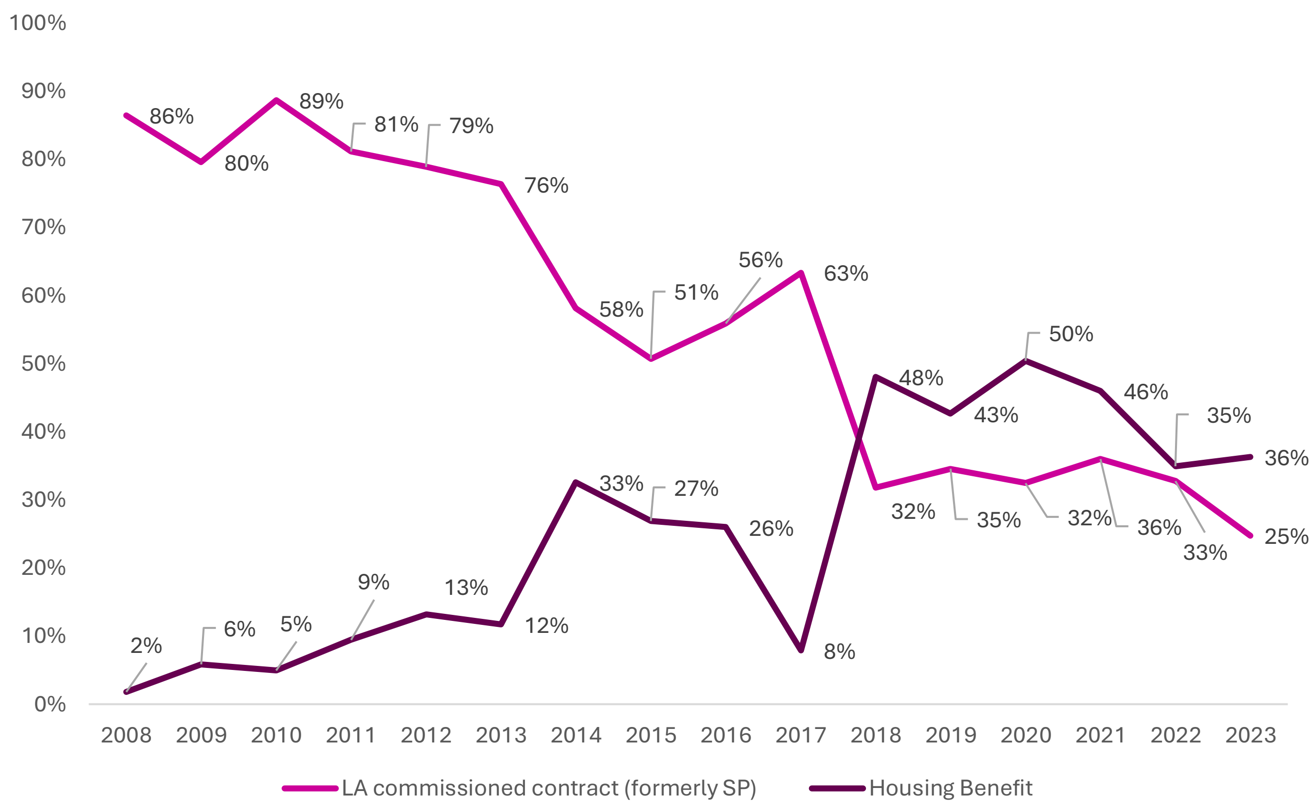
Source: Accommodation survey, N=190

Currently Housing Benefit is the main source of funding for most accommodation providers through Enhanced Housing Benefit and exempt provision. Given the growing attention to the role of exempt accommodation provision and funding for supported accommodation providers, our survey asked respondents to separate out Housing Benefit by Enhanced Housing Benefit income, and all other Housing Benefit income including Universal Credit. Enhanced Housing Benefit accounts for 54% of main income received through Housing Benefit.

Since 2010 there has been a significant shift in the way in which accommodation providers are funded, with the ending of the ring-fenced supporting people programme and a growth in providers becoming more reliant on Housing Benefit through exempt accommodation regulation. Chart 5.2. shows that it was in 2017 that the big switch to providers generating most of their income through Housing Benefit was seen and that for the first time supported accommodation providers were primarily funded through the welfare benefit system, rather than through local authority commissioning and grants.

Since the end of the Supporting People ringfence in 2008 there has been a 1700% increase in Housing Benefit as a funding source for homelessness accommodation and a 71% decrease in local authority commissioned services.

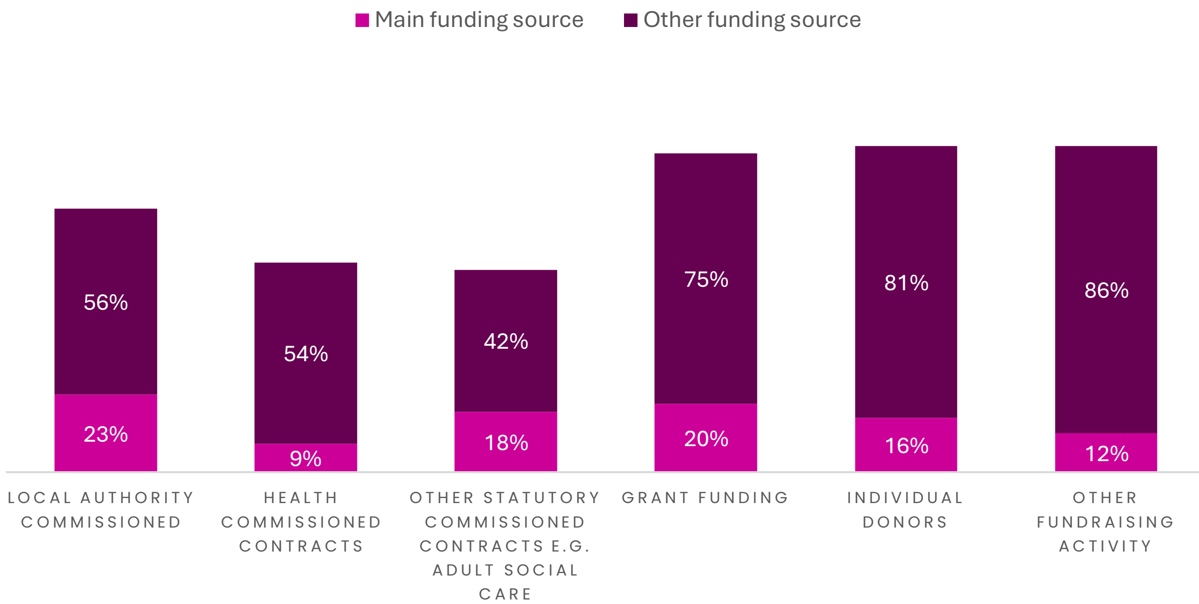
Chart 5.2. Accommodation providers change in main funding source, 2008 – 2023



Day centres funding source

Income for day centres is heavily reliant on fundraising, grants and philanthropy with income from these source the main funding for 48% of providers. This is most commonly through grant funding (20%) and individual giving (16%). 23% of daycentres receive local authority grants or commissioned contracts as their main funding source.

Chart 5.3. Day centres funding sources

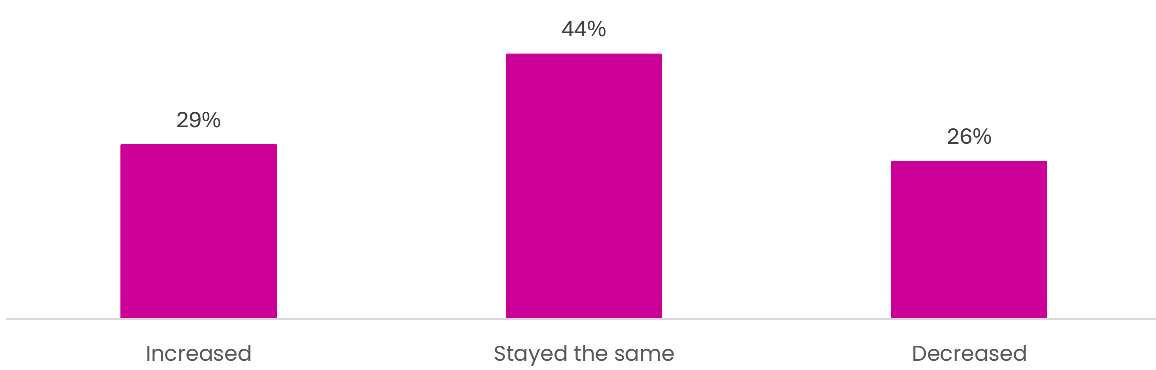


Source: Day centre survey, N=45

Change in income for accommodation providers

26% of accommodation providers stated that their income had decreased since the previous year, with 44% stating there was no change to their income, and 29% reporting an increase.

Chart 5.4. Overall funding compared to last financial year for accommodation providers



Source: Accommodation survey, N=163

Comparing across regions, for most providers there was little geographic variation in their reported change in funding, with most stating that in 2022-23 their funding had stayed the same compared to the previous financial year. The East Midlands and the West Midlands were exceptions to this. In the East Midlands, 30% of accommodation providers who responded to the survey reported an increase in their funding during this period. On the other hand, 19% of accommodation providers in West Midlands reported a decrease. The proportion of providers seeing an increase was greatest in the North West (24%), with London providers showing the highest proportion with a decrease in funding (21%).

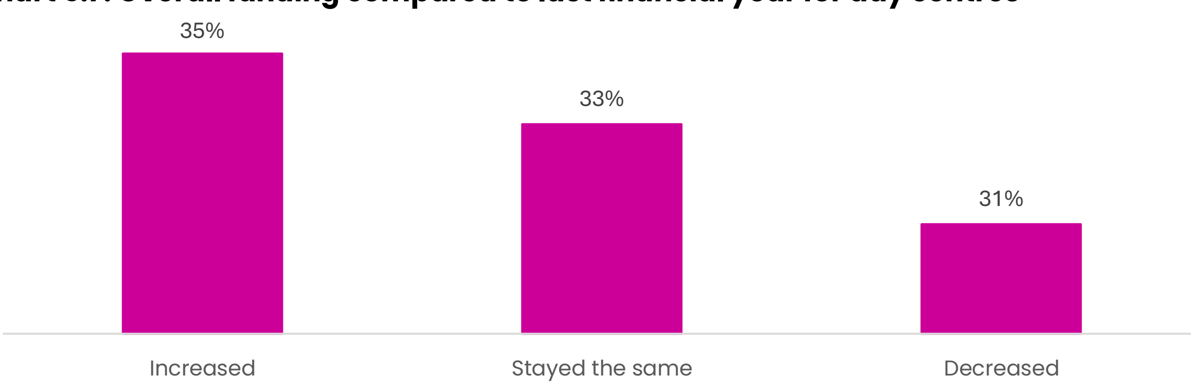
Chart 5.5. Overall funding compared to last financial year for accommodation providers by region

Source: Accommodation survey, N=163

Change in income for day centres

31% of day centres stated that their income had decreased since the previous year, with 33% stating there was no change to their income, and 35% reporting an increase.

Chart 5.7. Overall funding compared to last financial year for day centres



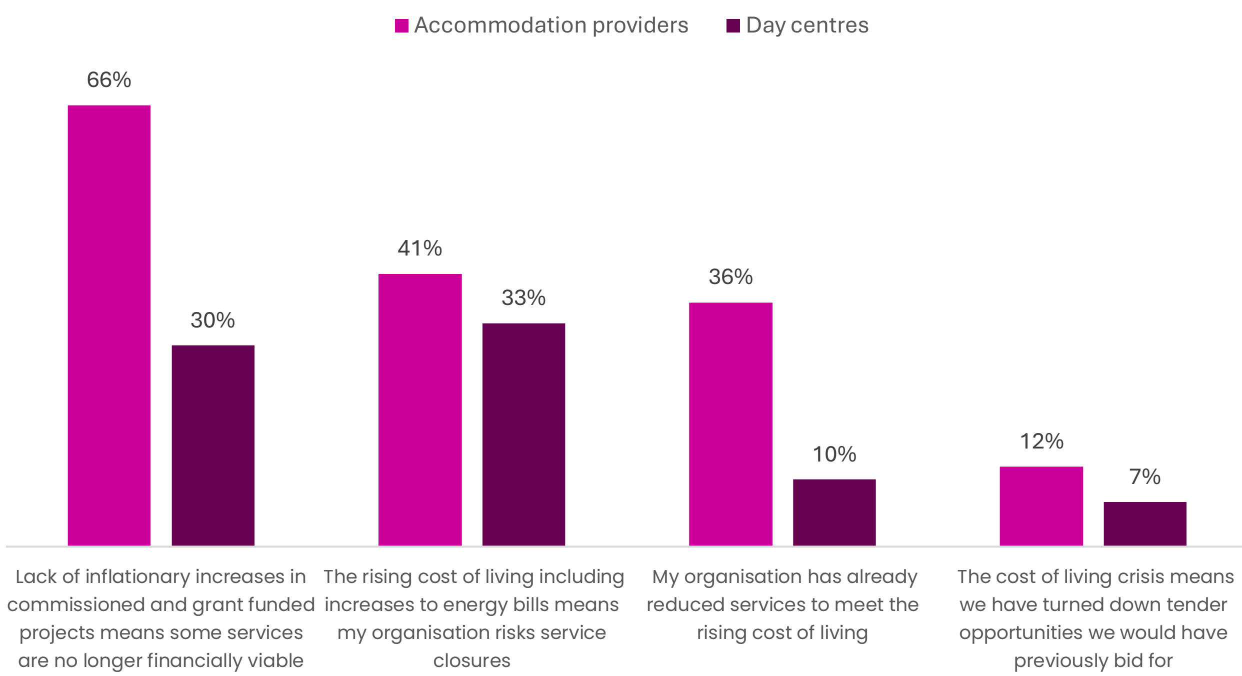
Source: Day centre survey, N=48

Impact of rising cost of living

The 2023 annual review was carried out against the backdropof the cost-of-living crisis, with salaries failing to keep up with soaring rates of inflation and rising bills. The findings show that the biggest impact of the cost of living on both accommodation providers and daycentres is how inflationary increases in commissioned and grant funded projects has meant that their services are no longer financially viable. As seen in Chart 5.9 below, it is noteworthy to highlight that accommodation providers are more impacted in this aspect than day centres (64% of accommodation provider agreeing to this, compared to 47% of day centres). It is also concerning that two-fifths of accommodation providers and day centres represented by our survey agree that their organisation risks service closures due to the increases in energy bills.

Whilst some proportion of both accommodation providers and day centres also agree that their organisations have already reduced services to meet the rising cost of living, accommodation providers seem to be affected by this more than day centres (34% of accommodation providers agreeing to this, compared to 20% of day centres).

Chart 5.9. Impact of rising cost of living on service provision



Source: Accommodation survey, N=198; day centre survey, N=52

Chapter 6. Move on from accommodation

The main aim of most homelessness services is to support people to move out of homelessness and into independent living. This chapter draws on the accommodation survey findings to explore key trends in relation to move on.

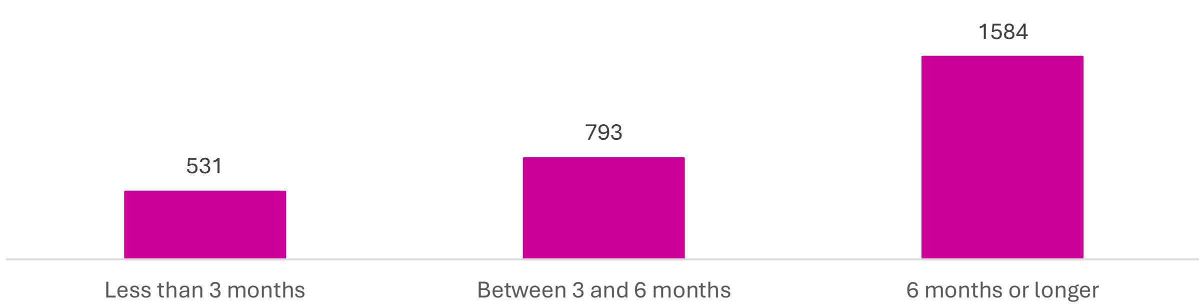
Key headlines

- 29% (2,908) of people currently being accommodated are waiting to move on from their current provision into more secure, sustainable housing.
- 54% (1,584) of people waiting to move on have been waiting for six months or longer.
- Lack of available social housing (86%) and the lack of private rented sector (PRS) accommodation at Local Housing Allowance rate (63%), are the two main barriers to moving on from homeless accommodation.
- Of those who do move on from their accommodation, most leave to positive destinations. On average 39% of residents move on to social housing, 20% move on to supported housing, and 13% move on to PRS. In contrast, only 4% move on to rough sleeping, 4% move on to prison, and 4% turn to sofa surfing.
- There is some regional variation when it comes to move on destinations.

Waiting for move on

Accommodation survey respondents reported that they currently had 2,908 residents waiting to move on from their accommodation, of which more than half (54%, 1,584 residents) had been waiting for six months or longer. This represents 29% of the snapshot of 9,921 people being accommodation on a given night from this survey sample and indicates significant blockages in the system, which if released could substantially increase available bedspaces for those in need.

Chart 6.1. Number of people waiting for move on by length of time

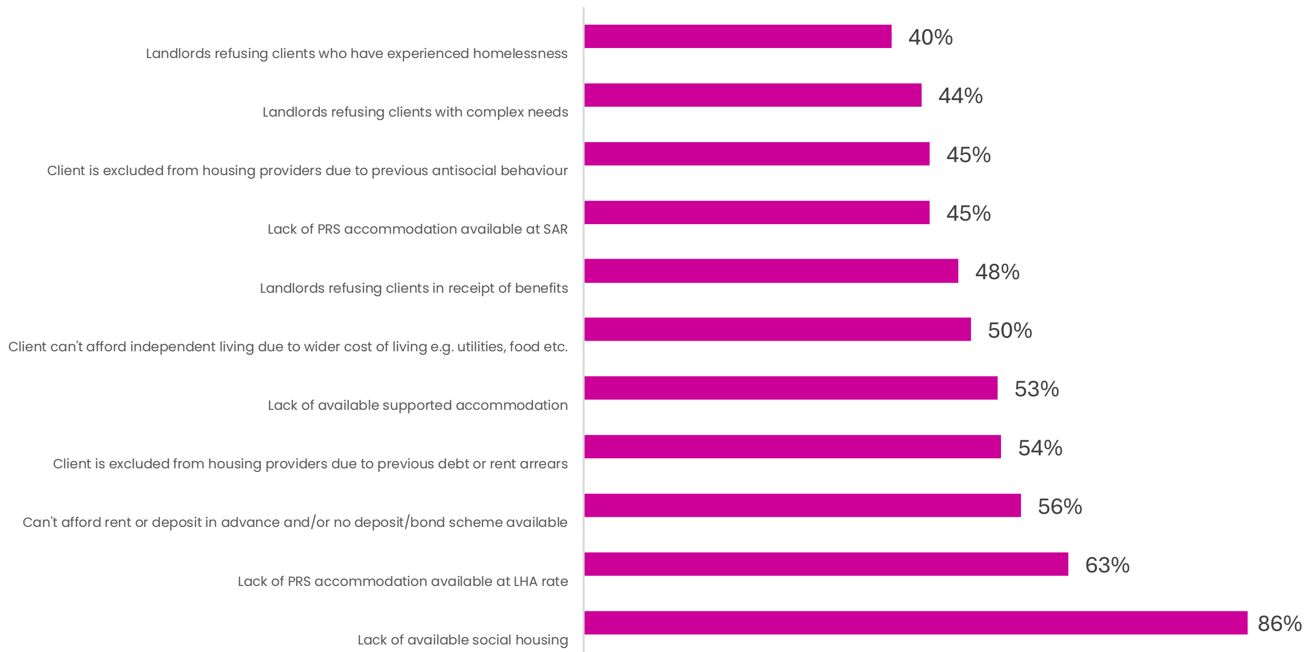


Source: Accommodation survey, N=190

Barriers to move on

Survey respondents were asked the reasons that people had not been able to move on from homeless accommodation. The biggest barrier faced is the lack of available social housing (86%), followed by lack of private rented sector (PRS) accommodation at Local Housing Allowance rate (63%).

Chart 6.2. Reported barriers to move on by accommodation providers



Source: Accommodation survey, N=188

Move on destination

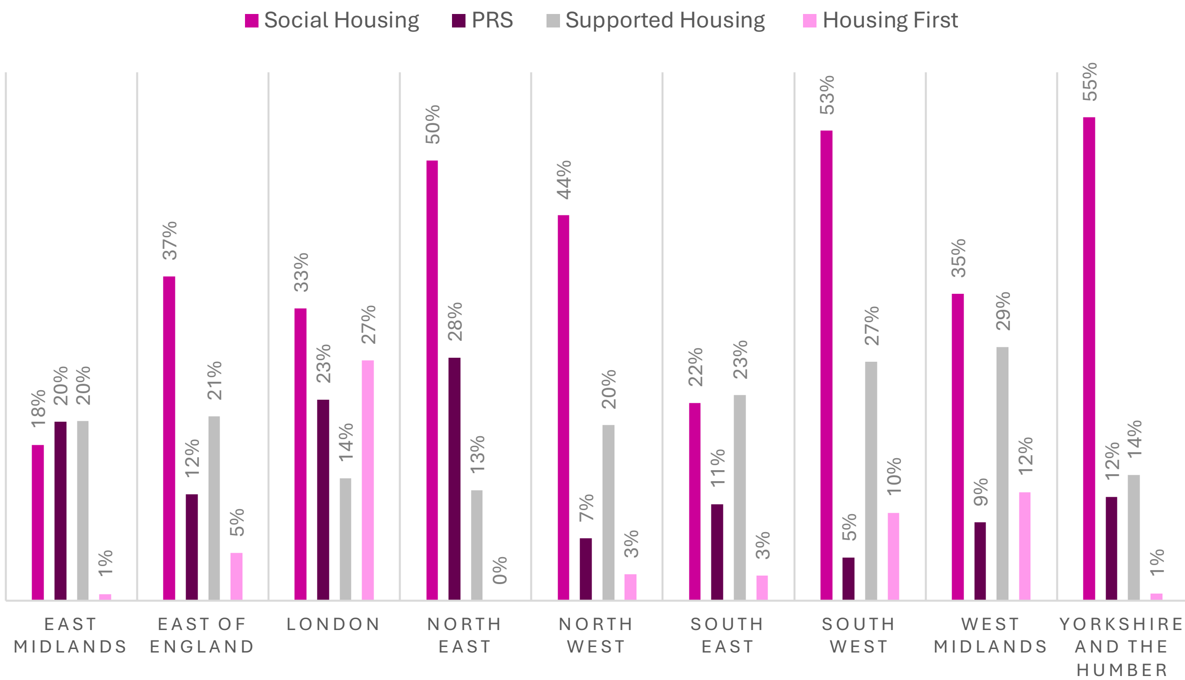
Of those who did move on from accommodation, there is a stark range of destinations on leaving provision, ranging from social housing to a return to rough sleeping. Chart 6.3 below shows the average proportion of residents moving on to different destinations based on survey respondents. On average 39% of residents move on to social housing followed by 20% going to supported housing (this could be from a non-supported accommodation provider or to a more suitable form of supported housing). An average of 15% of residents went on to stay with family or friends. A minority (8%) of people return to homelessness, either sofa surfing or rough sleeping.

Chart 6.3. Move on destinations

Source: Accommodation survey, N=188

When looking regionally there is significant variation in terms of destination of people who have moved on from accommodation providers and trends typically mirror housing affordability patterns. In the North East, where there is a greater number of social houses and PRS properties at LHA rates, it is more likely for people to have moved into one of these tenancies. Alongside the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber and the South West see the highest number of people moving on to social housing. The East Midlands is the only region where more people move on to PRS tenancy.

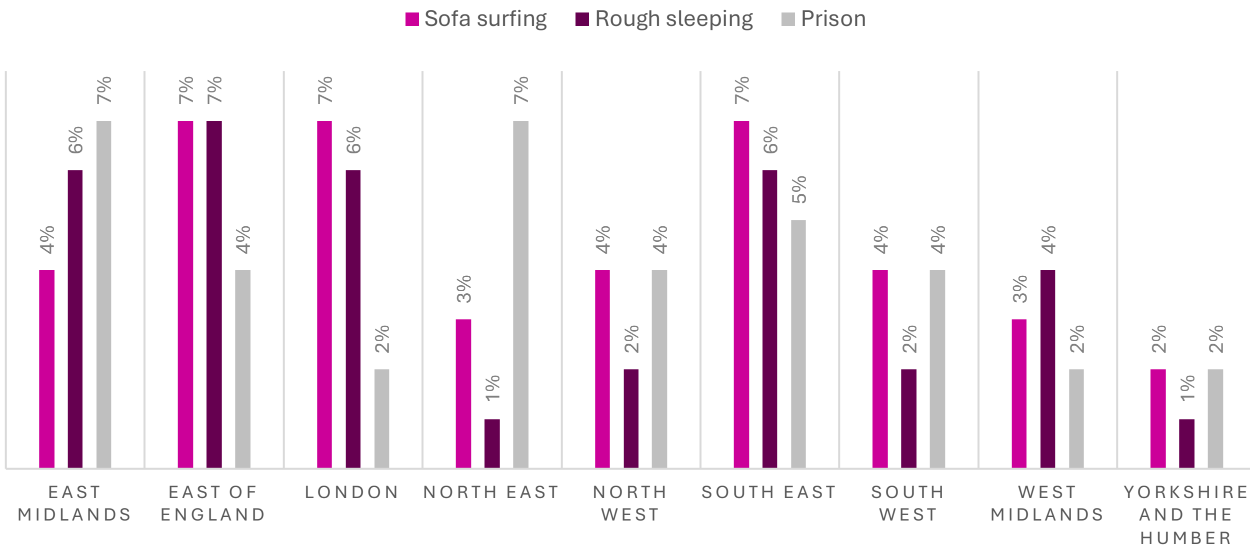
Chart 6.5. Average percentage of positive move-on destinations by region



Source: Accommodation survey, N=188

Whilst, encouragingly, negative move on is rare, we do still see some regional variation with regards to this. In the North East, on average, individuals are far more likely to go to prison as opposed to returning to rough sleeping or sofa surfing. In London, the opposite is true with people more likely to return to sofa surfing or rough sleeping compared to prison.

Chart 6.6. Average % of negative move on destinations by region



Source: Accommodation survey, N=188

Chapter 7. Conclusion

2023 has been an interesting year for the homelessness sector. For many working with single homeless populations, the security of the three-year funding cycle introduced by Government in 2022 meant that there was greater financial certainty than previous yearly rollovers, however increasing inflation and the rising cost of living has placed enormous financial pressures on frontline services. Increased energy bills, costs of repairs and maintenance, and the cost of general provisions for services have all impacted on the day to day offer available.

At the same time, we continue to see an increase in demand from diverse populations driven by varied causes of homelessness, including sharp increases in affordability and poverty driven homelessness. As services feel the pressure of increased costs at the same time as demand is rising, the homelessness sector is under enormous strain and we are starting to see the impact of over a decade of underinvestment in single homelessness provision as rough sleeping continues to rise.

There were an estimated 3,898 people sleeping on the streets on a given night in 2023, a 27% increase on 2022. Meanwhile there are record numbers of households in temporary accommodation, and the number of households owed a statutory duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act is also at its highest since current records began. At the same time, the number of accommodation providers and total number of bedspaces available have both decreased from 2022, and currently stand at the second lowest numbers on record.

Homeless Link began tracking the size and scale of the single homelessness sector in 2008. Since then the number of accommodation providers has reduced by 48% and the number of bedspaces has reduced by 45%. Despite increases in all forms of homelessness over the last sixteen years, the homelessness sector has seen a steady contraction as funding sources and policy priorities have shifted.

The change in main funding source for accommodation providers is a notable trend over the Annual Review data series with the transition from almost all providers (86%) being funded primarily through local authority commissioned contracts or grants (Supporting People at the time) in 2008, to only 25% of accommodation providers reporting local authorities as their primary funding source in 2023. Conversely, the number of providers funded mainly by Housing Benefit has risen from

2% in 2008 to 36% in 2023, the majority of which is through Enhanced Housing Benefit to provide supported exempt accommodation. The shift to DWP being a significant funder of homelessness services has consequences: there is different guidance on what support looks like, funding is more rooted to the individual rather than the service, which can limit longer-term structural development, and services are more exposed to financial risk. It also means that large parts of funding for the sector is disconnected from the national homelessness strategy.

Of those providers who are in receipt of grant funding from their local authority, lack of inflationary uplifts over the years has left them exposed to increased costs as a consequence of rising inflation. 66% of accommodation providers and 30% of day centres reported that they have services that are no longer financial viable, and over a third of accommodation providers reported that they had already reduced their service offer to cover increased costs.

Despite these budget pressures, findings in 2023 continue the trend of people presenting to services with increased complexity of needs. 98% of day centres and 95% of accommodation providers are supporting people with mental health needs. There were also high levels of providers supporting people with physical health needs, substance misuse and addiction needs, as well as history of offending behaviour. Whilst health and social care related needs are the most prominent, providers are also working with people who been affected by sexual abuse or exploitation, learning disabilities and modern day slavery.

Despite this, only 9% of accommodation providers state that they are suited to supporting people with high or complex needs and 60% reported that they had rejected a referral because the individuals' needs were too high or complex. 92% of accommodation providers and 91% of day centres also reported that they faced barriers in accessing mental health services. The diversity and severity of support needed by people accessing homelessness accommodation services is profound and the level of specialism necessary to provide appropriate support must be acknowledged.

Ongoing pressures caused by lack of affordable housing are also demonstrated throughout this report. 29% of people currently accommodated across the homelessness sector are waiting to move on from their current provision into more secure, sustainable housing but are unable to due to lack of suitable options. 54% of those waiting to move on have been waiting for six months or longer. Lack of available social housing (86%) and the lack of private rented sector (PRS) accommodation at Local Housing Allowance rate (63%) are the two main barriers to moving on from homeless accommodation.

The 2023 Annual Review of Support for Single Homeless People highlights a system facing enormous challenges. Increased financial pressures and precarity coupled with rising demand are exposing systematic challenges in the sector. Despite this, regional variation tells us that there are examples of local areas working to reverse these trends, to increase capacity and to find ways of providing the support needed by people experiencing homelessness.

Appendix: Methodology and sampling

The findings featured in this report are drawn from the following four key data sources:

Telephone and online survey from 241 accommodation projects (27% response rate)

A combination of telephone and online surveys were conducted between November 2023 and January 2024. Of a total available population of 907, 241 (27%) accommodation projects responded and were included for analysis. There were 356 total responses, with 68% meeting the inclusion criteria. Responses were excluded if they were a) a duplicate or b) incomplete (answering less than 25% of the survey).

Telephone and online survey from 61 day centres (36% response rate)

A combination of telephone and online surveys were conducted between November 2023 and January 2024. Of a total available population of 168 services, 61 (36%) day centres responded. There were 83 total responses, with 76% meeting the inclusion criteria. Responses were excluded if they were a) a duplicate or b) incomplete (answering less than 25% of the survey).

For both accommodation providers and day centres together we achieved 90% confidence intervals of ±5% and stratified each project type by region and local authority. This in turn allowed us to generalise the findings to the wider sector. For day centres we also achieved 95% confidence intervals of ±5% but poorer response rates amongst accommodation providers in certain regions meant we were not able to achieve 95% confidence intervals for surveys.

Homeless England database

This database is managed by Homeless Link and covers information about homelessness services in England. Although the data is not live, it is updated regularly and is the only data source on the number of homelessness services in England. Data on the availability of services and bed spaces were extracted from the Homeless England database, allowing a comparative analysis with previous publications of the Annual Review.[34]

Existing data on homelessness trends

Existing data on homelessness trends, including national statutory homelessness and rough sleeping figures as published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

[34] All Homeless Link Annual Review reports are available at: https://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/our-research/annual-review-of-single-homelessness-support-in-england

Sampling approach

The sample structure was a vital part of this survey. Homeless Link ensured that the profile of the projects interviewed closely represented the profile of the sector's projects (accommodation or day centre) as a whole. For this survey, we achieved 90% confidence intervals of ±5% for the survey results from accommodation providers as a discrete group, and a 95% confidence intervals of ±5% from the aggregated grouping of accommodation providers and day centres.

Providers were contacted initially by email, with follow up by phone and email. Surveys were conducted over the phone and online according to individual preference and we attempted phone contact with each provider three times in addition to the email invitations to invite response. Social Engine were commissioned to support the completion of the survey with a focus on meeting regional targets.

For accommodation providers only, the available sample numbers 907 projects. This required 271 interviews to be completed to achieve a 95% confidence interval of ±5%. We failed to achieve this, with **241** usable respondents. To achieve a confidence 90% confidence interval of ±5% we required 210 interviews to be completed. We achieved this with **241** usable respondents.

For accommodation providers and day centres combined, the available sample size of 1,075 projects required 284 interviews to be completed to achieve a 95% confidence interval of ±5%. We achieved considerably higher with 61 day centres and 241 accommodation providers resulting in a **302** overall sample.

Within each of the two project types, we stratified by region to ensure that there were no unexpected skews in the data which can at times occur within a purely random un-stratified sample. Using the original sample, we calculated regional quotas which were set to ensure that the samples from each project type reflected the actual distribution of projects across England.

In addition to achieving a reliable overall evidence base, we also wish to ensure – as far as practical – that we secure a representative sample across all regions of England. However, due to the significantly smaller samples size for each region, it is necessary to accept a higher confidence interval.

For each region a minimum expected target with a margin of error of +/-15% has been calculated, along with an aspirational target of +/-10%. The table below summarises the numbers required for each region based on the available sample size and the total achieved. East Midlands, London, North East, and West Midlands regions all failed to achieve the target. All other regions achieved the minimum expected target for accommodation providers and day centres combined.

	AP + DC	Target at +/- 15%	Target at +/- 10%	Total AP	Total DC	Total AP + DC
East	136	33	57	42	6	48
East Midlands	64	26	39	13	4	17
London	229	37	68	27	9	34
North East	55	25	36	16	3	19
North West	141	33	37	32	8	40
South East	143	34	32	37	13	50
South West	155	34	60	34	6	40
West Midlands	76	28	43	16	6	22
Yorkshire and Humber	80	29	44	23	2	29

The survey sample is representative at a lower confidence interval of 85% +/-15% in all regions except the East Midlands, which had a particularly poor response rate in 2023.

What We Do

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for frontline homelessness services. We work to improve services through research, guidance and learning, and campaign for policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

Homeless Link

Minories House
2-5 Minories
London
EC3N 1BJ

www.homeless.org.uk
@HomelessLink

Let's End Homelessness Together

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