Support to End Homelessness 2024

Homeless Link

A review of services addressing single homelessness in England

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Services addressing single homelessness

Support to End Homelessness 2024

Contents

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We are grateful to all the homelessness services who took time out of their busy schedules to complete our survey.

Executive Summary

For the past seventeen 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 seventeenth edition of our *Support to End Homelessness 2024: A review of services addressing single homelessness in England*[2] 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 204 accommodation providers and 40 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

2024 was a year marked by significant increases in all forms of homelessness, with unprecedented numbers of households in temporary accommodation and rough sleeping estimates fast approaching the 2017 peak. This continual rise in demand is causing ripple effects through the rest of the system.

- 333,170 households were at risk of, or had experienced, homelessness in 2024, a 4% increase from 2023, and a 14% increase since 2019 when the HRA had been in implementation for 12 months. This includes:
    - 148,400 households threatened with homelessness within 56 days and owed a prevention duty. This is a 1% increase since 2023, and a 1% decrease from 2019 figures.
    - 184,780 households experiencing statutory homelessness and owed a relief duty. This is a 6% increase from 2023, and a 26% increase from 2019.
- 57,930 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.

[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.

[2] From 2008 to 2014 this report series was named Survey of Needs and Provision Services for Homeless Single People and Couples in England (SNAP); from 2015 to 2023 this report series was named Support for Single Homeless People in England: Annual Review.

- 54,750 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, there was a 32% increase from 2023 in the number of people owed a relief duty as a result of being required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support.
- The 2024 rough sleeping snapshot found that 4,667 people were estimated to be sleeping rough on a given night, a 20% increase from 2023 and a 164% increase since 2010. Rough sleeping increased in every English region, expect for a marginal decrease in the Noth West, compared with 2023.
- As of 31 December 2024, there were 127,890 households in temporary accommodation, a 12% increase on the previous year and a 31% increase compared to 2019. The total number of households in TA at the end of 2024 represents the highest number since current records began.

Availability of and access to homelessness services

Whilst the number of accommodation projects and bed spaces has increased very slightly from 2023, the 2024 report finds a sector that has been steadily declining in size since 2010, and a trend that is at odds with the increases in homelessness and rough sleeping seen across England.

- In 2024 there are 915 accommodation projects for single homeless people in England.
- The number of accommodation services has marginally increased by 0.9% from last year, but is still 28% lower than a decade ago in 2014, and 47% lower than 2008 when this data series began.
- There are 33,249 bedspaces in England, a slight increase of 2% from 2023, but a 14% decrease from 2014, and a 43% decrease since 2008.
- With an increasing presentation of complex support needs in a context of overstretched funding, 81% of accommodation projects reported having to turn someone away from support because the clients' needs were too high or too complex.
- 81% of accommodation projects are mixed gender, with 10% men only and 9% women only.
- 38% (347) of accommodation projects are youth specific services.
- 8% (58) of accommodation projects are able to support people with high or complex needs.
- A total of 173 day centres operate throughout England as of 2024. This is a slight increase in day centres compared to 2023 (168) and a return to 2022 levels (173).

Support needs and support services available

There is evidence that over the last few years the level and visibility of support needs of people accessing homelessness services has increased substantially. Despite most accommodation providers offering low to medium support, almost all services are now supporting people with a range of overlapping needs. Barriers to statutory services, in particular mental health services, remain the biggest challenges to ensuring that people can access the support they need.

- 79% of day centres, and 56% of accommodation providers saw an increase in people experiencing homelessness for the first time..
- Both day centres and accommodation providers reported big increases in people experiencing homelessness whilst in employment, at 46% and 22% respectively.
- Accommodation providers and day centres also reported substantial increases in refugees accessing their services, at 44% and 71% respectively. This is alongside a 46% increase of people with no recourse to public funds presenting to day centres.
- Mental health remained the most commonly reported support need amongst accommodation providers. 95% of accommodation providers support residents with a history of diagnosed mental health conditions. This is a 14% increase since 2022 and a 2% decrease compared to 2021. Compared to 2020, there was a 53% increase.
- Mental health was also one of the most commonly reported support need amongst day centres (100%). Day centres also reported high levels of addiction related support needs, both drug dependency (100%) and alcohol addiction (100%), as well as dual diagnosis (95%).
- Access to mental health support remains the biggest barrier for both accommodation providers and day centres (100% and 92% respectively).
- Accommodation providers also reported barriers to accessing drug and alcohol support services (61%) and immigration advice services (58%).
- 56% of day centres reported barriers in physical health services (56%).

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 taking over as the most dominant funding source in the sector in 2017.

- Housing benefit is the most commonly cited primary source of income for accommodation providers (47%), followed by local authority commissioned contracts (46%).
- 69% of those who receive Housing Benefit as a main income source cite Enhanced Housing Benefit as their primary income.

- Since the end of the Supporting People ringfence in 2008 there has been a 2500% increase in Housing Benefit as the main funding source for homelessness accommodation providers and a 47% 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 source of funding for 60% of providers. This is most commonly through grant funding (26%) and individual giving (21%).
- 16% of accommodation providers stated that their income had decreased since the previous year, with 51% stating there was no change to their income, and 33% reporting an increase.
- 21% of day centres stated that their income had decreased since the previous year, with 44% stating there was no change to their income, and 36% reporting an increase.
- 48% of accommodation providers and 46% of day centres reported that they risk service closures as a result of increased financial pressures, and 38% of accommodation providers stated they have already reduced their provision.

Move on from accommodation

The main aim of most homelessness services is to support people to access the services and support that they need to move on from homelessness and into independent living, but accommodation providers are facing increasing barriers to accessing these services, and to securing sustainable housing.

- 39% (3,596) of people currently being accommodated are waiting to move on from their current provision into more secure, sustainable housing.
- 49% (1,752) of people waiting to move on have been waiting for six months or longer.
- Lack of available social housing (97%) and the lack of private rented sector (PRS) accommodation at Local Housing Allowance rate (75%), 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 41% of residents move on to social housing, 19% move on to supported housing, and 8% move on to PRS. In contrast, only 4% move on to rough sleeping, 3% move on to prison, and 2% turn to sofa surfing.

Conclusion

2024 has been a year of uncertainty for the sector. A new Government brought with it the potential for a revitalised strategy and new commitments on homelessness but financial insecurity has been the backdrop to much of 2024 for the homelessness sector. Services faced a funding cliff-edge, with the rollover of existing homelessness funding into 2025/26 not confirmed until 18th December. This, coupled with the lack of inflationary uplifts, has resulted in serious anxiety for providers as to the tenability and delivery of their services. 67% of accommodation providers and 46% of day centres reported that the lack of inflationary increases in commissioned and grant funded projects means some services are no longer financially viable. The consequence of increased costs is evidenced by the impact on service reduction, delivery and closures. Nearly half of accommodation providers (48%) and day centres (46%) report that increased financial pressures puts their organisation at risk of service closures.

As services feel the pressure of increased costs alongside underinvestment in single homelessness, demand continues to rise, with all forms of homelessness increasing in 2024. Rough sleeping is rapidly approaching its 2017 peak, with an estimated 4,667 people sleeping rough on a given night, a 20% increase from 2023, and a 164% increase since 2010.

Meanwhile, a record number of households are in temporary accommodation. As of December 2024, there were 127,890 households in temporary accommodation, a 12% increase on the previous year. For many local authorities, the rise in costs associated with meeting statutory homelessness duties has pushed them to the edge of bankruptcy. Many are scaling back support in other areas and to cover the cost of temporary accommodation have reduced activity across homelessness prevention, rough sleeping outreach, and supported accommodation. This has left service providers grappling with difficult financial decisions whilst still trying to deliver high quality support.

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 47% and the number of bedspaces has reduced by 43%. Despite increases in all forms of homelessness over the last seventeen years, the homelessness sector has seen a steady contraction as funding sources and policy priorities have shifted.

The Review has also tracked how homelessness services are funded and how the funding landscape has changed over time. The findings show accommodation providers continue to rely on Housing Benefit (47%) as their primary source of income, of which 69% is through Enhanced Housing Benefit to provide supported exempt accommodation. As the sector looks ahead to the anticipated standards and licensing scheme being brought into regulate the supported exempt sector there is potentially enormous change ahead for homelessness accommodation provision.

Yet despite services operating under immense financial pressures, findings in 2024 demonstrate the continued trend of people presenting to services with increased complexity of needs and from diverse populations driven by varied causes of homelessness. Mental health is the most pressing support need seen by service providers, with 95% of accommodation providers and 100% of day centres reporting supporting clients with mental health needs. Other health and social care needs were also prevalent, particularly high levels of addiction related support needs, and dual diagnosis.

Despite this, providers faced accessibility barriers when linking their clients into necessary services. 100% of accommodation providers and 92% of day centres reported barriers in accessing mental health support services. 81% of accommodation providers had to turn someone down from their project because the individual's support needs were too high or too complex for the service to manage. This represents a huge increase from 2023, where 61% of services cited this as a reason for refusal.

The findings in this report evidence the fact that service providers are often the last line of defence for people who have fallen through the gaps of other public services, including mental health, social care, and the justice system. Both accommodation providers and day centres are delivering a huge range of services, working across housing advice, relief and support. 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. Without the homelessness system picking up the fallout from the cuts and pressures facing other public sector services, some of the country's most vulnerable residents would be left without a safety net or the vital support needed.

Ongoing pressures caused by lack of affordable housing are also demonstrated throughout this report. 39% 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. 49% of those waiting to move on have been waiting for six months or longer. Lack of available social housing (97%) and the lack of private rented sector (PRS) accommodation at Local Housing Allowance rate (75%) are the two main barriers to moving on from homeless accommodation.

The 2024 Review of Services Addressing Single Homelessness highlights a system facing enormous, ongoing challenges and overwhelmed with rising demand and increased complexity of needs at the same time as access to the wider health and social care system becomes increasingly difficult to access. Increased financial pressures and precarity coupled with overreliance on Housing Benefit as a primary funding source are exposing systematic challenges in the sector, vulnerable to outsized impact with future anticipated changes. The lack of growth in the system despite rising demand shows the fundamental issues at play. 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 seventeen 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 seventeenth edition of *Support to End Homelessness 2024: A review of services addressing single homelessness in England*[3] 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 surveys from 204 accommodation providers (22% response rate) conducted between November 2024 and January 2025.[4]

2. Telephone and online surveys from 40 homelessness day centres (23% 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 90% 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 review. Overall comparisons of accommodation projects, day centres and bed spaces can be given from 2008.

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.

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[3] From 2008 to 2014 this report series was named Survey of Needs and Provision Services for Homeless Single People and Couples in England (SNAP); from 2015 to 2023 this report series was named Support for Single Homeless People in England: Annual Review.

[4] Of the 204 respondents, 4 service providers provided aggregated data across all of their services. This means the survey is based on aggregated data for 263 services, but from a total of 204 individual survey responses.

Data accuracy

In line with all reviews since 2017, the survey asked services to provide data for the period of April 2023 – March 2024, allowing for a year-on-year comparison with the previous year's report. 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.).

Table 1.1. Quality of data provided by respondents

	Accommodation providers	Day centres
All exact figures	24%	36%
Mostly exact figures	52%	49%
About half and half	13%	8%
Mostly estimates	10%	8%
All estimates	1%	-

Source: Accommodation Providers Survey N=176; Day Centres survey N=39

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

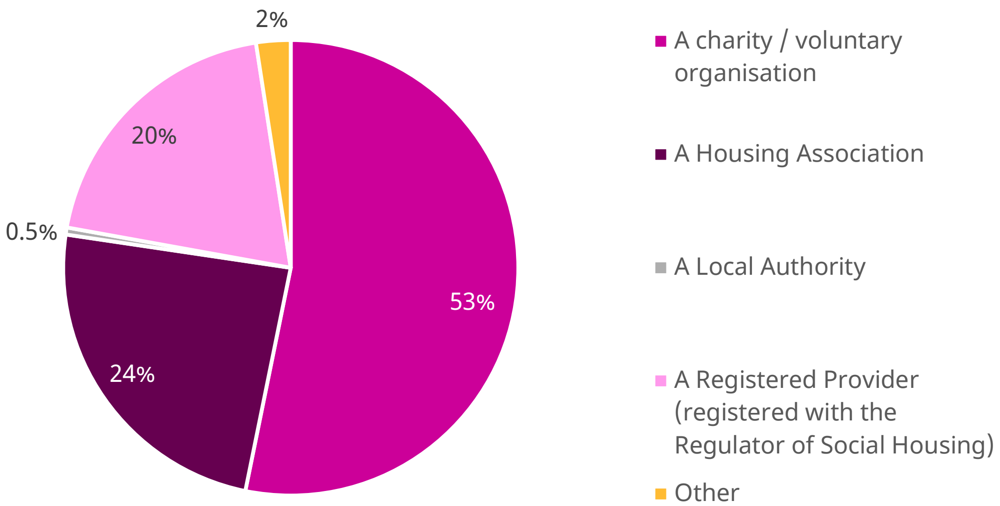
	Accommodation Providers		Day Centres	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
East of England	24	12%	5	13%
East Midlands	14	7%	1	3%
London	21	10%	6	15%
North East	13	6%	2	5%
North West	27	13%	7	18%
South East	36	17%	7	18%
South West	35	17%	7	18%
West Midlands	17	8%	3	8%
Yorkshire and the Humber	19	9%	2	5%
Total	206*[5]	-	40	-

[5] The count is slightly higher than the overall sample to reflect where services responded based on aggregated data across their services.

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 (53%, 108), followed by Housing Associations (24%, 49) and Registered Providers (20%, 40). A small proportion of respondents represented local authority accommodation (0.5%, 1).

Chart 1.1. Accommodation provider survey respondents 2024



Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=203

Chapter 2: Single homelessness in England

This chapter provides context for the 2024 report. It explores the different categories of homelessness and then looks at 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

- 333,170 households were at risk of or experienced homelessness in 2024, a 4% increase from 2023, and a 14% increase since 2019 when the HRA had been in implementation for 12 months. This includes:
  - 148,400 households threatened with homelessness within 56 days and owed a prevention duty. This is a 1% increase since 2023, and a 1% decrease from 2019 figures.
  - 184,780 households experiencing statutory homelessness and owed a relief duty. This is a 6% increase from 2023, and a 26% increase from 2019.
- 57,930 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.
- 54,750 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, there was a 32% increase from 2023 in the number of people owed a relief duty as a result of being required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support.
- The 2024 rough sleeping snapshot found that 4,667 people were estimated to be sleeping rough on a given night, a 20% increase from 2023 and a 164% increase since 2010. Rough sleeping increased in every English region, expect for a marginal decrease in the Noth West, compared with 2023.
- As of 31 December 2024, there were 127,890 households in temporary accommodation, a 12% increase on the previous year and 31% increase compared to 2019. The total households in TA at the end of 2024 represents the highest number since current records began.

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. This 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.[6] The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced people who are made homeless as a result of fleeing domestic abuse as an additional priority need category.[7]

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.[8]

Relief duty: Local authorities 'must take reasonable steps' to relieve homelessness within 56 days, primarily through securing alternative accommodation.[9]

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[6] 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.

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

[8] 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

[9] 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.[10]

Single homelessness[11]

This term covers individuals or couples without dependent children who are homeless. People experiencing homelessness within this 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.[12]

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 result will not receive the advice and support that they need.[13]

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

[11] 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.

[12] 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

[13] 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

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.[14,15]

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.[16]

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 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 and homelessness policy context

The General Election in 2024, alongside a change in Government brought with it significant context and potential policy change throughout the second half of the year.

[14] ONS (2023) "Hidden" homelessness in the UK: evidence review. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/hiddenhomelessnessintheukevidencereview/20 23-03-29
[15] 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-householdsfact-sheet
[16] 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)

The beginning of 2024 was marked by the continuation of ongoing policy and funding decisions that had been seen since 2018. After the sharp rise in rough sleeping between 2010 and 2017 the Government had introduced the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI), a dedicated grant fund for rough sleeping support services. The latest round of RSI funding was announced in September 2022, and included up to £500 million for 2022-25, which will be distributed in 303 areas.[17] Alongside RSI Government also introduced the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) and the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP). This was the first time that the RSI, and additional funding programmes had provided multi-year funding settlements but entering the 2024-25 financial year providers were once again facing a funding cliff-edge with uncertainty around the continuation of the grant fund.

This uncertainty was compounded by the new Labour Government who brought their own strategy and considerations, and a revised timeline for budget and Spending Review decisions. Although confirmation of the total allocation for homelessness and rough sleeping spend was announced in September, the detail of how and what this was to be spent on was not released until December 2024 and that included all RSI funded support. The newly named Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant, which brought together RSI, RSAP and other disparate funding sources, was confirmed as a one year roll-over of funding for 2025-26 ahead of an anticipated more comprehensive review at the spring Spending Review. Although welcome the funding was welcome this meant that extreme financial uncertainty, the risk of a hard funding cliff-edge and loss of rough sleeping services loomed large across the sector over much of 2024.

In June 2024 a Labour Government was formed for the first time in 14 years potentially heralding a significant policy change approach in homelessness. The Labour manifesto committed to "*develop a new cross-government strategy, working with Mayors and Councils across the country, to put Britain back on track to ending homelessness*" alongside "*Delivering the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation*". However whilst an inter-ministerial taskforce, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, has been established, and initial activity on a new strategy started there has yet to be detail of what this new vision and strategy to end homelessness entails. Therefore although we saw a significant political change in 2024 this has yet to translate to substantial policy change on the ground.

2024 had also seen continued challenges with increased rough sleeping and homelessness amongst newly recognised refugees evicted from asylum accommodation, driven by the Home Office's Streamlined Asylum Process. In December 2024 the Labour Government introduced a pilot scheme to extend the time given to newly recognised refugees from 28 days to 56 days, but the impact of this was not yet observed in this report.

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

Despite the impact of the made by the Conservative Government through RSI, RSAP, SHAP and other funding streams, in 2024 ongoing 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 and homelessness. This in particular has driven up the numbers of households in temporary accommodation at enormous cost to local authorities and becoming a significant driver of local government financial pressure. At the Autumn budget this pressure was recognised through an uplift in the Homelessness Prevention Grant, increasing funds available for temporary accommodation, although with a cap on the amount able to be allocated to temporary accommodation to safeguard wider homelessness and rough sleeping services.

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 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[18]

According to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) annual statutory statistics for January - December 2024, 333,170 households were at risk of or experienced homelessness during this period and owed either a prevention

[18] Note unless otherwise specified all statutory homelessness statistics in this section refer to the full calendar year not the financial year.

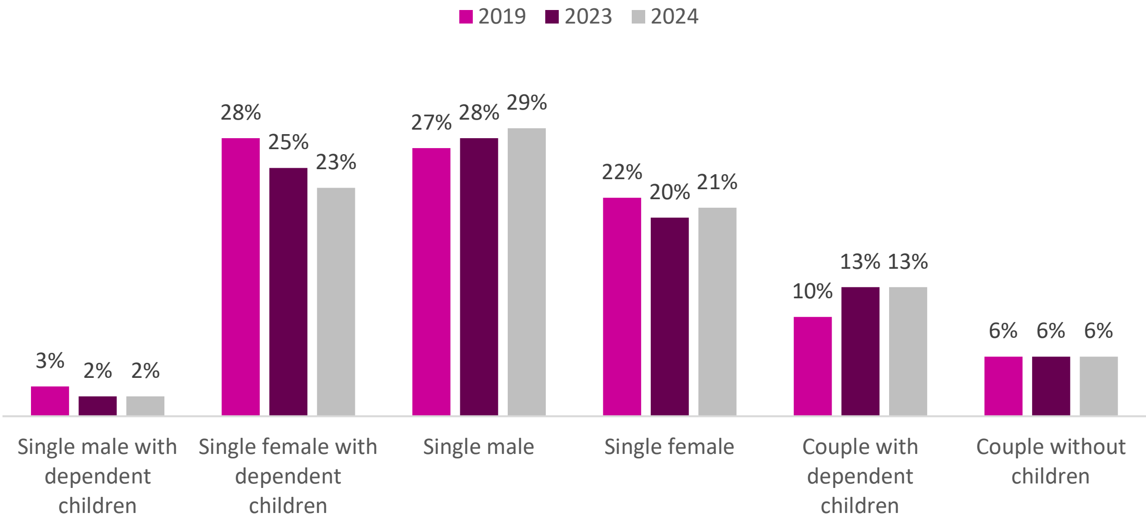
or relief duty.[19] This represents a 4% increase from January – December 2023, and a 14% increase since 2019, which was the first full year with the HRA in effect.[20]

Prevention duty

In 2024, 148,400 households were threatened with homelessness within 56 days and owed a prevention duty. This is a 1% increase since 2023, and a 1% decrease from 2019 figures. Whilst this reduction in the number of households at risk of homelessness may look encouraging, this must be understood in the context of a significant increase in households owed a relief duty over the same period, and therefore may suggest instead that households are accessing help at a later stage.

The profile of households owed a prevention duty has remained consistent with 2023, with single males without dependents making up the highest proportion of households (43,230, 29%), followed by single female parents (34,300, 23%), and single females without dependents (30,430, 21%). Compared with 2019, there have been some changes to the profile of those owed a prevention duty, at which time 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 2019 and 2024.

Chart 2.1. Profile of households owed prevention duty: 2019, 2023, 2024



Source: MHCLG Statutory homelessness live tables

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 57,930 households making up 39% of the total proportion owed the duty in 2024. This remains unchanged from 2023 but represents a 25% increase from 2019. Breaking down the reasons for the end of an AST:

[19] MHCLG (2025) Statutory homelessness live tables. Available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/674726faa72d7eb7f348c04a/StatHomeless_202406.ods

[20] MHCLG (2025) Statutory homelessness live tables. Available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/674726faa72d7eb7f348c04a/StatHomeless_202406.ods

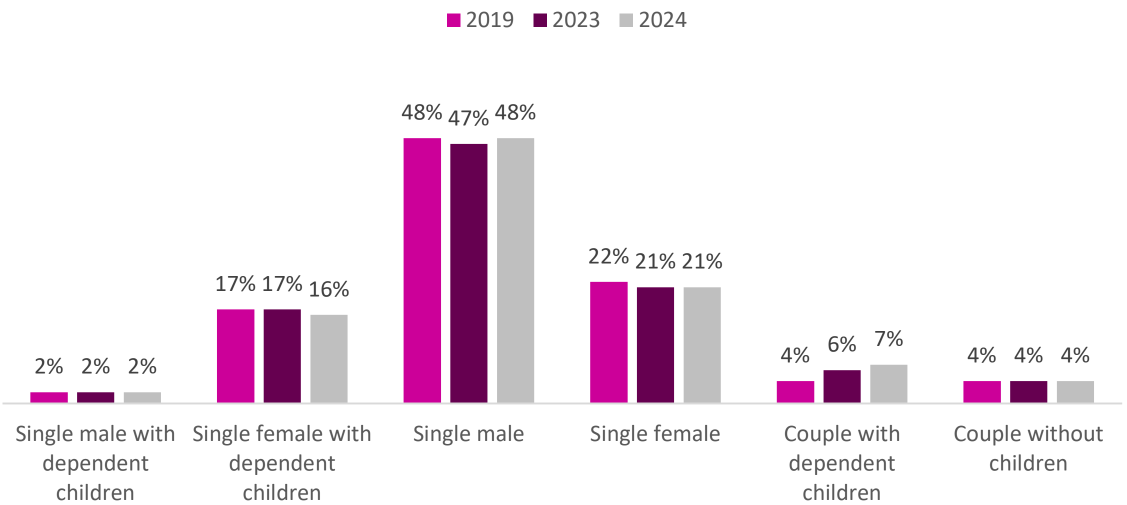
- 37,400 households were owed a prevention duty because their landlord was selling or re-letting the property. This is a 1% increase on 2023 and a 39% increase on 2019.
- 8,130 households were at risk of homelessness due to rent arrears, a 4% decrease on 2023 and a 33% decrease on 2019.
- However, within this there has been a 5% increase from 2023 of people in rent arrears due to an increase in rent, and a 72% increase since 2019.
- Of those at risk of homelessness due to the end of an AST, 26,640 households had a valid section 21 notice, a 2% increase on 2023, and a 31% increase since 2019.

141,780 households ended their prevention duty in 2024. This is a 5% increase on 2023, and a 3% increase compared to 2019. In 2024, of those whose prevention duty ended, 73,700 households had a positive outcome and secured accommodation for 6+ months. When looking comparatively at successful outcomes, in 2024, 51% of duties ended resulted in secured accommodation, equivalent to the proportion in 2023 but a decline from the successful prevention outcomes of 58% in 2019. Aligned with this, 36,770 households ended their prevention duty homeless, a 5% increase from 2023 and a 27% increase from 2019. This also represents a proportional increase from 20% of the total number of duties ended in 2019, to 26% in 2024.

Relief duty

In 2024, 184,780 households were experiencing statutory homelessness and owed a relief duty. This is a 6% increase from 2023, and a 26% increase from 2019. 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 (87,980, 48%). Single females make up the next largest group owed a relief duty (38,330, 21%), followed by single females with dependent children (29,300, 16%).

Chart 2.2 – Profile of households owed relief duty: 2019, 2023, 2024



Source: MHCLG Statutory homelessness live table

Of those owed a relief duty, the most common reason was friends or family no longer willing or able to accommodate, at 54,750 households making up 30% of the total proportion owed the duty. This is a 2% increase from 2023 and a 31% increase from 2019. Experiencing homelessness as a result of domestic abuse was the next main reason given, at 28,650 households (16% of those owed relief duty). This is a 2% increase on 2023 and an 40% increase on 2019. The third most common reason was due to the end of an AST, at 22,730 households (12% of those owed relief duty), a 2% increase from 2023 and a 36% increase from 2019.

Eviction from asylum support continues to be a prevalent and significant reason for being owed a relief duty. In 2024, 14,480 households were owed a relief duty as a result of being required to leave accommodation provided by the Home Office as asylum support. This is a 32% increase compared to 2023 (9,780 households), and 82% increase from 2019 (2,670 households). This is a direct consequence of the Streamlined Asylum Processing and associated increased in evictions of newly recognised refugees from Home Office asylum accommodation.

219,040 households ended their relief duty in 2024. Of those, 66,920 households (31%) had a positive outcome and secured accommodation for 6+ months. This is a 32% increase from 2019, and a 12% increase on the previous year. In 2024, 31% of relief duties that ended resulted in secured accommodation, compared with 33% in 2023, and 40% in 2019. In contrast, 112,900 households (52%) ended their relief duty still homeless at the point that 56 days elapsed, a 19% increase on 2023 and a 51% increase from 2019. This is also an increase in terms of proportions, from 48% of the total number of duties ended in 2023, and from 37% in 2019, to 52% in 2024.

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.

In Autumn 2024, there was an increase in the number of rough sleepers for the third year in a row, with 4,667 people counted or estimated by local authorities to be

[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-2024/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2024#snapshot-approach

sleeping rough.[22] This represents a 20% increase from 2023 (Table 2.1), and a 164% increase since the current methodology for measuring rough sleeping was introduced in 2010.

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

	Number of rough sleepers	% change (vs 2023)	Numerical change (vs 2023)
2010	1,768	164%	+2,899
2011	2,181	114%	+2,486
2012	2,309	102%	+2,358
2013	2,414	93%	+2,253
2014	2,744	70%	+1,923
2015	3,569	31%	+1,098
2016	4,134	13%	+533
2017	4,751	-2%	-84
2018	4,677	0%	-10
2019	4,266	9%	+401
2020	2,688	74%	+1,979
2021	2,443	91%	+2,224
2022	3,069	52%	+1,598
2023	3,898	20%	+769
2024	4,667	-	-

Source: Rough Sleeping Snapshot Autumn 2024

Regional trends in rough sleeping

There are regional variations in the numbers of people seen sleeping rough. As seen in Chart 2.3 below, rough sleeping increased in every region compared to 2023 expect in the North West, which saw a very marginal decrease (-2%). London, the South East and Yorkshire and the Humber saw the greatest increase in the number of people seen sleeping rough in 2024 when compared to 2023. The lowest increase was seen in the North East.

In terms of overall distribution of rough sleeping across England, as seen in Table 2.2 below, London (28%), the South East (17%) and the South West (11%) reported the highest proportion of rough sleeping, with the North East (3%) reporting the lowest proportion of rough sleeping in England.

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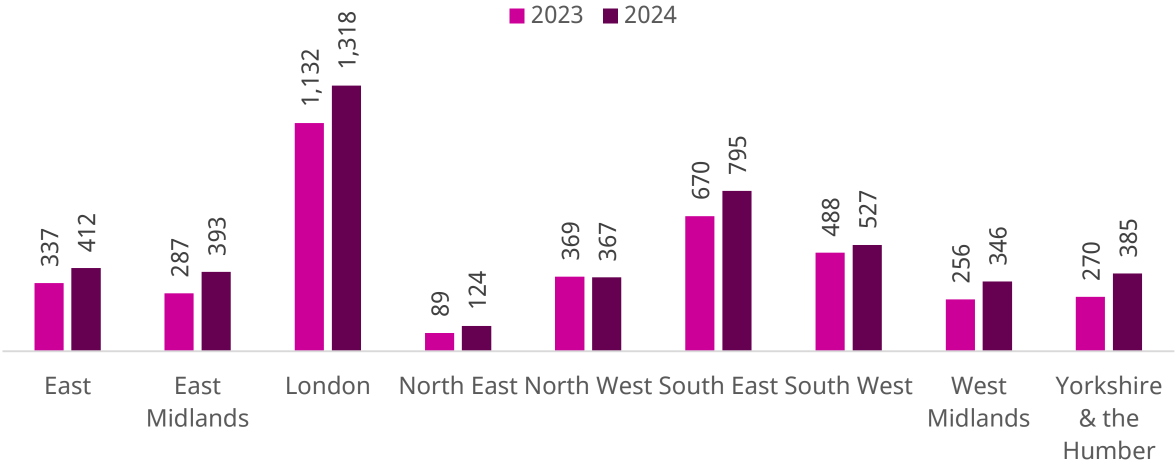
[22] MHCLG (2024) Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2024. Available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2024/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2024

Chart 2.3. Regional change in rough sleeping count: 2023 and 2024



Source: Rough Sleeping Snapshot

Table 2.2. Proportion of rough sleeping in England by region, 2024

East of England	9%
East Midlands	8%
London	28%
North East	3%
North West	8%
South East	17%
South West	11%
West Midlands	7%
Yorkshire and The Humber	8%

Source: Rough Sleeping Snapshot

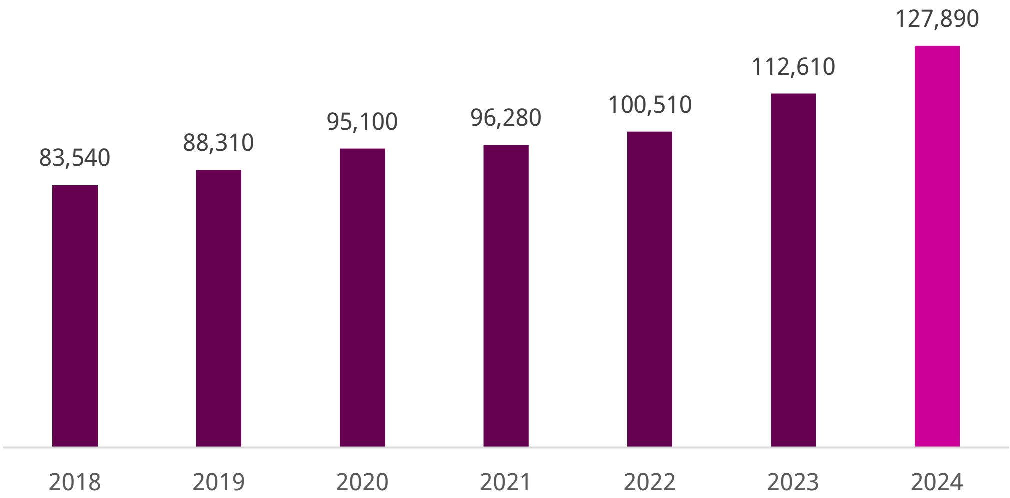
Temporary accommodation

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 2024, there were 127,890 households in temporary accommodation, a 12% increase on the previous year, and a 31% increase compared to 2019. 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 2024 represents the highest number since current records began.

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

Chart 2.4. Total households in temporary accommodation 2018-2024



Source: MHCLG (2025) Statutory homelessness live tables

For the third year in the row, most households in TA were accommodated in nightly paid, private lets (43,110 households) with the majority of these households being families with dependent children (29,700 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 (30,000 households, of which 20,430 had dependent children), closely followed by PRS (26,380 households, of which 19,390 had dependent children). 16,390 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. 41,070 households had been accommodated in TA outside of their local authority area, a 19% increase on 2023.

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 of services from across England, it discusses key characteristics of existing provision and changes in provision over the past year.

Key headlines

- In 2024 there are 915 accommodation projects for single homeless people in England.
- The number of accommodation services has marginally increased by 0.9% from last year, but sits 28% lower than a decade ago in 2014, and 47% lower than 2008 when this data series began.
- There are 33,249 bedspaces in England, a slight increase of 2% from 2023, but a 14% decrease from 2014, and a 43% decrease since 2008.
- With the increasing presentation of complex support needs, 81% of accommodation projects reported having to turn someone away from support because the clients' needs were too high or too complex.
- 81% of accommodation projects are mixed gender, with 10% men only and 9% women only.
- 38% (347) of accommodation projects are youth specific services.
- 8% (58) of accommodation projects are able to support people with high or complex needs.
- A total of 173 day centres operate throughout England as of 2024. This is a slight increase in day centres compared to 2023 (168), and a return to 2022 levels (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.

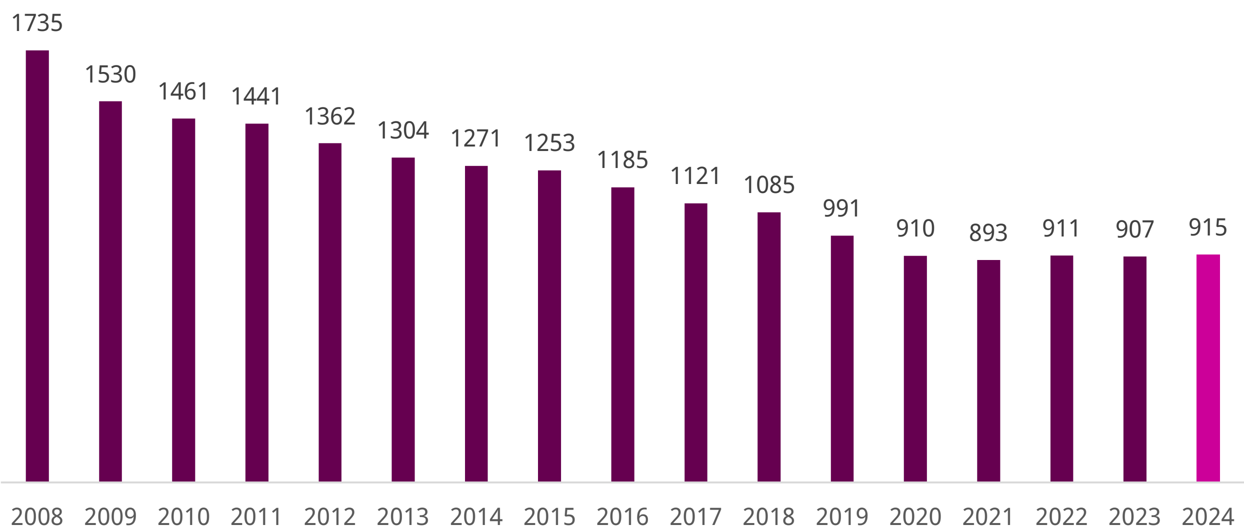
- **Day centres** offer non-accommodation-based support for those sleeping rough and/or who are either experiencing or at risk of other forms of homelessness. Day centres are usually provided and run by voluntary, faith, or community organisations[24] and have often emerged in response to a local need.

Availability of homelessness accommodation services

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

Data from the Homelessness England database identifies 915 accommodation projects for single people who are homeless in England in 2024, representing a very marginal increase of 0.9% from the previous year's figure of 907. The number of accommodation projects in 2024 is 28% lower compared to 10 years ago in 2014, and 47% lower than in 2008 when this data series began. The data suggests that after a long period of reduction in the number of accommodation providers since 2008, this decrease has stalled and numbers have stayed relatively static since 2020.

Chart 3.1. Number of accommodation providers, 2008 - 2024



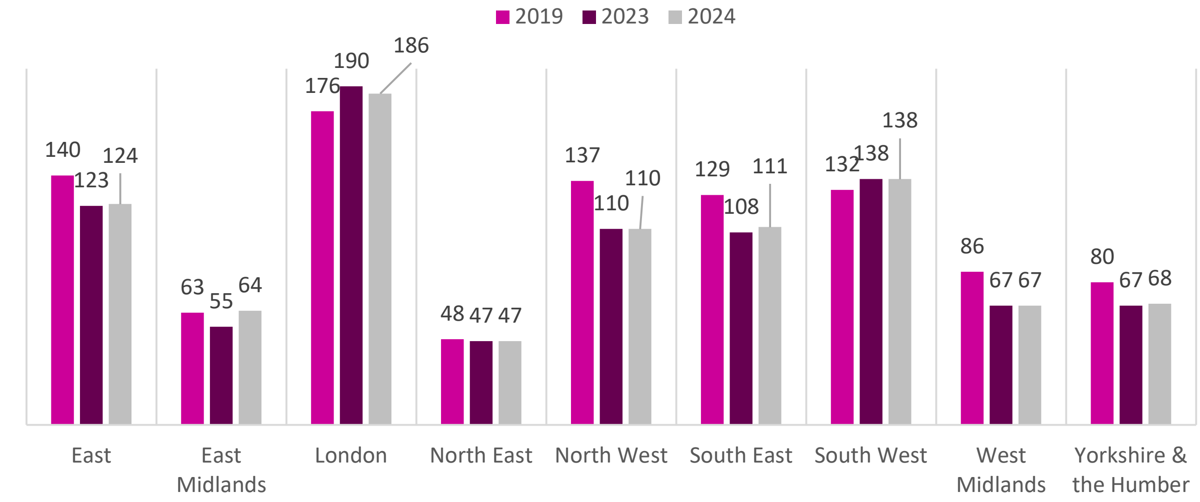
Source: Homeless England, N=915

As seen in Chart 3.2 below, the number of accommodation providers by region has remained largely static between 2023 and 2024. Whilst most regions have seen no change in their provision, the East, East Midlands, South East and Yorkshire and the Humber have seen marginal increases in the number of providers. London has seen a

[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

slight decrease in the number of accommodation providers compared to the previous year and is at its lowest number since 2018.

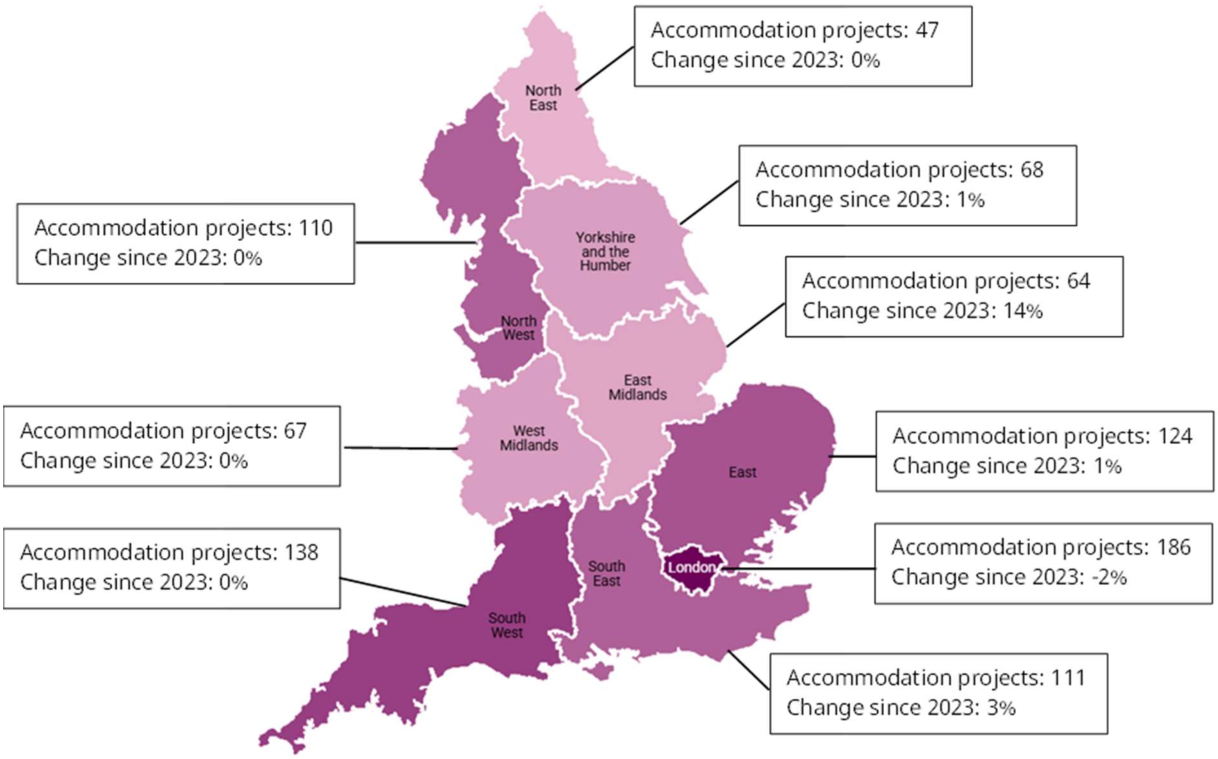
Chart 3.2. Change in number of accommodation providers by region



Source: Homeless England, N=915

Map 3.1 below shows the geographical distribution of accommodation projects across England.

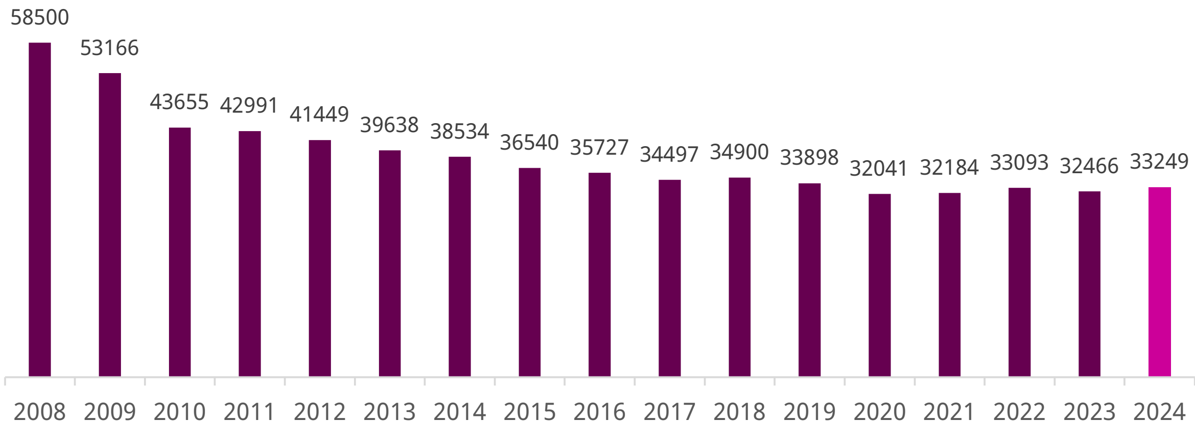
Map 3.1. Regional distribution of homelessness accommodation projects, 2024



Source: Homeless England, N=915

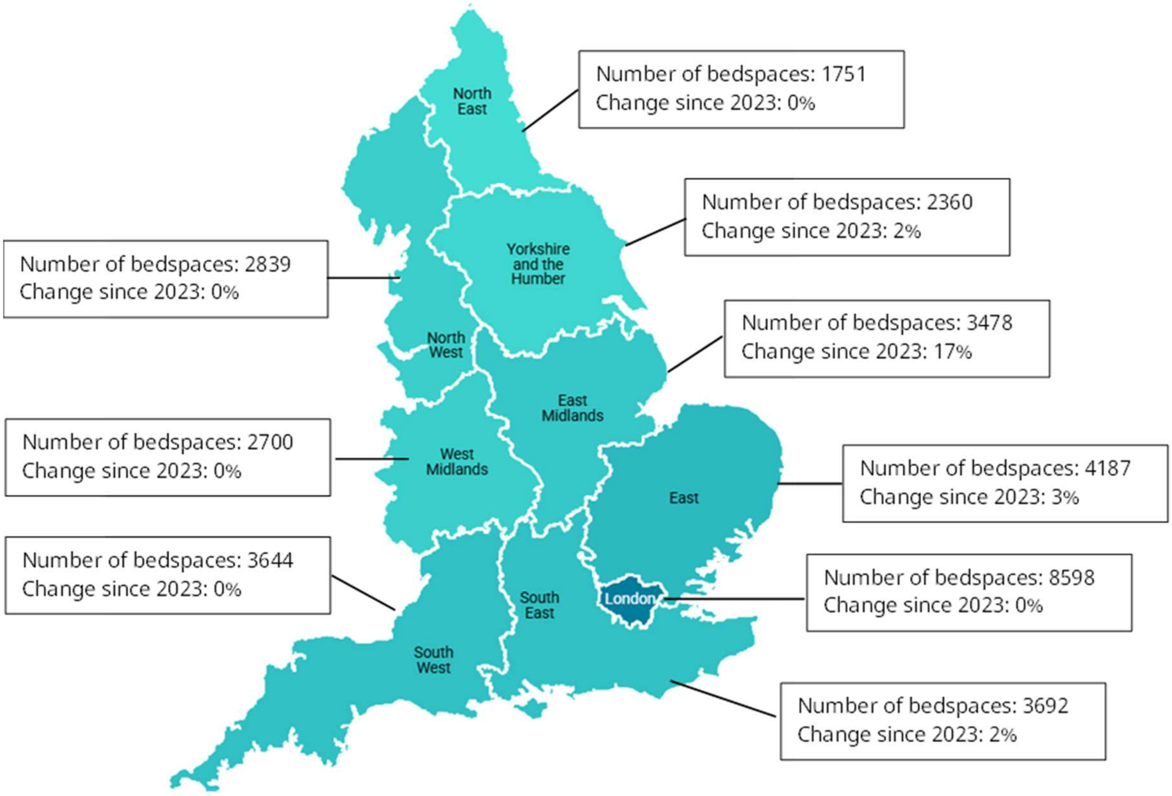
As seen in Chart 3.3 below, there are 33,249 bedspaces in England in 2024, a marginal 2% increase from the previous year in 2023. However, this year's figure represents a 14% decrease from 10 years ago in 2014 and a 43% decrease since 2008.

Chart 3.3 Number of bedspaces available in England, 2008 – 2024
Source: Homeless England, N=915



Map 3.2 below shows the regional distribution of bedspaces. In the majority of regions the number of bedspaces between 2023 and 2024 remained stable, with the exception of Yorkshire and the Humber, East Midlands, the East and the South East, who all saw percentage increases in bedspace capacity.

Map 3.2. Regional distribution of bedspaces, 2024



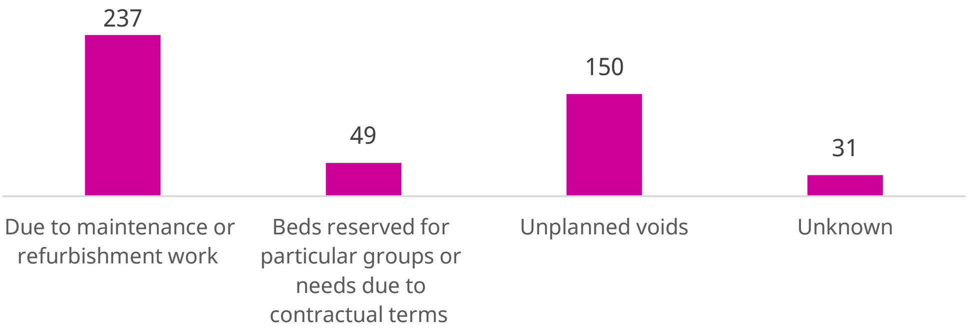
Source: Homeless England, N=915

Bed night voids

To create a picture of the level of demand, the accommodation survey asked respondents whether they had any voids (empty beds). 132 projects (65% of respondents) reported a total of 598 voids. This represents 6% of reported available bedspaces that night. As per previous findings, this suggests that providers are running at high capacity.

The reason for voids can vary, ranging from planned voids due to maintenance or 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 for voids was due to maintenance or refurbishment (51%, 237 voids).

Chart 3.4. Reasons for voids

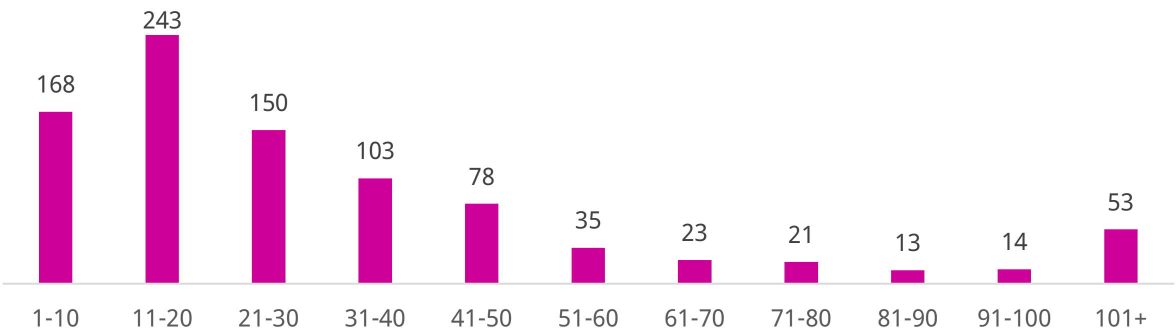


Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=203

Size of accommodation projects

In 2024, 46% of accommodation providers provided up to 20 bedspaces within their service. 18% of accommodation providers 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



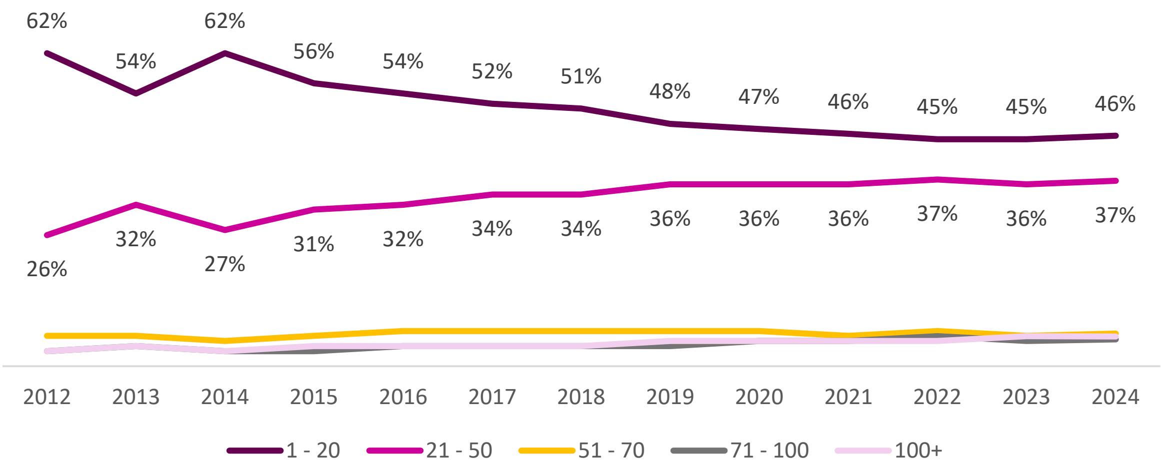
Source: Homeless England, N=901

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

Since the 1980s, homelessness accommodation projects have 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]

As seen in Chart 3.6 below, since 2014 there is a general gradual upward trend in the proportion of medium sized projects (between 21 – 50 bed spaces), while a downward trend is seen in the proportion of small projects (between 1 – 20 bed spaces). This seems to align with 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 the use of Housing Benefit as a primary source of income suggesting a relationship between funding source and the types of services being delivered (see Chapter 5).

Chart 3.6. Accommodation projects by size, 2012 – 2024



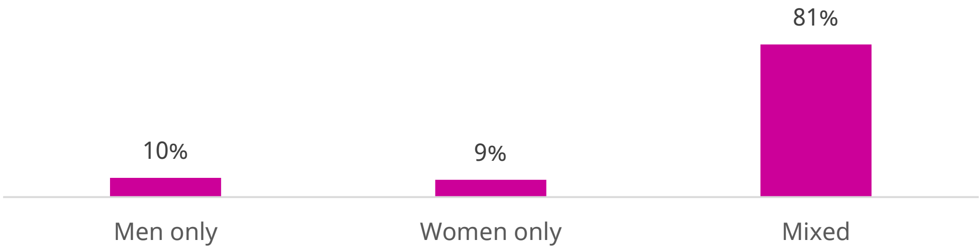
Source: Homeless England, N=901

Availability of accommodation for specific populations

Gender

In 2024, 784 (81%) accommodation projects offer mixed gender accommodation, while 10% (97) of projects offer male only accommodation and 9% (87) of projects offer female only accommodation. Gender provision among accommodation providers has remained the same as 2023. 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

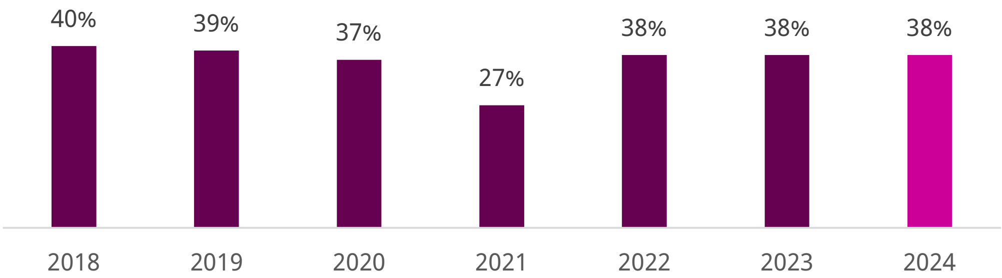


Source: Homeless England, N=915. *Note: projects may offer gender specific and mixed gender accommodation within the same service.*

Young people

Young people here refers to people aged between 16-25. A total of 347 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 seven years, bar an anomalous figure in 2021.

Chart 3.8. Proportion of accommodation provision that is youth specific



Source: Homeless England, N=915

Support needs

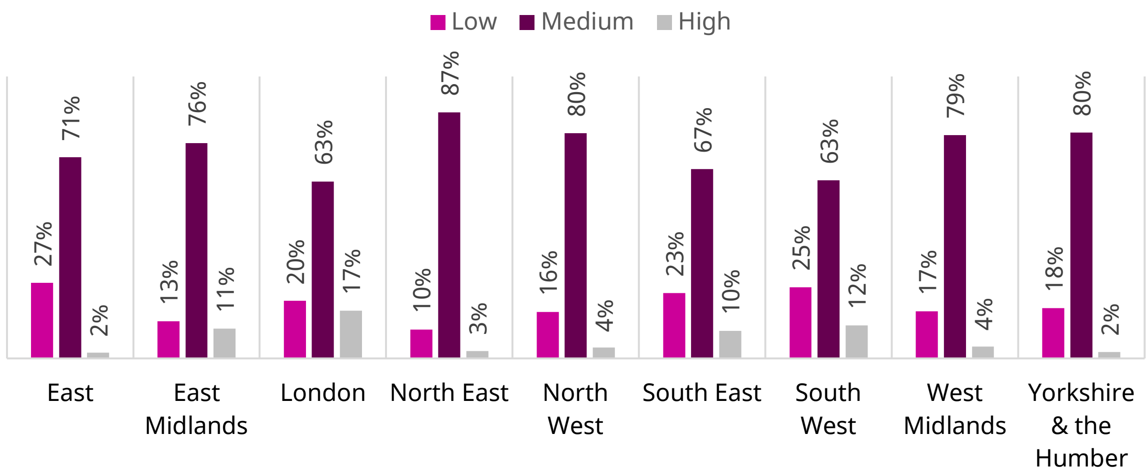
685 (74%) of the accommodation provided is supported accommodation, as opposed to emergency or direct access accommodation. The latter is typically less specified on different support needs, with criteria being more focussed around current or immediate risk of rough sleeping. While some providers are better suited to certain needs such as substance misuse or mental health needs, providers rarely identify a 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 685 supported accommodation providers, 92% (627) offer accommodation for low to medium support needs. Only 8% (58) of projects are able to support individuals with high or complex needs. This shows marginal change from 2023 where 90% of supported accommodation across England caters to low to medium support needs, and 10% of projects were able to support those with high and complex needs.

There is significant regional variation apparent within accommodation suited to different support needs. In London, 17% of accommodation providers able to support those with high needs, compared with 2% in East of England, and 2% in Yorkshire and the Humber.

The availability and provision of high needs support has changed regionally compared to 2023; in London there has been a 10% decrease in high needs supported accommodation, as well as a 6% decrease in Yorkshire and the Humber. This is at odds with the findings from this year's Review, which suggest there is increasingly complex need among people experiencing homelessness. Access to the right support plays a critical role in pathways out of homelessness for people with severe and multiple disadvantage. The decline in high support needs provision speaks to both the budget shortfalls facing the sector, reduction in commissioned services, and the consequences of short-term, patchwork, and insufficient funding.

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



Source: Homeless England, N=685

Accessing accommodation services

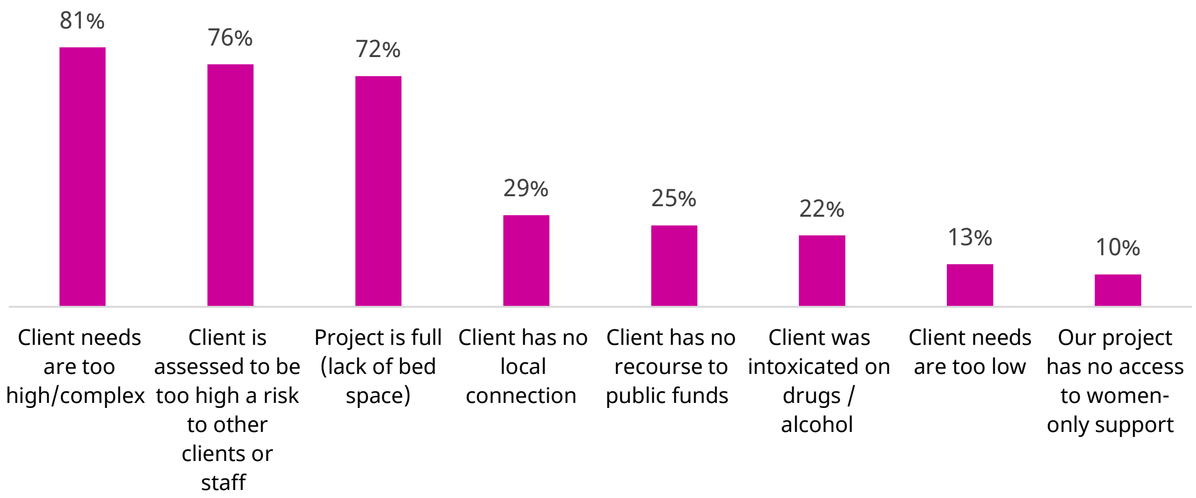
Survey respondents were asked how many people were accommodated in their project on a given night, and how many had been accommodated cumulatively over a 12-month period (between April 2023 and March 2024). There were 9,184 people accommodated on a given night and 17,116 people accommodated over the 12-month period. On average providers accommodated 1.9 times their capacity over a year period i.e. the move on rates were such that they were able to provide support for just under double the number of beds that they have available. This is a drop in move-on rates from 2023 (2.2) suggesting increased barriers to move-on options (see Chapter 6).

189 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 an individual's support needs were too high or too complex for the service to manage (81%). This represents a significant change compared to the picture of refusals seen in 2023, where 60% of providers cited this as a main reason.

Other key reasons for rejecting referrals include that the client was assessed to be too high a risk to staff or other residents (76%) and capacity i.e. the project is full (72%).

Chart 3.10. Main reasons for rejected referrals to accommodation providers

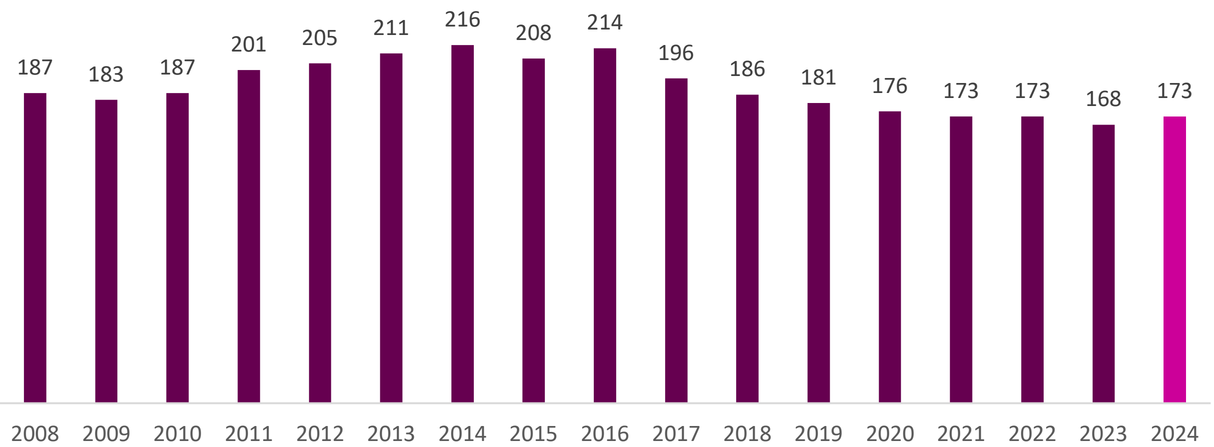


Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=189

Availability of day centres

Data from the Homeless England database identified 173 day centres for people experiencing homelessness in England. This marks a slight uptick in number from the preceding year, and similar to levels seen in 2021 and 2022.

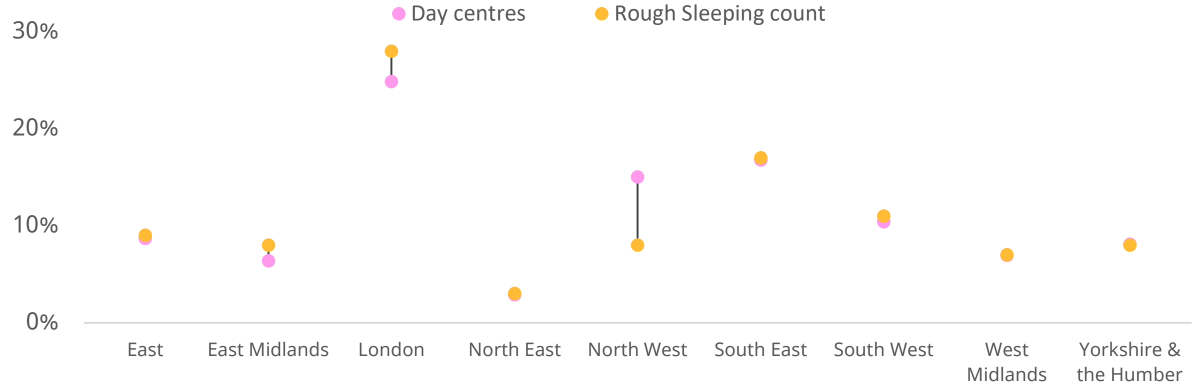
Chart 3.11. Number of day centres, 2008 – 2024



Source: Day Centres Survey, N=173

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. This is particularly evident in the East Midlands and London (See Chart 3.12). Conversely the North West has seen a greater number of day centres compared to rough sleeping count, a notable observation in the context of being the only region to see a decrease in rough sleeping in 2024.

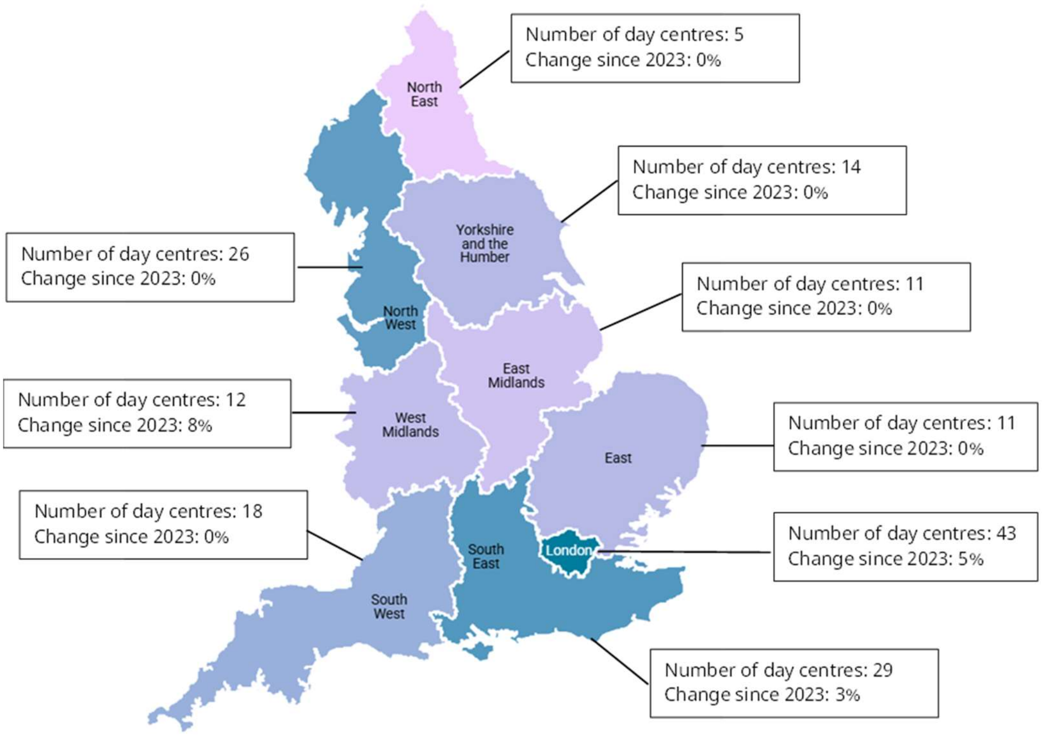
Chart 3.12. Regional proportion of rough sleepers and day centres



Source: Homeless England, N=173; 2024 Rough sleeping count snapshot

The number of day centres remains mostly unchanged across all regions, expect for London, the South East and the West Midlands, which have seen slight increases in provision.

Map 3.3. Regional distribution of day centres, 2024



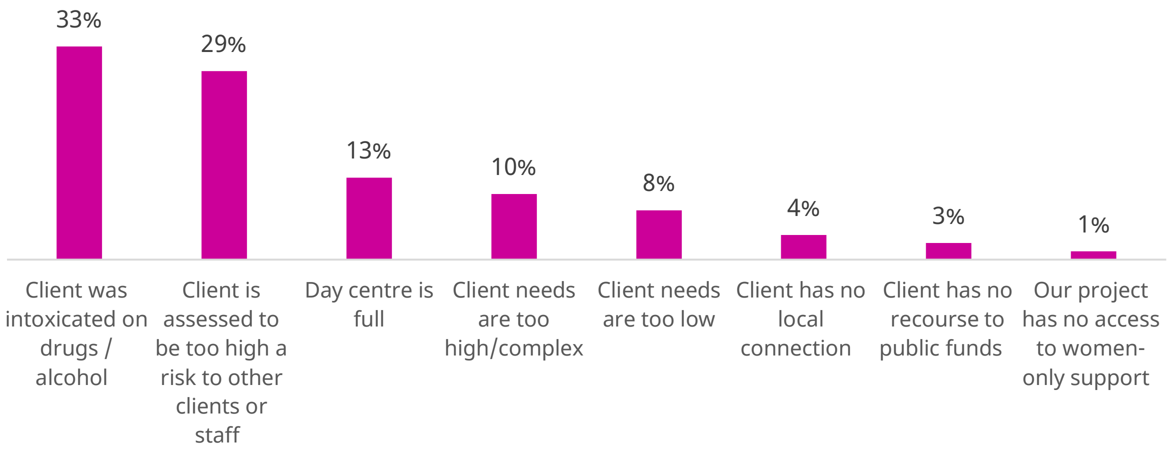
Source: Homeless England, N=173

Accessing day centres

Survey respondents reported a snapshot count of 1,938 people being supported by a day centre on a given day, and an estimated 130,349 people over the course of a year (between April 2023 and March 2024).

37 (93%) respondents reported that they had refused access or referrals to their project at some point between April 2023 and March 2024. The most prevalent main reason for someone to be turned down was due to being intoxicated on drugs or alcohol (33%), followed by them being assessed to be too high a risk to other clients or staff (29%).

Chart 3.13. Main Reasons for refused access to day centres



Source: Day Centres Survey, N=79

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 looks at the profile of those accessing support, the main services provided by homelessness organisations, and barriers to accessing support.

Key headlines

- 79% of day centres report seeing an increase in people experiencing homelessness for the first time, as did 56% of accommodation providers.
- Both day centres and accommodation providers reported big increases in people experiencing homelessness whilst in employment, at 46% and 22% respectively.
- Accommodation providers and day centres also reported substantial increases in refugees accessing their services, at 44% and 71% respectively. This is alongside a 46% increase of people with no recourse to public funds presenting to day centres.
- Mental health remained the most commonly reported support need amongst accommodation providers. 95% of accommodation providers support residents with a history of diagnosed mental health conditions. This remains the same as 2023 but is a 14% increase since 2022 and a 2% decrease compared to 2021.
- Day centres reported high levels of mental health support needs (100%), addiction related support needs, both drug dependency (100%) and alcohol addiction (100%), as well as dual diagnosis (95%).
- Access to mental health support remains the biggest barrier for both accommodation providers and day centres (100% and 92% respectively).

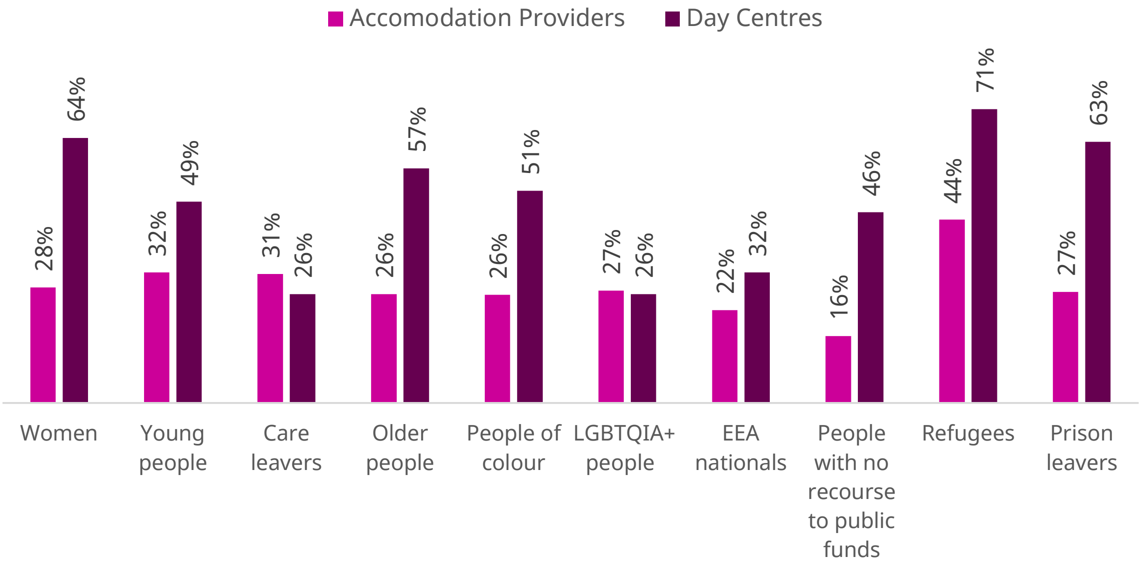
Profile of people accessing homelessness services

While there is a huge diversity of people experiencing homelessness, some populations are less well served by existing provision that was not originally set up to reflect diverse needs and may not meet the current complexity of support needs. We now know that women,[26]young people,[27]people from the LGBTQIA+ community,[28]people of colour or from minoritised communities,[29] people with

[26] Bretherton, J. & Pleace, N. (2018) Women and Rough Sleeping: A Critical Review of Current Research and Methodology. University of York
[27] Homeless Link (2018) Young and Homeless 2018; Homeless Link (2020) Young and Homeless 2020.
[28] AKT (2021) The LGBTQ+ youth homelessness report.
[29] Allard, M., D'Souza, S., and Leith, G. (2024). 'Where do I belong, where is home?': Experiences of racism and homelessness. London: Crisis

experience of the asylum system,[30] and people who have experienced multiple disadvantage[31] have 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. 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 4.1. Proportion of homelessness services who have seen an increase in the number of people they are supporting from specific populations



Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=196; Day Centres Survey, N=39

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. Both day centres and accommodation providers reported seeing the biggest increase amongst refugees accessing their services (71% and 44% respectively). This is reflective of the increase in the numbers of non-UK nationals experiencing homelessness; 27% of people found sleeping rough on a single night in Autumn 2024 were non-UK nationals, the highest proportion since records began.[32] Moreover, 62% of day centres reported seeing an increase in the numbers of people presenting having been evicted from asylum accommodation.

Day centres have also reported significant increases of women (64%) and prison leavers (63%) accessing their services. The increase in prison leavers accessing day centres may be a result of the SDS40 policy, in which the Labour Government

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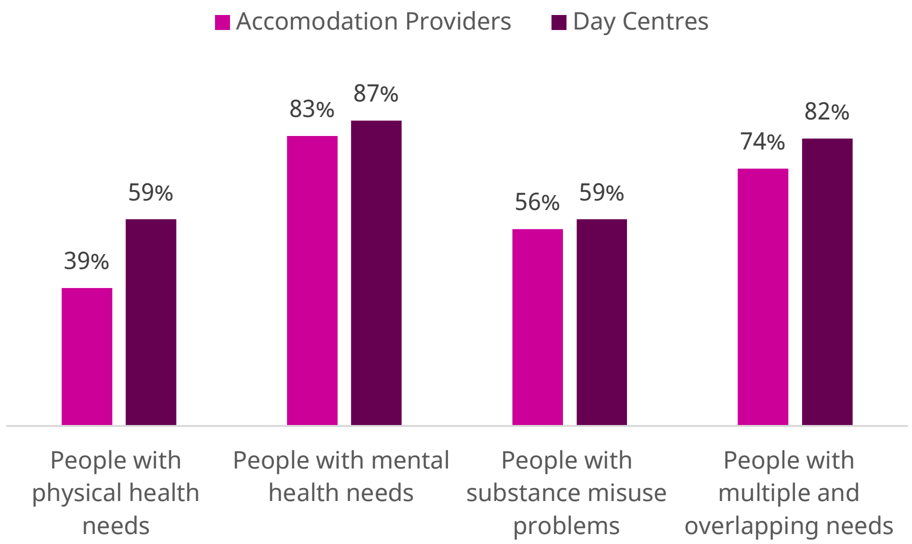
[30] Homeless Link (2022) Unlocking the Door: A roadmap for supporting non-UK nationals facing homelessness in England.
[31] CFE research (2022) 'More than a roof' - addressing homelessness with people experiencing multiple disadvantage. Available at: https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/insights/documents/39More-than-a-roof39-addressing-homelessness-with-people-experiencing-multiple-disadvantage-2022.pdf?mtime=20220311155105&focal=none
[32] Homeless Link and NACCOM (2025) Policy briefing – Vital solutions to ending migrant homelessness

announced early release for certain groups of offenders after serving 40% of their sentence. This has long been a challenge, with people at all stages of the criminal justice system facing significant barriers to maintaining and securing stable housing.

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.

Both accommodation providers and day centres have seen a staggering increase in the number of people they are supporting with high or complex health needs. 83% of accommodation providers and 87% of day centres have seen an increase in people with mental health needs. Similarly, over half of both accommodation providers (56%) and day centres (59%) have seen an increase in the need for support amongst people with substance misuse problems. The large increase in people requiring support with multiple and overlapping needs speaks to the continued trend of people presenting to services with increased complexity of needs, particularly pertaining to health and social care.

Chart 4.2. Proportion of homelessness services who have seen an increase in the number of people they are supporting with health needs

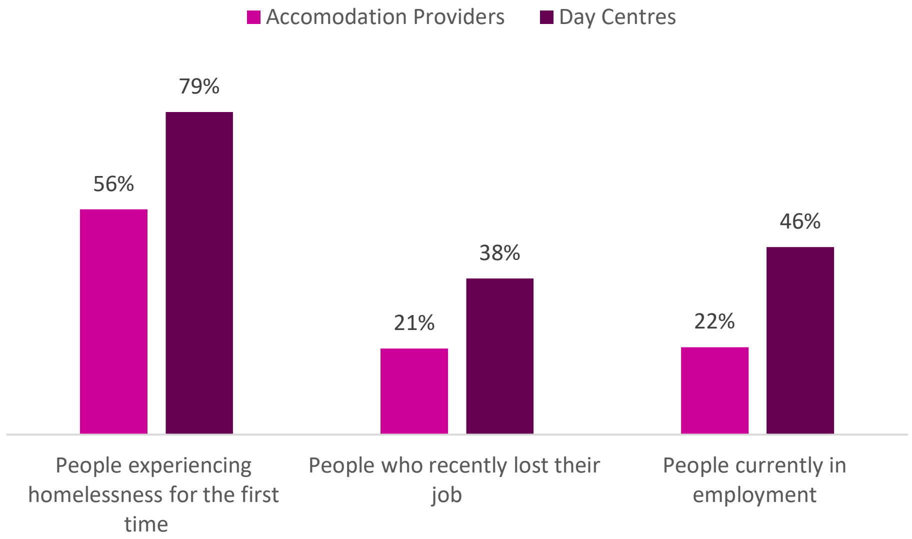


Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=203; Day Centres Survey, N=39

In recognition of ongoing financial pressures, cost of living pressures, and the ongoing consequences on the wider economy, the survey asked about changes in the number of people needing support who were experiencing homelessness for the first time, those who had recently lost a job, and those who were currently in employment.

Across both accommodation providers and day centres there is a big increase in the number of people requiring support who are experiencing homelessness for the first time, 56% and 79% respectively. There are also indications of a concerning rise in in-work homelessness, with 22% of accommodation providers stating they have seen an increase in people needing their support who are currently in employment, and 46% of day centres.

Chart 4.3. Proportion of homelessness services who have seen an increase in the number of people they are supporting due to financial pressures



Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=200; Day Centres Survey, N=39

Support needs of people accessing homelessness services

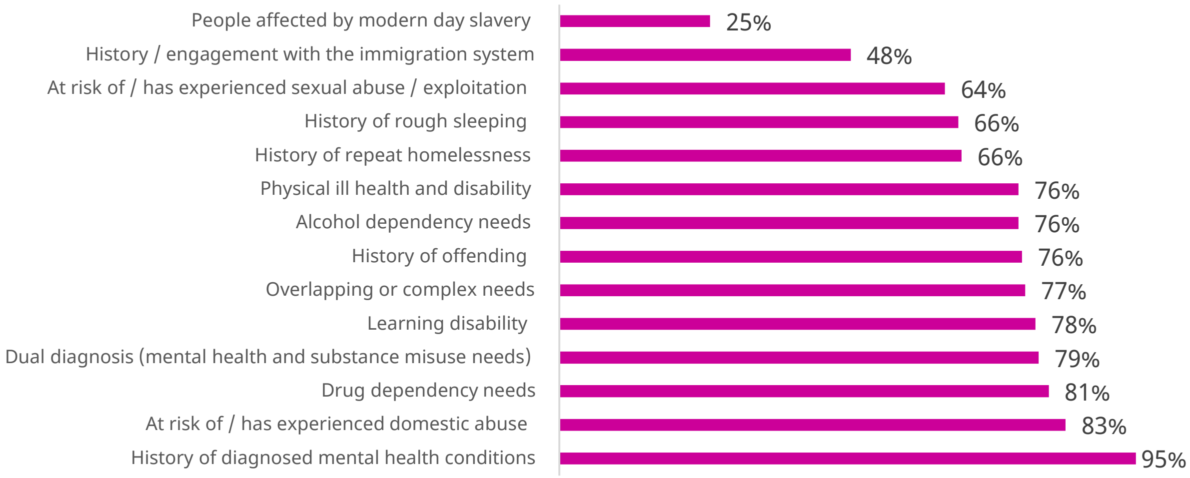
Service providers were asked for information on the support needs of people accessing their services and how this has changed compared to the previous year. Across both accommodation providers and day centres every residents or service user had additional support needs beyond housing need. This follows 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 dual diagnosis of both mental health and substance misuse needs (79%).

Whilst health and social care related needs are the most prominent, accommodation projects are also working with people with learning disabilities (78%), who have been affected by sexual abuse or exploitation (64%) and modern day slavery (25%). The diversity and severity of needs of people accessing homelessness accommodation services is profound and the level of specialism necessary to provide appropriate support must be acknowledged.

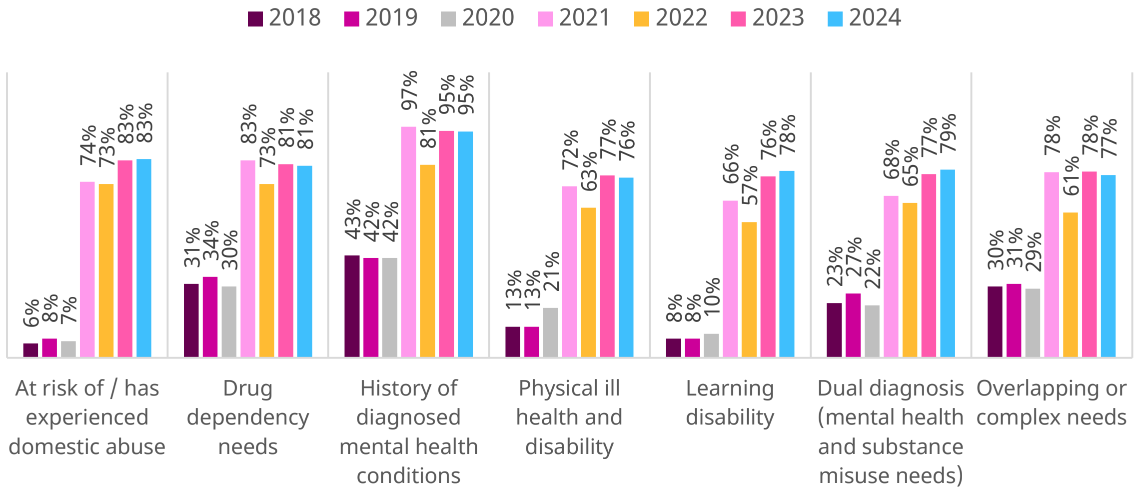
Chart 4.4. Support needs of accommodation project residents



Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=181

Compared to 2023, the proportion of support needs has remained the same across most types of support needs, expect for marginal increases in learning disabilities and dual diagnosis. There have also been some very small decreases in levels of physical ill health and overlapping or complex needs. However, whilst this may be encouraging, levels of support needs still remain staggeringly higher than pre-2022 levels, which suggests a continued shift in the profile of people accessing support, with people presenting with a much greater complexity of need, and services not equipped to be able to provide sufficient and appropriate support.

Chart 4.5. Change in accommodation project support needs, 2018 – 2024



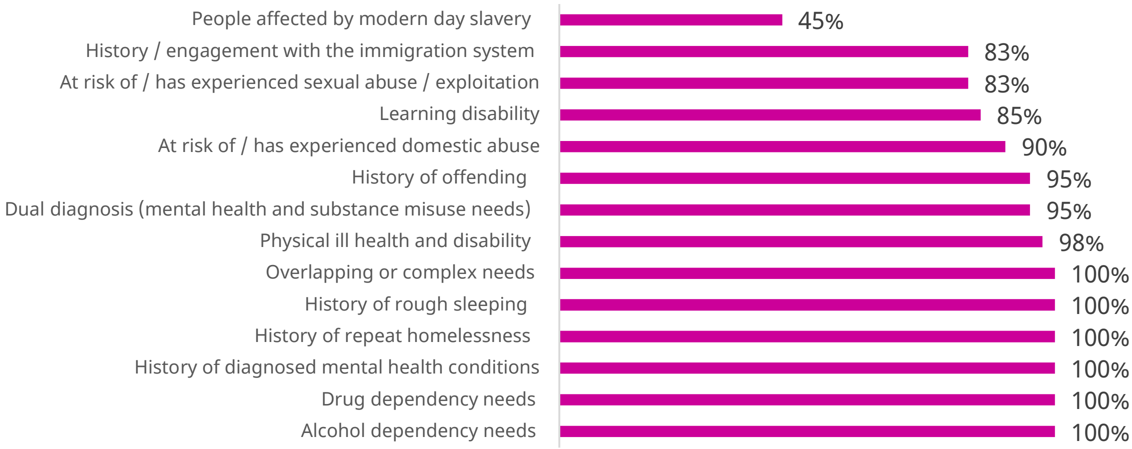
Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=181; Homeless Link *Support for single homeless people in England, Annual Review 2018 - 2023*

Day Centres

Support needs of day centre users have reached a peak since the beginning of this data series, with 100% of day centres reporting supporting people with the following needs: overlapping or complex needs, history of diagnosed mental health conditions, and drug and alcohol dependency needs. There were also high levels of physical ill health and disability (98%) and dual diagnosis (95%).

Whilst health and social care needs are most prevalent, day centres also reported a range of other support needs, with users having a history or engagement with the immigration system (83%), history of offending (95%), and at risk of / has experienced domestic abuse (90%).

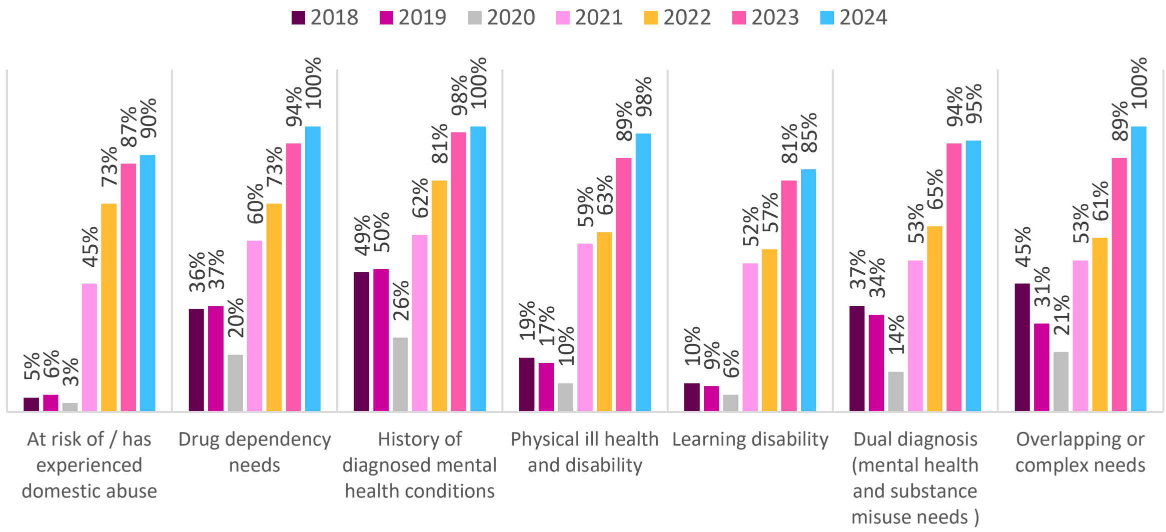
Chart 4.6. Support needs of day centre users



Source: Day Centres Survey, N=40

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 2024 with annual increases observed across all support needs.

Chart 4.7. Change in support needs of day centre users, 2018 – 2024



Source: Day Centres Survey, N=40; Homeless Link *Support for single homeless people in England, Annual Review 2018 - 2023*

This level of support needs seen by day centres reinforces that these services are often on the frontline of responding to people with high levels of often overlapping, complex needs, and trauma

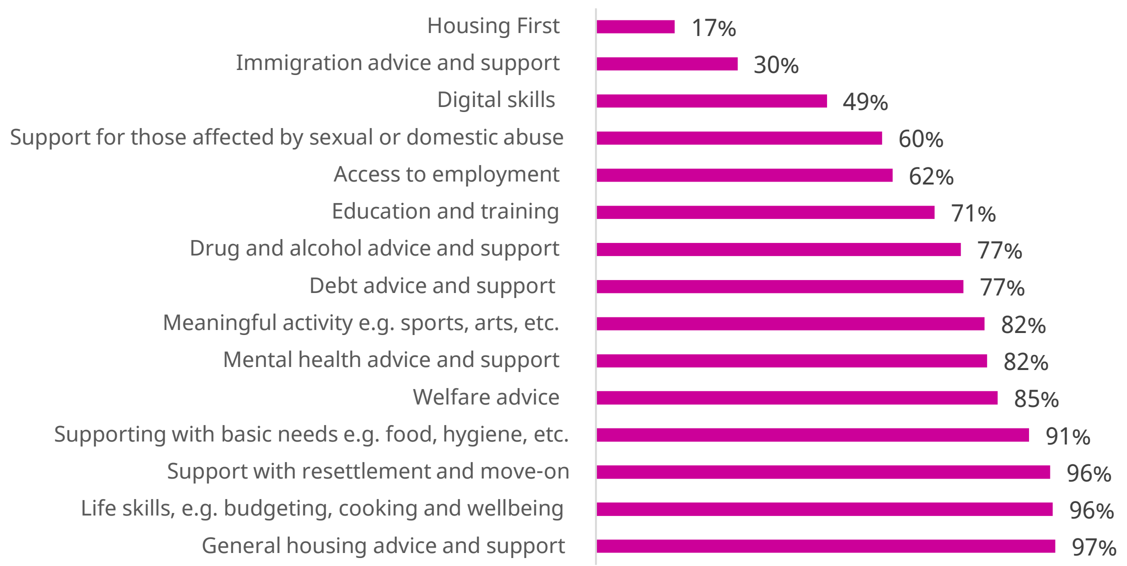
Support services provided by homelessness services

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 (97%) and support with move on and resettlement (96%). Life skills support including budgeting and cooking is offered by 96% of providers, and support with basic needs including food and hygiene by 91%. Over three quarters of providers are offering support related to health and social care, including mental health advice and support (82%) and substance misuse support (77%). The diversity of provision available is clear from the range of different offers available through projects, as illustrated in Chart 4.8 below.

Chart 4.8. Service provision within accommodation projects

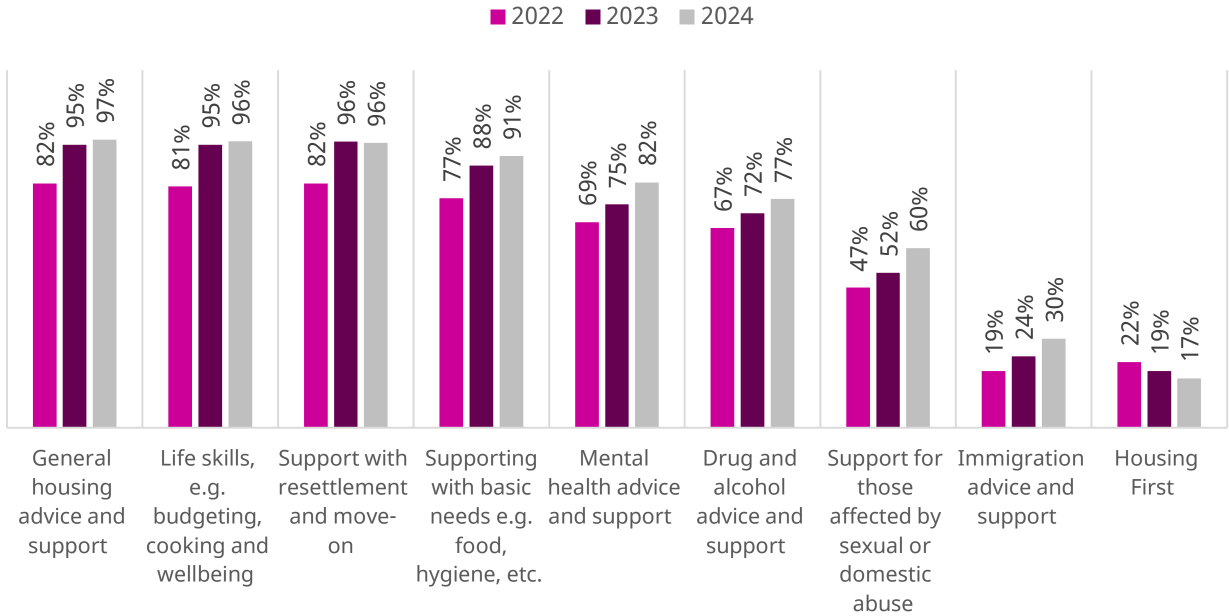


Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=181

As evidenced below in Chart 4.9, accommodation providers are delivering a huge range of services, working across housing advice, relief and support. The number of projects offering support services has peaked across most types of service provision, including housing advice, supporting with basic needs, immigration advice, mental health advice, and support for those affected by sexual or domestic abuse. Housing first is the only reported area to see a decline when compared to previous years.

This general upward trend demonstrates how providers are responding to meeting the increased complexity and demand in the needs of service users. Whilst the support services provided by the sector can be praised, rising levels of homelessness alongside the erosion of other support or public services means that providers within the sector are often the last line of defence. Homelessness services are picking up the fallout from other areas of the system alongside chronic budget shortfalls and increased financial pressures.

Chart 4.9. Change in service provision within accommodation projects:



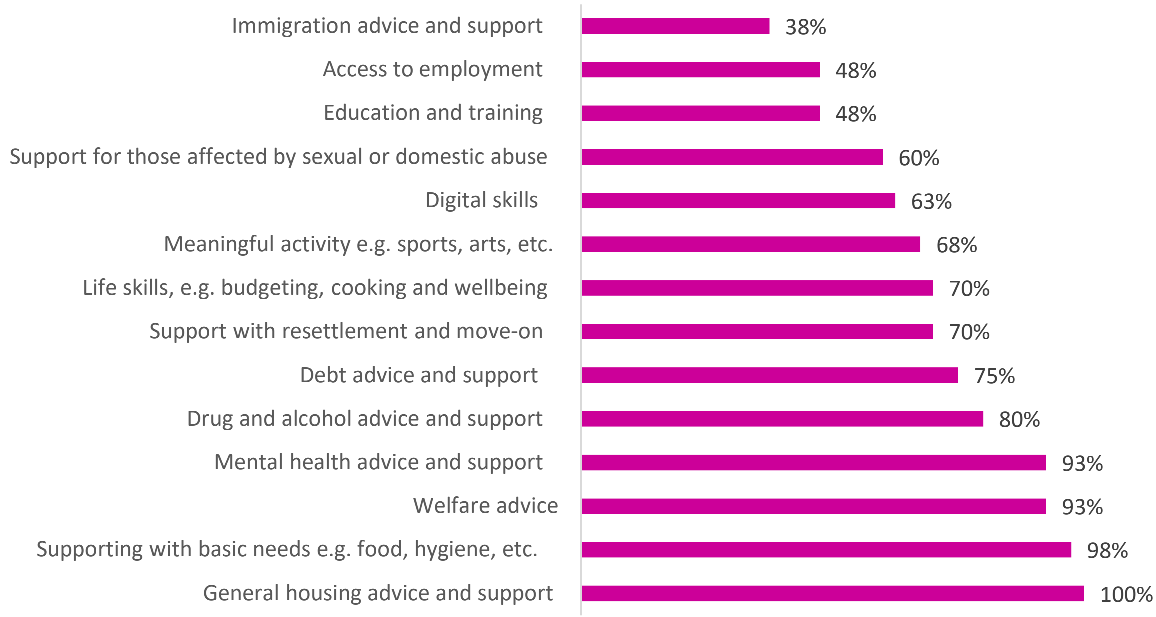
Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=181; Homeless Link *Support for single homeless people in England, Annual Review 2022, 2023*

Day Centres

Day centres were asked what additional support their service provides for those who make use of their services. As with accommodation providers, all day centres offer a range of different support 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 100% of providers offering general housing advice and support, and 98% offering support with basic needs including food and hygiene. Providing advice and support related to welfare (93%), mental health (93%), and substance misuse (80%) are also all very common amongst day centre provision.

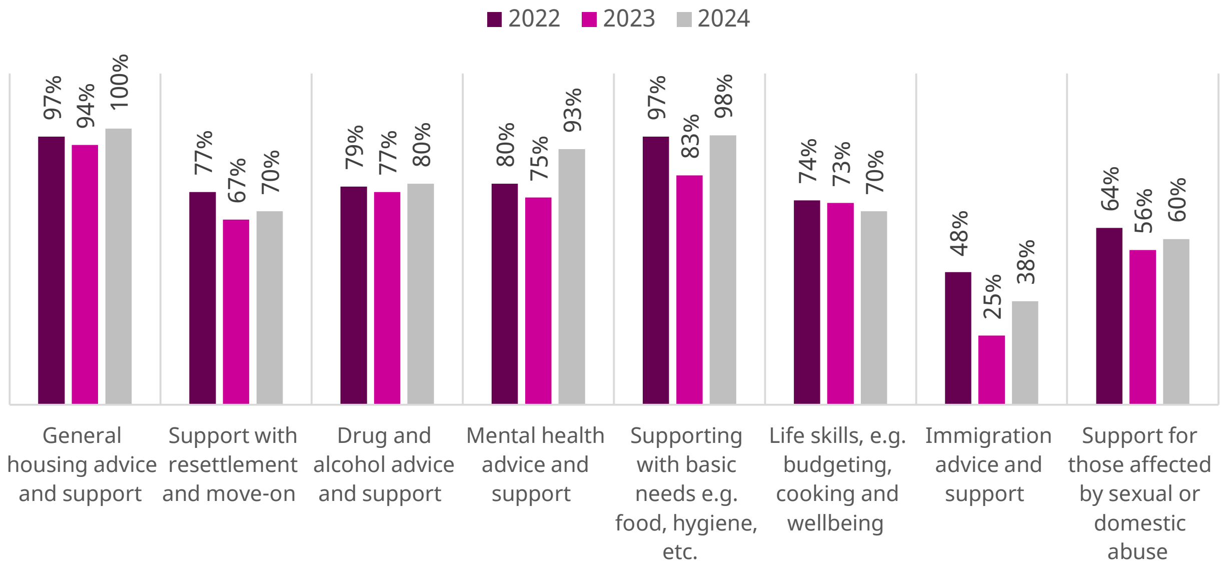
Chart 4.10. Service provision within day centres



Source: Day Centres Survey, N=40

When looking comparatively at the changes in service provision, day centres are increasingly providing mental health support, with an increase of18% from 2023 and 13% from 2022. Similarly, all day centres surveyed are now providing general housing advice and support, up 6% from 2023.

Chart 4.11 Change in service provision within day centres, 2022 - 2024



Source: Day Centres Survey, N=40; Homeless Link *Support for single homeless people in England, Annual Review 2022, 2023*

What support looks like

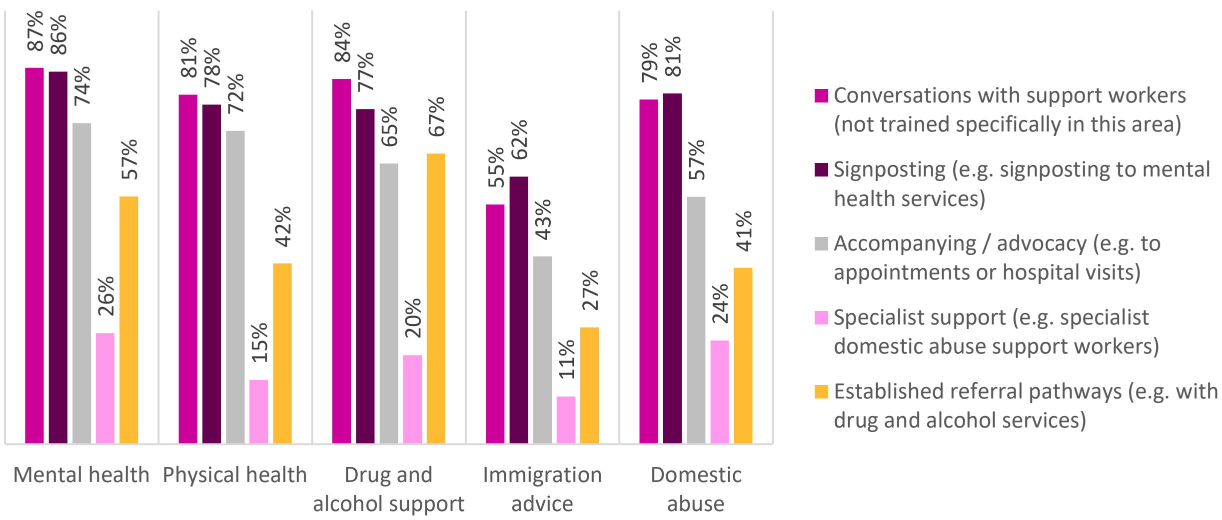
Providers were asked about the specific types of support they offer within their services. The findings here demonstrate that the support homelessness providers offer is not a replacement for that of specialist and mainstream health and social care support, and a reliance on the homelessness sector to manage increasing complex support needs is not sustainable.

Most support provided across homelessness services is focussed on enabling access to the wider specialist provision through signposting, referrals and encouraging engagement with advocacy and accompanying attendance at appointments. This is alongside broad conversations and discussions about a wide range of needs with support workers to help identify level of need and what wider support might be available

Conversations with support workers is the main type of support across all the health related services identified (see Chart 4.12), whereas signposting is the more common type of support offered within immigration advice and domestic abuse services. The findings speak to the diversity and breadth of support offered by homelessness service providers, as well as their role in facilitating and coordinating support for their clients.

Moreover, strikingly, in-house specialist support is limited across all the services. This demonstrates the importance of the homelessness workforce in delivering vital support (e.g. supporting clients in areas they are not specifically trained in due to need) against a backdrop of shortfalls in funding, increased demand and the pressures squeezing other public sector services. Frontline staff are facing increased, and increasingly complex, workloads as a result of these funding pressures and the barriers in accessing specialist support in other parts of the system.

Chart 4.12. Specific type of support within each service offered among providers



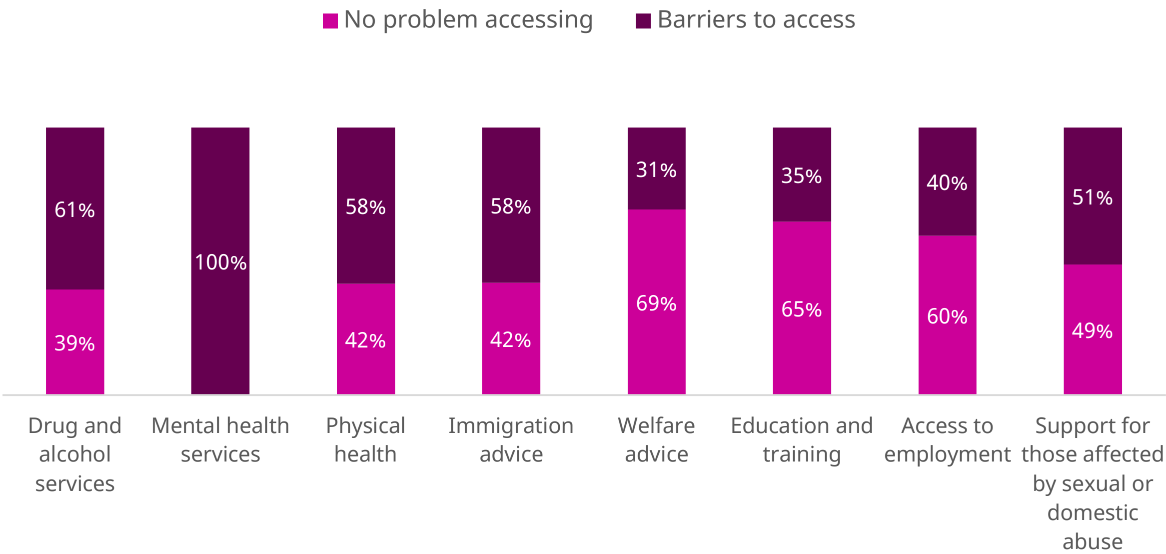
Source: Accommodation Providers Survey and Day Centres Survey, N=219

Barriers to accessing services

Not all support is, or should be, available internally within homelessness providers, and more significant needs or those that need to be managed through wider statutory support are reliant on the wider system and public services infrastructure. As set out in chart 4.12 it is clear that a significant amount of the activity within homelessness support is about helping people access wider services. 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 100% of respondents stating they have a problem accessing mental health services. This highlights a serious challenge, with high numbers of services supporting people with mental health needs, yet all facing barriers to getting service users the support they vitally need. Provision of mental health support in some capacity is evidently therefore falling on the homelessness sector. Accommodation providers also face accessibility barriers to drug and alcohol services (61%), physical health services (58%) and immigration advice (58%).

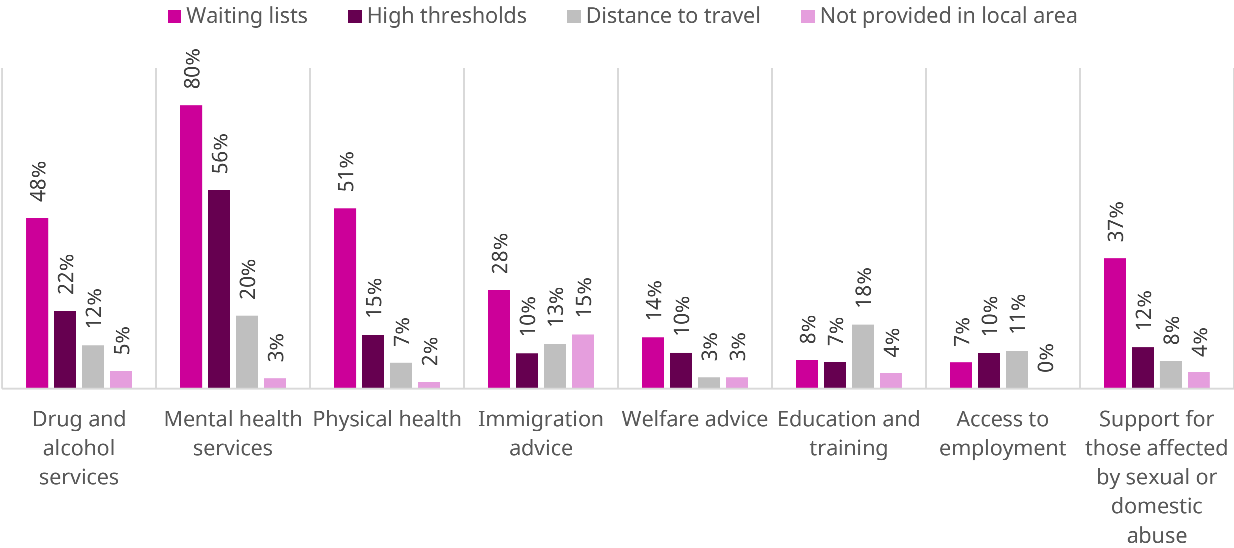
Chart 4.13. Accommodation providers: barriers in accessing services



Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=156

When looking at why providers experience barriers, waiting lists remain the biggest challenge in terms of access to other services, with 80% of providers saying waiting lists are a barrier to mental health services, and 51% for physical health services. Lack of provision locally is a particular challenge for access to immigration advice, a known issue that has been identified through evidence on immigration advice deserts across the country.[33]

Chart 4.14. Reasons accommodation providers face barriers to services

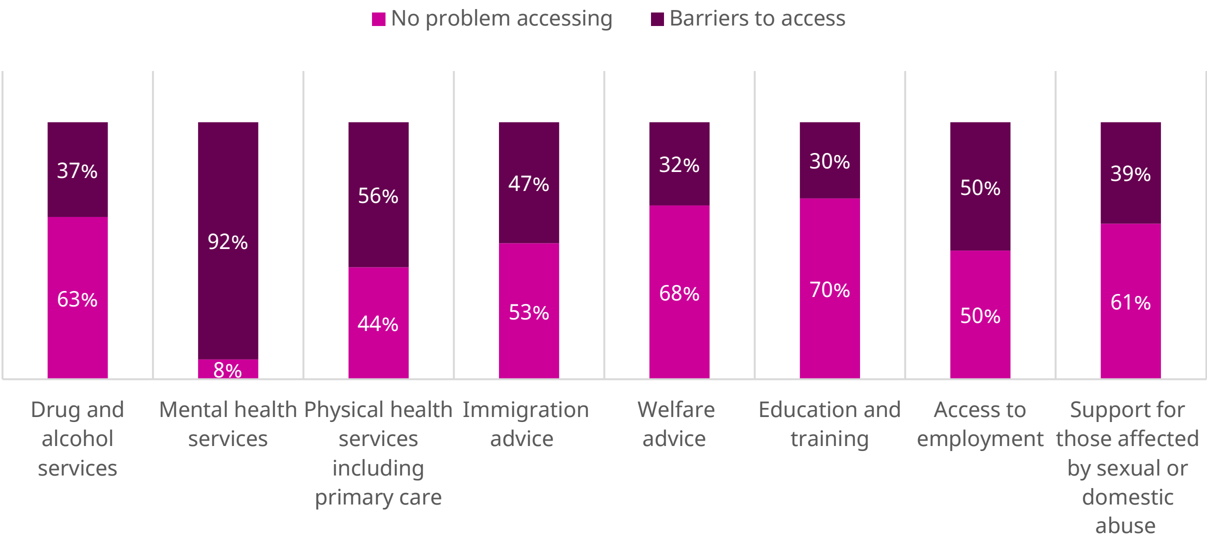


Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=156

Day Centres

For day centres, access to mental health services (92%) is also the biggest barrier faced, followed by access to physical health services (56%), and immigration advice (47%).

Chart 4.15. Services day centres experience accessibility barriers



Source: Day Centres Survey, N=39

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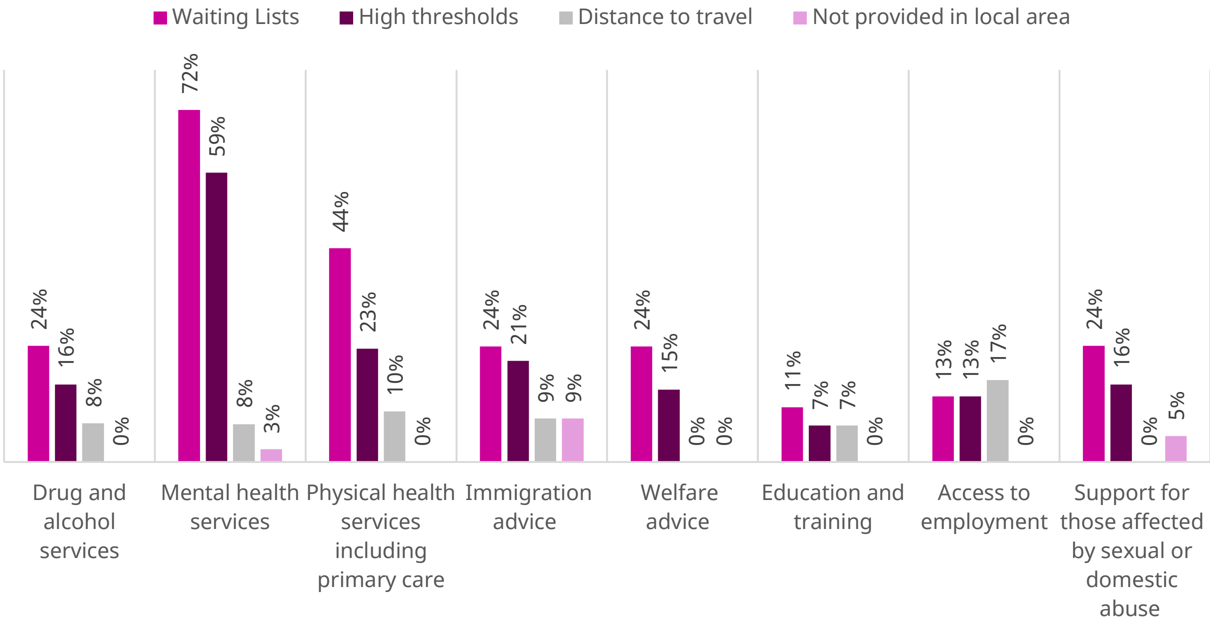
[33] Refugee Action (2022) No Access to Justice: How legal advice deserts fail refugees, migrants and our communities. Available here: https://assets.website-files.com/5eb86d8dfb1f1e1609be988b/62a1e16cba8478993c7d512c_No%20access%20to%20justice-%20how%20legal%20advice%20deserts%20fail%20refugees%2C%20migrants%20and%20our%20communities.pdf

When looking at why day centres experience barriers to services, waiting lists remain the biggest challenge to accessing all but employment support, in which distance to travel is the biggest challenge. 72% of day centres state waiting lists are a barrier to mental health services, and 44% for physical health services.

Chart 4.16. Reasons day centres face barriers to services



Source: Day Centres Survey, N=39

Chapter 5: Funding

Over the last seventeen years the Support to End Homelessness series has tracked how homelessness services are funded and how this has changed over time.

Key headlines

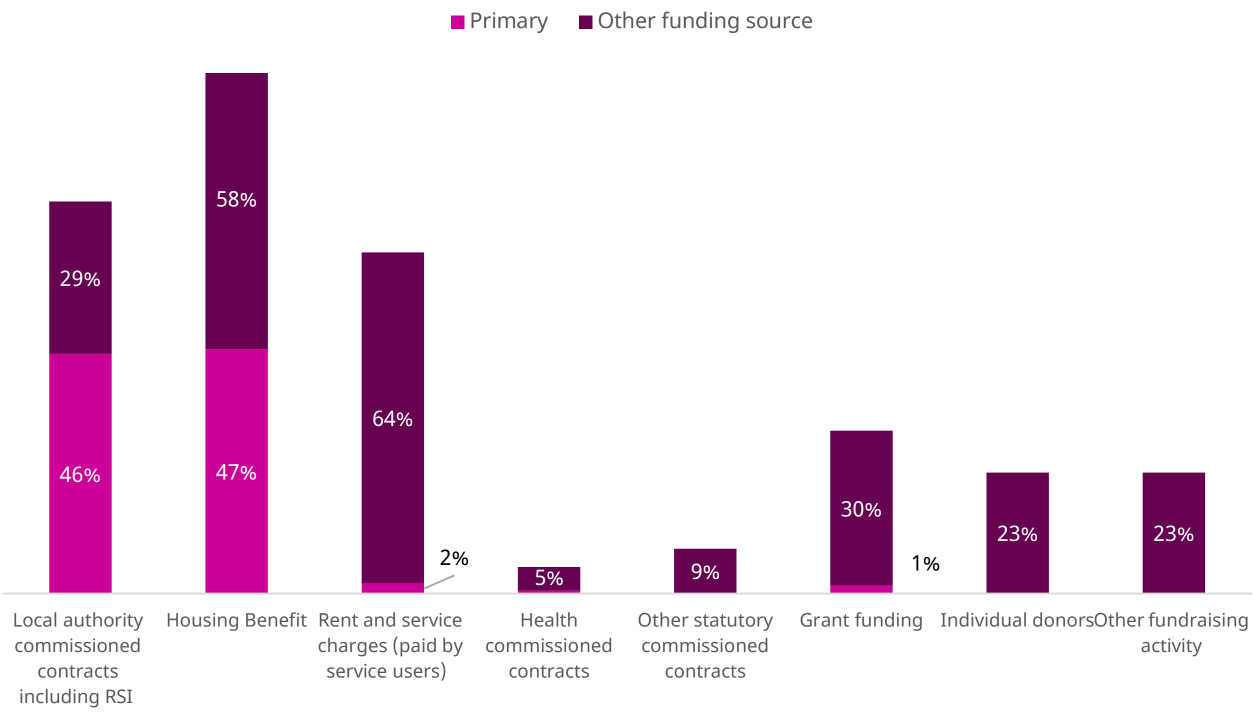
- Housing benefit is the most commonly cited primary source of income for accommodation providers (47%), followed by local authority commissioned contracts (46%).
- 69% of those who receive Housing Benefit as a main income source are in receipt of Enhanced Housing Benefit.
- Since the end of the Supporting People ringfence in 2008 there has been a 2500% increase in Housing Benefit as the main funding source for homelessness accommodation providers and a 47% 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 60% of providers. This is most commonly through grant funding (26%) and individual giving (21%).
- 16% of accommodation providers stated that their income had decreased since the previous year, with 51% stating there was no change to their income, and 33% reporting an increase.
- 21% of day centres stated that their income had decreased since the previous year, with 44% stating there was no change to their income, and 36% reporting an increase.
- 48% of accommodation providers and 46% of day centres reported that they risk service closures as a result of increased financial pressures, and 38% of accommodation providers stated they have already reduced their provision.

Accommodation providers funding sources

Accommodation providers were asked to identify their primary (greatest) funding source and then subsequently the other sources of funding they receive. Chart 5.1 below illustrates the main sources of funding (i.e. the top selected funding source out of all sources asked in the survey for accommodation providers). The findings show that the primary sources of funding for accommodation providers are Housing Benefit (47%), followed by Local Authority commissioned contracts (46%).

The sources that are ranked lowest for the primary funding source are philanthropy and donations. Accommodation providers do not rely on this as their primary funding source, with 0% of respondents selecting this option. 2% of accommodation providers selected rent and service charges (paid by service users) as their main funding source.

Chart 5.1. Accommodation providers funding sources



Source: Accommodation Providers Survey; Primary source, N=204; Other funding source, N=198

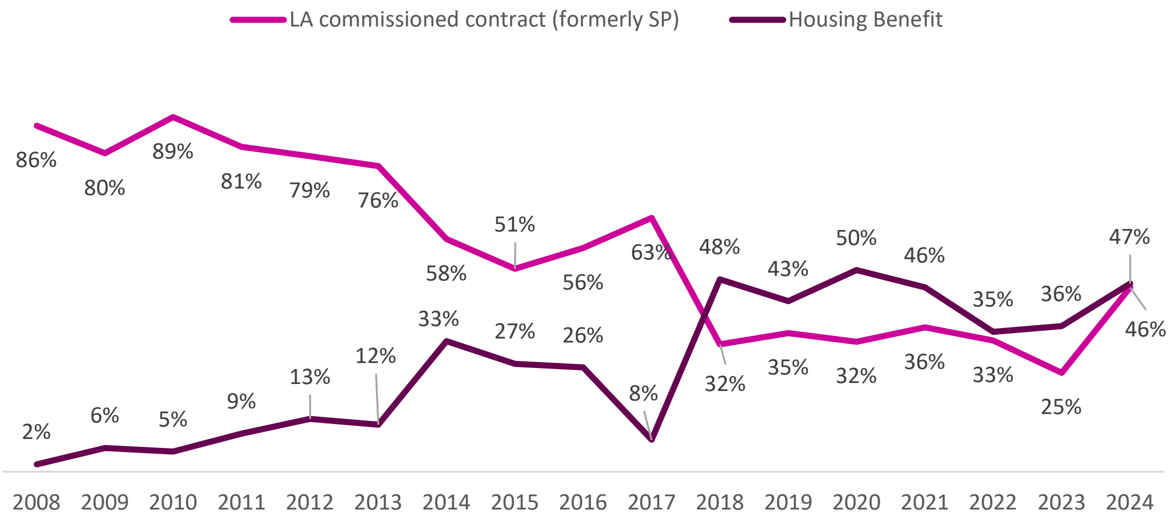
Housing Benefit is currently the main source of funding for most accommodation providers, through Enhanced Housing Benefit. Given the continued attention on the role of exempt accommodation and funding for supported accommodation providers, our survey asked respondents to separate out Housing Benefit by Enhanced Housing Benefit income, and all other Housing Benefit income including Universal Credit. Enhanced Housing Benefit accounts for 69% 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 the 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.

In the last decade there has been a 75% increase in Housing Benefit as a funding source for homelessness accommodation and a 9% decrease in local authority commissioned services. This rises to an incredible 2500% increase in Housing Benefit as the primary funding source for homelessness accommodation, and a 47% decrease, since the end of the Supporting People ringfence in 2008. In the context of the increased scrutiny on supported exempt accommodation funded through Enhanced

Housing Benefit through the Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act, and the proposed standards and licensing this becomes particularly relevant. Understanding how historic changes to funding models impacts both how the need for increased regulation arose and the impact of the proposed new scheme will play out will be vital to driving forward the anticipated improvement in quality to the sector.

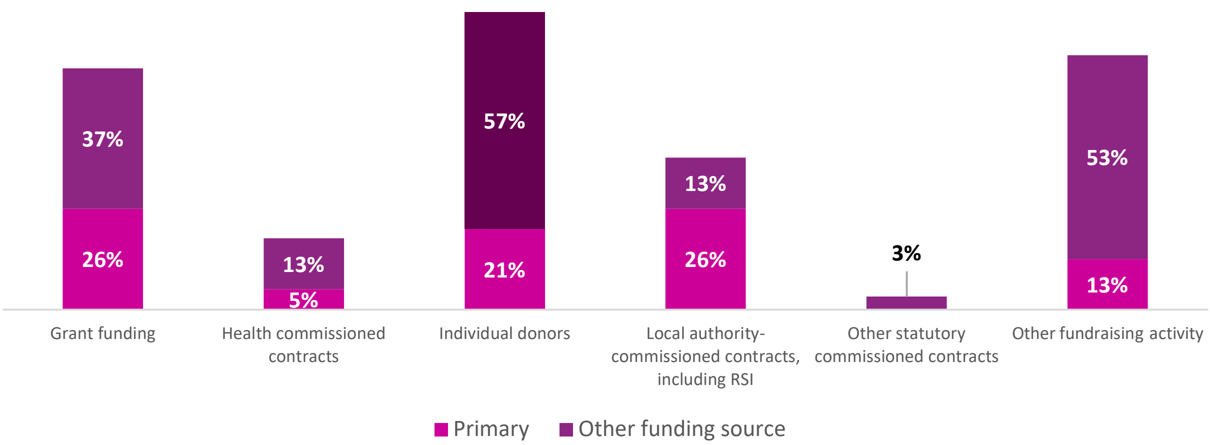
Chart 5.2. Accommodation providers change in main funding source: 2008 – 2024



Day centres funding sources

Income for day centres is heavily reliant on fundraising, grants and individual donors with income from these sources the main funding for 60% of providers. This is most commonly through grant funding (26%) and individual giving (21%). 26% of daycentres receive local authority grants or commissioned contracts as their main funding source.

Chart 5.3. Day centres funding sources

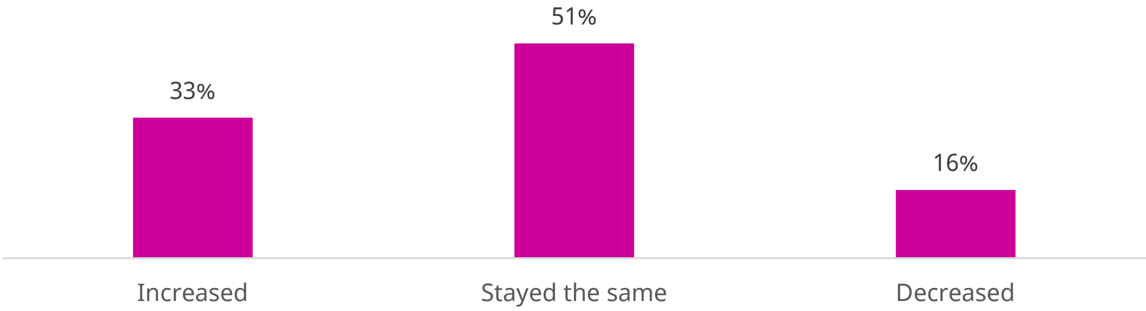


Source: Day Centres Survey; Primary, N=38; Other funding source, N=30

Change in income for accommodation providers

16% of accommodation providers stated that their income had decreased since the previous year, with 51% stating there was no change to their income, and 33% reporting an increase.

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



Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=199

Comparing across regions, for most providers there was little change in their funding, with most stating that in 2023-24 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, 54% of accommodation providers who responded to the survey reported an increase in their funding during this period. On the other hand, 31% of accommodation providers in the West Midlands reported a decrease, which was the largest decrease across England. In the South East, the same number of providers reported that their funding had either increased or stayed the same (39% respectively).

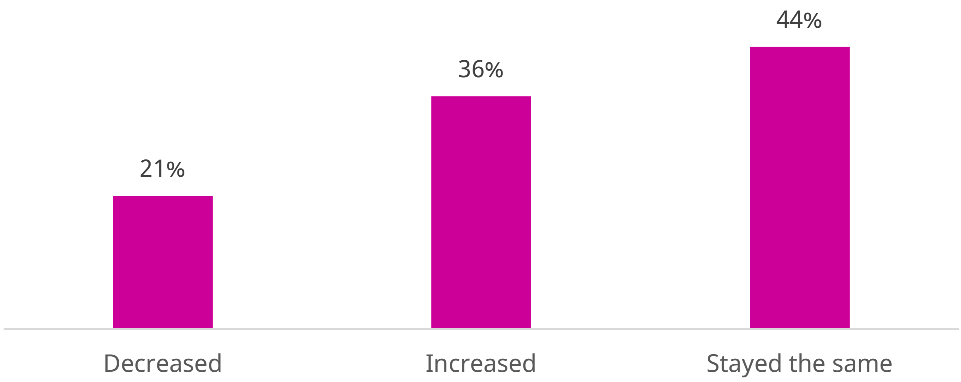
Chart 5.5. Overall funding compared to last financial year for accommodation providers by region

Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=19

Change in income for day centres

21% of day centres stated that their income had decreased since the previous year, with 44% stating there was no change to their income, and 36% reporting an increase.

Chart 5.6. Overall funding compared to last financial year for day centres



Source: Day Centres Survey, N=39

Impact of increased financial pressures

The 2024 Review was carried out against a backdrop of continued financial pressure, in which the homelessness sector has delivered services in the context of overstretched funding, ongoing inflation and increasing demand for its services.

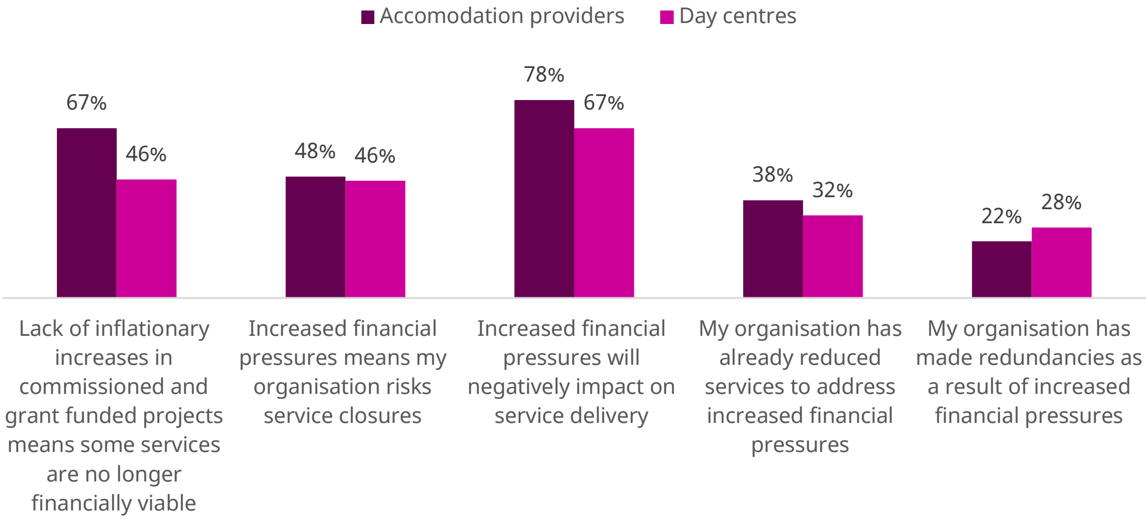
The system overall is at once hugely expensive and insufficient, having been subject to severe cuts and funded in a patchwork manner that can trap people in homelessness for longer and leave some without any access to support at all. Homelessness services can act as a lifeline for those with few other options, but the current funding system for the homelessness sector undermines its ability to deliver high-quality support. Like many other essential services, the sector faces significant budget shortfalls. This has left providers unable to plan strategically for the future, hopping from crisis to crisis as service quality drops.[34]

This is evidenced by Chart 5.7 below which shows that the biggest impact of increased financial pressure is the negative implications on service delivery, with 78% of accommodation providers and 67% of day centres agreeing with this statement. It is also noteworthy that just over two thirds of accommodation providers feel that the lack of inflationary increases in commissioned and grant funded projects means some services are no longer financially viable.

[34] Homeless Link (2024) Breaking the Cycle: Delivering a homelessness funding system that works for all. Available here: https://homelesslink-1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/Delivering_a_homelessness_funding_system_that_works_for_all__.pdf

It is also deeply concerning that nearly half of all day centres (46%) and accommodation providers (48%) reported that increased financial pressures means that their organisation risks service closures. Moreover, over a fifth of day centres and accommodation providers report making redundancies as a result of increased financial pressures. Fieldwork was conducted between November 2024 and January 2025, in which time there was uncertainty about the future of ongoing contracts funded through the then Rough Sleeping Initiative (announced as rolling over in December 2024) and the rise to National Insurance contributions was announced in the Government's Autumn budget. This may have contributed to services concerns and anxieties about financial pressures and budgets.

Chart 5.7. Impact of increased financial pressure on service provision



Source: Day Centres Survey, N=39; Accommodation Providers Survey, N=197

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.

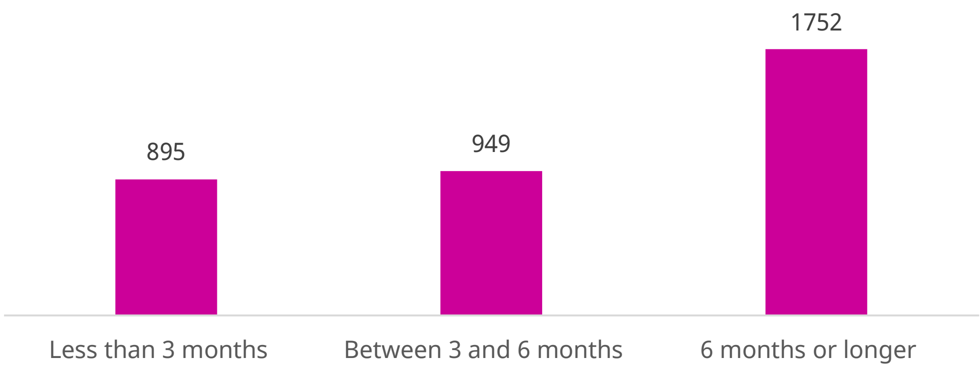
Key headlines

- 39% (3,596) of people currently being accommodated are waiting to move on from their current provision into more secure, sustainable housing.
- 49% (1,752) of people waiting to move on have been waiting for six months or longer.
- Lack of available social housing (97%), and the lack of private rented sector (PRS) accommodation at Local Housing Allowance rate (75%) 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 41% of residents move on to social housing, 19% move on to supported housing, and 8% move on to PRS. In contrast, only 4% move on to rough sleeping, 3% move on to prison, and 2% turn to sofa surfing.

Waiting for move on

Accommodation survey respondents reported that they currently had 3,596 residents waiting to move on from their accommodation, of which nearly half (49%, 1,752 residents) had been waiting for six months or longer. This represents 39% of the snapshot of 9,184 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

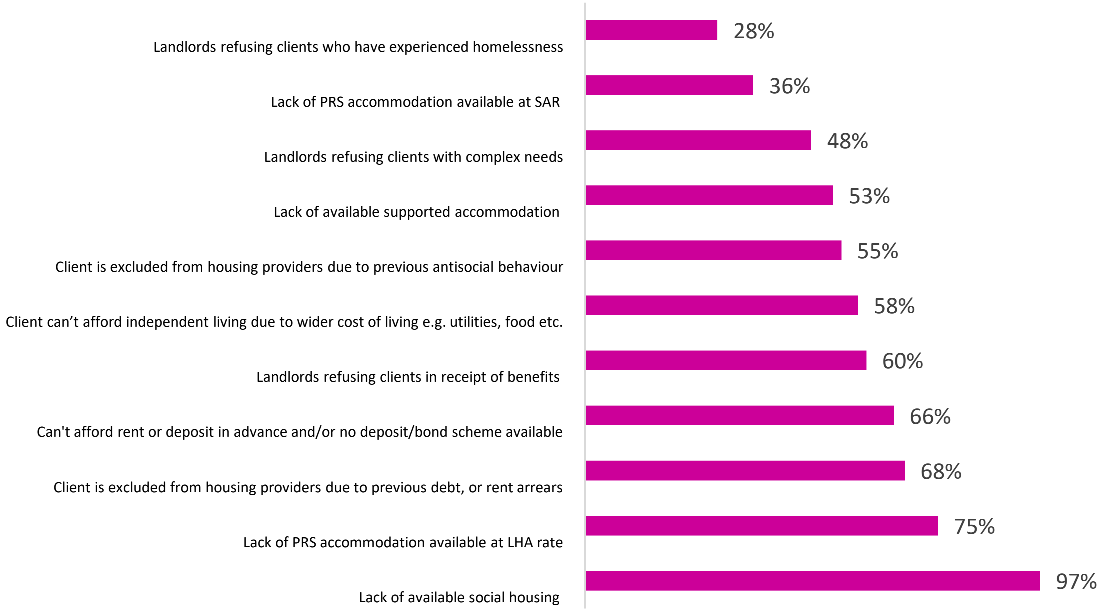


Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=204

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 (97%), followed by lack of private rented sector (PRS) accommodation at Local Housing Allowance rate (75%).

Chart 6.2. Reported barriers to move on by accommodation providers

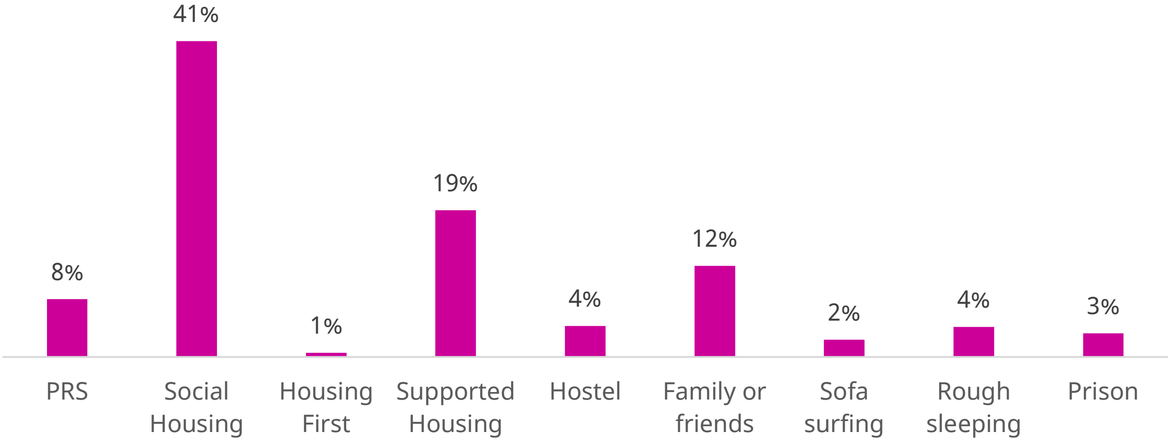


Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=170

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 responses. On average, 41% of residents move on to social housing followed by 19% 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 12% of residents went on to stay with family or friends. A minority (6%) of people return to homelessness, either sofa surfing or rough sleeping.

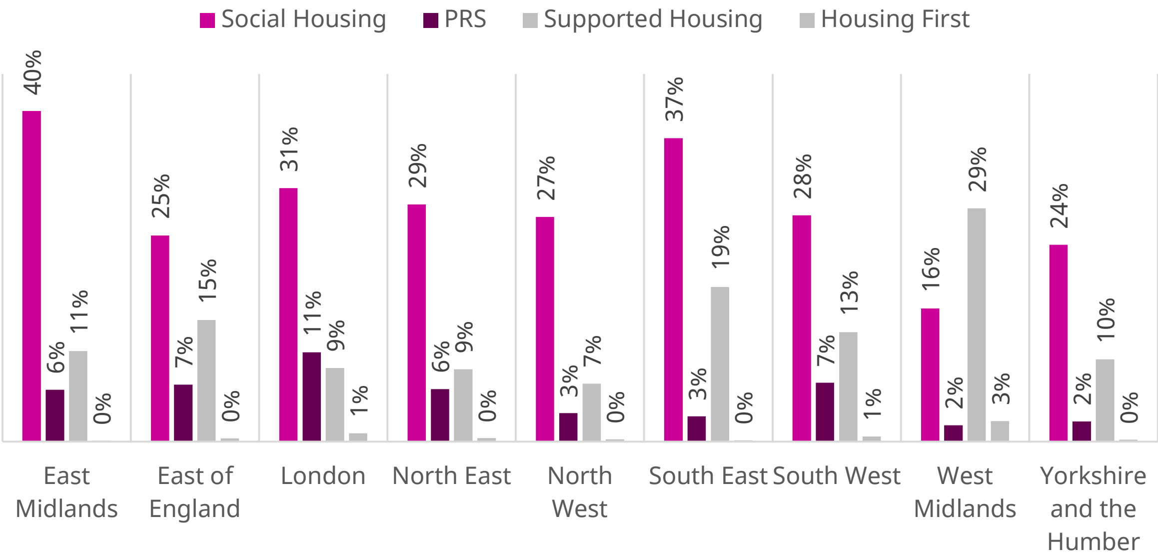
Chart 6.3. Move on destinations



Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=200

When looking at move-on destinations regionally, it is most common in almost all regions for people to move on to social housing with the exception of the West Midlands, which is the only region where more service users move on into supported accommodation (29%). London has the highest levels of move on to PRS (11%), whilst other regions have higher numbers of people moving into supported accommodation compared to PRS.

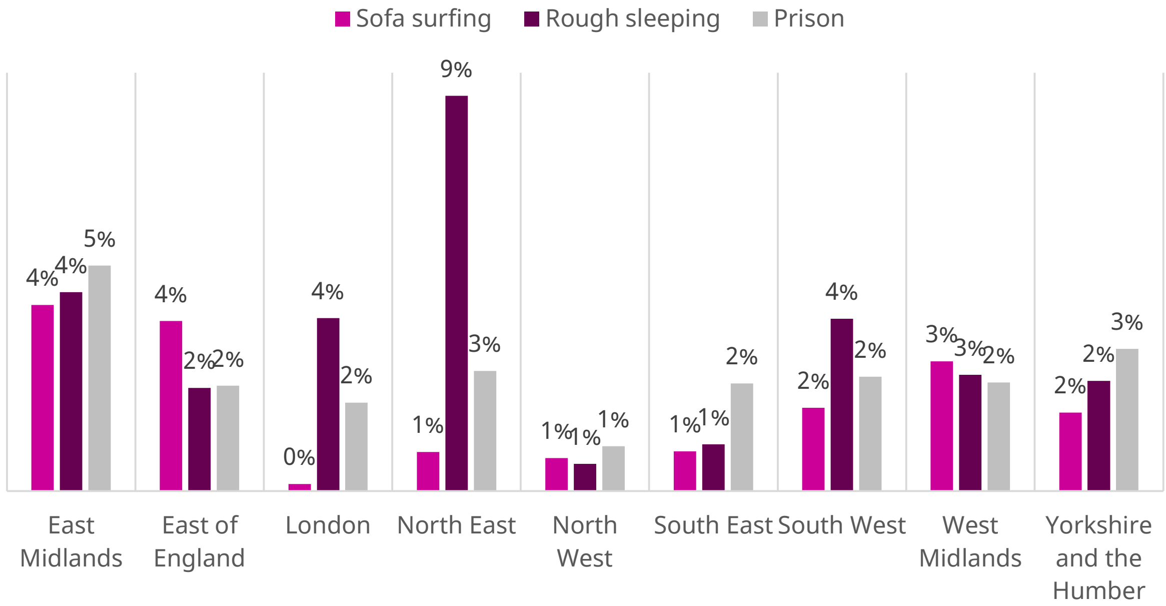
Chart 6.4. Average percentage of positive move-on destinations by region



Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=202

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 return to rough sleeping (9%) than go to prison or sofa surf. Returning to rough sleeping has increased from an average of 1% to 9% in the North East over the past year. Rough sleeping is also a more common move-on destination for those in London or the South West. In the East Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber, slightly higher numbers of people, on average, move-on to prison rather than sofa surfing or rough sleeping.

Chart 6.5. Average % of negative move on destinations by region



Source: Accommodation Providers Survey, N=202

Chapter 7: Conclusion

2024 has been a year of uncertainty for the sector. A new Government brought with it the potential for a revitalised strategy and new commitments on homelessness but financial insecurity has been the backdrop to much of 2024 for the homelessness sector. Services faced a funding cliff-edge, with the rollover of existing homelessness funding into 2025/26 not confirmed until 18th December. This, coupled with the lack of inflationary uplifts, has resulted in serious anxiety for providers as to the tenability and delivery of their services. 67% of accommodation providers and 46% of day centres reported that the lack of inflationary increases in commissioned and grant funded projects means some services are no longer financially viable. The consequence of increased costs is evidenced by the impact on service reduction, delivery and closures. Nearly half of accommodation providers (48%) and day centres (46%) report that increased financial pressures puts their organisation at risk of service closures.

As services feel the pressure of increased costs alongside underinvestment in single homelessness, demand continues to rise, with all forms of homelessness increasing in 2024. Rough sleeping is rapidly approaching its 2017 peak, with an estimated 4,667 people sleeping rough on a given night, a 20% increase from 2023, and a 164% increase since 2010.

Meanwhile, a record number of households are in temporary accommodation. As of December 2024, there were 127,890 households in temporary accommodation, a 12% increase on the previous year. For many local authorities, the rise in costs associated with meeting statutory homelessness duties has pushed them to the edge of bankruptcy. Many are scaling back support in other areas and to cover the cost of temporary accommodation have reduced activity across homelessness prevention, rough sleeping outreach, and supported accommodation. This has left service providers grappling with difficult financial decisions whilst still trying to deliver high quality support. 38% of accommodation providers and 32% of day centres reported that their organisation has already reduced services to address financial pressures. Over a fifth of accommodation providers (22%) and day centres (28%) have made redundancies, highlighting the extent of financial insecurity facing the sector.

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 47% and the number of bedspaces has reduced by 43%. Despite increases in all forms of homelessness over the last seventeen years, the homelessness sector has seen a steady contraction as funding sources and policy priorities have shifted.

The Review has also tracked how homelessness services are funded and how the funding landscape has changed over time. The findings show accommodation providers continue to rely on Housing Benefit (47%) as their primary source of income, of which 69% is through Enhanced Housing Benefit to provide supported exempt accommodation. As the sector looks ahead to the anticipated standards and licensing scheme being brought into regulate the supported exempt sector there is potentially enormous change ahead for homelessness accommodation provision.

Yet despite services operating under immense financial pressures, findings in 2024 demonstrate the continued trend of people presenting to services with increased complexity of needs and from diverse populations driven by varied causes of homelessness. Mental health is the most pressing support need seen by service providers, with 95% of accommodation providers and 100% of day centres reporting supporting clients with mental health needs. This is a 61% increase among accommodation providers since 2017. Other health and social care needs were also prevalent, particularly high levels of addiction related support needs, and dual diagnosis.

Despite this, providers faced accessibility barriers when linking their clients into necessary services. 100% of accommodation providers and 92% of day centres reported barriers in accessing mental health support services. 81% of accommodation providers had to turn someone down from their project because the individual's support needs were too high or too complex for the service to manage. This represents a huge increase from 2023, where 61% of services cited this as a reason for refusal.

The findings in this report evidence the fact that service providers are often the last line of defence for people who have fallen through the gaps of other public services, including mental health, social care, and the justice system. Both accommodation providers and day centres are delivering a huge range of services, working across housing advice, relief and support. 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. Without the homelessness system picking up the fallout from the cuts and pressures facing other public sector services, some of the country's most vulnerable residents would be left without a safety net or the vital support needed.

Ongoing pressures caused by lack of affordable housing are also demonstrated throughout this report. 39% 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. 49% of those waiting to move on have been waiting for six months or longer. Lack of available social housing (97%) and the lack of private rented sector (PRS) accommodation at Local Housing Allowance rate (75%) are the two main barriers to moving on from homeless accommodation.

The 2024 Review of Services Addressing Single Homelessness highlights a system facing enormous, ongoing challenges and overwhelmed with rising demand and increased complexity of needs at the same time as access to the wider health and social care system becomes increasingly difficult to access. Increased financial pressures and precarity coupled with overreliance on Housing Benefit as a primary funding source are exposing systematic challenges in the sector, vulnerable to outsized impact with future anticipated changes. The lack of growth in the system despite rising demand shows the fundamental issues at play. 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 in this report are drawn from the following four key data sources.

Online and telephone survey from 204 accommodation projects (22% response rate)
A combination of telephone and online surveys were conducted between November 2024 and January 2025. Of a total available population of 915, 204 (22%) accommodation projects responded and were included for analysis. There were 437 total responses, with 47% meeting the inclusion criteria. Responses were excluded if they were a) a duplicate or b) incomplete (answering less than 25% of the survey).

Of the 204 respondents, 4 service providers provided aggregated data across all of their services. This means the survey is based on aggregated data for 263 services, but from a total of 204 individual survey responses.

Online and telephone survey from 40 day centres (23% response rate)
A combination of telephone and online surveys were conducted between November 2024 and January 2025. Of a total available population of 173 services, 40 (23%) day centres responded. There were 102 total responses, with 39% 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 accommodation providers we also achieved 90% confidence intervals of ±5% but poorer response rates amongst day centres in certain regions meant we were not able to achieve 95% confidence intervals.

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 Review.[35]

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.

[35] Homeless Link Annual Review reports are available at: https://homeless.org.uk/knowledge-hub/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 90% confidence interval 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 was 915 projects. This required 271 interviews to be completed to achieve a 95% confidence interval of ±5%. We failed to achieve this, with 204 usable respondents. To achieve a 90% confidence interval of ±5% we required 210 interviews to be completed. We fell just shy of achieving this with 204 usable respondents with a 90% confidence interval at ±5.1%.

For accommodation providers and day centres combined, the available sample size of 1,088 projects required 285 interviews to be completed to achieve a 95% confidence interval of ±5%. We did not achieve this as 40 day centres and 204 accommodation providers resulted in an overall sample of 244. However, we achieved a 90% confidence interval at ±5% (requirement target of 218 interviews).

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 unstratified 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. The North West, South East and South West achieved the minimum expected target for accommodation providers and day centres combined. All other regions failed to achieve the target.

	AP + DC	Target at +/- 15%	Target at +/- 10%	Total AP	Total DC	Total AP + DC
East	139	33	58	24	5	29
East Midlands	75	28	43	14	1	15
London	229	37	68	21	6	27
North East	52	24	34	13	2	15
North West	136	33	57	27	7	34
South East	140	33	58	36	7	43
South West	156	34	60	35	7	42
West Midlands	79	28	44	17	3	20
Yorkshire and Humber	82	29	45	19	2	21

The survey sample is representative at a lower confidence interval of 85% +/-15% in all regions except the East Midlands and North East, which had a particularly poor response rate in 2024.

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.

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