

SUPPORT FOR SINGLE HOMELESS PEOPLE IN ENGLAND

ANNUAL REVIEW 2014



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PRODUCED BY

Policy Team

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KEY FINDINGS

For the past seven years, Homeless Link has produced an annual review of homelessness services, in its Survey of Needs and Provision (SNAP). We have tracked the sector's capacity, support services available to homeless people, funding for homelessness services, and changes to the provision of homelessness support.

These annual reviews have provided detailed information on the homelessness sector and single homeless people receiving support, as well as tracked the changes taking place in the sector. This provides a 'broad brush' investigation of changes, designed to complement the other high quality, but more narrowly focused research on homelessness undertaken by our members and other organisations in recent years.¹

For this 2014 review, fieldwork was carried out between September and December 2013. In total 459 agencies took part (via in-depth telephone interviews and online surveys), and in addition 218 accommodation projects provided data about their service via a self-completed data return. A full methodology can be found in Appendix 1.

The key findings from this annual review include:

People using homelessness services

- 70% of homeless people using accommodation projects are men (30% are female) and 53% are young people (under 25 year olds), with only 10% aged 50 or over. A third of homeless people using accommodation projects have needs related to drug use (33%) and mental health (32%) and over a quarter have complex and multiple needs (28%). 15% are recent rough sleepers and 27% have an offending history.

Services for homeless people

- There are currently 1,271 accommodation projects in England for single homeless people, a small decrease of 3% from last year. There are 216 day centres in England that support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, a small increase from 211 last year.
- The accommodation projects in England provide a total of 38,534 bed-spaces for single homeless people. Around half of accommodation projects are small, with 46% having 20 beds or fewer. Over half (53%) report having no spare bed-spaces on a given night. Where there are spare bed spaces this is mostly due to refurbishment (43% of reported voids).
- Compared to last year, more accommodation projects report declining referrals or refusing access to those homeless people with the highest needs or the most challenging behaviour. 91% of accommodation projects refused access to people who were assessed as being too high a risk to other clients or staff, compared to 79% last year, and 74% refused people whose needs were too high for the project to manage, up from 63% last year. 40% of projects refused access to people who were intoxicated by drugs or alcohol, up from 22% last year. The results also suggest more projects are requiring referrals to have a local connection. This is a trend that has been emerging over the past years and particularly concerning is the increase in projects which are not able to work with individuals with high and complex needs.
- Homelessness services provide more than just a roof. In accommodation projects, the four most common services provided in-house are meaningful activities (by 92% of projects, which includes activities such as art, sport, gardening, and informal learning), resettlement services (91%), advice services (85%) and Education, Training and Employment (ETE, 72%).

¹ This research and more is available on Homeless Pages, the leading source of information on homelessness on the web, www.homelesspages.org.uk

Access to external support

- Most accommodation projects and day centres provide access to health and substance use services, largely through referral to external agencies. In general, there were few gaps identified in local provision, except for day centres where 11% reported having no access to a GP or practice nurse and 10% no access to employment, training or education services. 44% of day centres experienced difficulties for clients accessing mental health services, including due to long waiting lists, clients' disruptive behaviour, and high access thresholds restricting the support for those with lower level but significant needs.

Outcomes for homeless people

- 22% of people who move on from accommodation projects return to friends or family, and a further 21% move into second-stage accommodation where they can receive ongoing support. 15% of homeless people who move on do so to social housing; and 10% move into the private rented sector (PRS).
- However, a high number of respondents reported difficulties accessing move-on accommodation. 66% of accommodation projects said that local pressures on the housing market and limited supply of suitable rental properties were the main barriers to move-on. On average, accommodation projects reported that 32% of people currently staying in their services were ready to move on but had not yet moved. 48% of those had been waiting for more than three months.
- As well as accommodation outcomes, projects reported that 21% of people using their services were managing their health better and 30% were engaged in money management skills development, sport, arts or other meaningful activities. 12% of people reduced their offending and 10% had achieved paid employment.

Funding for homelessness services

- 38% of accommodation projects saw their funding fall over the past 12 months, while conversely 8% saw an increase in their funding. Levels of funding for day centres has varied, with 31% reporting a funding increase and 26% a decrease.
- Accommodation projects continue to rely on a small number of funding sources. 96% projects receive Housing Benefit payments; 91% rent and service charges and 88% receive housing-related support. The contribution of other minor funders (such as health or criminal justice) has not grown from previous years. Day centres continue to rely on fundraising income.
- Housing-related support (formerly Supporting People funding) is the primary funding source for 58% of projects, a significant reduction from 76% last year.
- The main changes resulting from funding decreases are in the range of services offered and the level of support available. 19% of projects with funding cuts reported reducing the provision of key-working and 33% reported reducing the provision of meaningful activities. 48% of projects with decreases in funding also reduced their frontline staff, and 41% reduced their back-office capacity. These changes suggest that projects are operating with fewer staff available to support the same number of homeless people and have fewer services on offer to help them move on from homelessness.
- Accommodation projects with funding reductions have made various adaptations to help manage these, including reducing the number of staff (23% of projects), restructuring (23%), reducing staff costs (11%), using more volunteers or junior staff (10%), and reducing the hours or support given to service users (8%).

- Although many accommodation projects have seen funding levels fall, generally they have not changed the number of people that they support in their services, including those with complex needs, which suggests that funding decreases are not leading to fewer people being supported. However funding cuts have impacted on reduced staffing and on the level of support that many services can offer, whereby many services are offering a lower level of support. When this is considered alongside the increasing number of projects saying they are not able to work with individuals with high and complex needs, there is a concerning trend emerging in the sector where those who need support the most are at greatest risk of not being able to access this.

Alternative types of support for homeless people

- Many accommodation projects have been developing new types of support for homeless people. Most projects offer some form of personalised service, ranging from co-production of support plans (74%) to personal budgets (39%). Others are using private sector leasing schemes (26%), Housing First (23%) and peer landlord schemes (10%). Only 6% of accommodation projects were currently commissioned on a payment by results basis.

Impact of welfare changes

- Responses this year showed that welfare changes – including changes to the conditionality and sanctions regime, Local Welfare Assistance, the Shared Accommodation rate and Local Housing Allowance - are having a substantial impact on people who are homeless and those agencies which support them. Day centres are advising a high number of people (on average 100 each month) on welfare benefits issues, mostly because claims are suspended without people knowing why (71% of day centres), a change in a person's fit-to-work assessment (70%), and because of benefit sanctions (68%).
- People using day centres were experiencing increasing anxiety about making ends meet, and the demand for food parcels had increased. Access to Local Welfare Assistance schemes varied, reflecting the local differences in eligibility and process. Benefit sanctions for homeless people were a concern in 69% of accommodation projects, as well as delays in receiving Housing Benefit or due to changes in circumstances.
- 85% of accommodation projects had rent arrears from current clients, with 27% of clients in arrears on average.

Future challenges for homelessness services

- The major changes that homelessness services identified included a decrease in provision for homeless people; stricter eligibility requirements to access support, such as local connection; limited suitable move-on accommodation; the impact of the Shared Accommodation Rate; more service users with complex needs; and landlords not accepting tenants on Housing Benefit.
- The major gap in services for homeless people was the availability of affordable and/or suitable accommodation as well as: limited access to mental healthcare, substance use and dual diagnosis services; suitable move-on accommodation for people with multiple or complex needs; lack of supported housing for specific groups, e.g. women, mothers and babies, couples and people with dogs; and limited access to the private rented sector.

CHAPTER 1: SINGLE HOMELESSNESS IN ENGLAND

Key Headlines

- In 2012-13 nearly 20,000 households were classified as homeless but not in priority need, many of whom are likely to be single homeless.
- 2,414 people were sleeping rough on a given night in autumn 2013, an increase of (5%) from the autumn 2012.
- Single homeless people are more likely to be male, with over half being young (16-24), nearly a third being ex-offenders and one fifth from a BME group.
- Many homeless people have a range of needs in particular those relating to poor physical and mental health and alcohol and/or drug use.

Homelessness can happen to anyone and can have a devastating effect on people's lives; however research has identified a number of experiences and factors that put people more at risk of homelessness in later life². Some of the reasons why people become homeless include losing their home due to problems with their tenancy or mortgage; losing a job; or experiencing a breakdown in family relationships. This report focuses on single people who are homeless, who tend to have different experiences and support options to homeless families.

This chapter explores:

- What is single homelessness?
- How many single people in England are homeless?
- Where are single people homeless?
- What are the external factors influencing homelessness in England?
- Who is homeless?

1.1 WHAT IS SINGLE HOMELESSNESS?

Homelessness is legally defined, and protections are given in England to certain homeless groups. Under the legal definition, a person is considered homeless if they have no home in the UK or anywhere else in the world available to occupy. This includes people facing eviction, those living in temporary accommodation, squatters, rough sleepers, people at risk of violence, those housed in property potentially damaging to their health, and those who cannot afford their current accommodation.

In England, not all homeless people who meet the legal definition of homelessness will be provided with housing. Under the 1996 Housing Act, local authorities have a statutory duty to find accommodation for households deemed to be homeless, eligible and in 'priority need'. Most commonly, 'priority need' applies to adults with dependent children and/or households with a vulnerable member.

The majority of single homeless people or homeless couples without children do not meet these criteria. Many single homeless people reside in hostels, shelters and temporary accommodation, and some will sleep rough. Some people who are homeless live temporarily in squats, on the floors or sofas of friends and families, or sleep rough in concealed locations. These 'hidden' homeless people tend to be absent from both official statistics and public perception, but without support they comprise some of the most vulnerable members of society. This report focuses on single homeless people who do not meet the definition of statutory homelessness.

² Tackling homelessness and exclusion: Understanding complex lives, JRF, 2011
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/tackling-homelessness-and-exclusion>

Measuring single homelessness

There are different definitions of homelessness and various forms that homelessness can take. The homeless population is transient; people move in and out of different types of accommodation and situations with resulting shifts in their status. Consequently it is difficult to capture the total number of single homeless people in England. In addition, data collection is not consistent between agencies and organisations. There is likely to be overlap between categories, while some populations are not included at all. This lack of consistency is not unique to the UK; few European and other developed countries systematically collect data on homelessness making comparisons of trends with other countries unreliable. Despite these limitations, a general picture of single homelessness in England can be assembled from a range of sources.

1.2 HOW MANY SINGLE PEOPLE IN ENGLAND ARE HOMELESS?

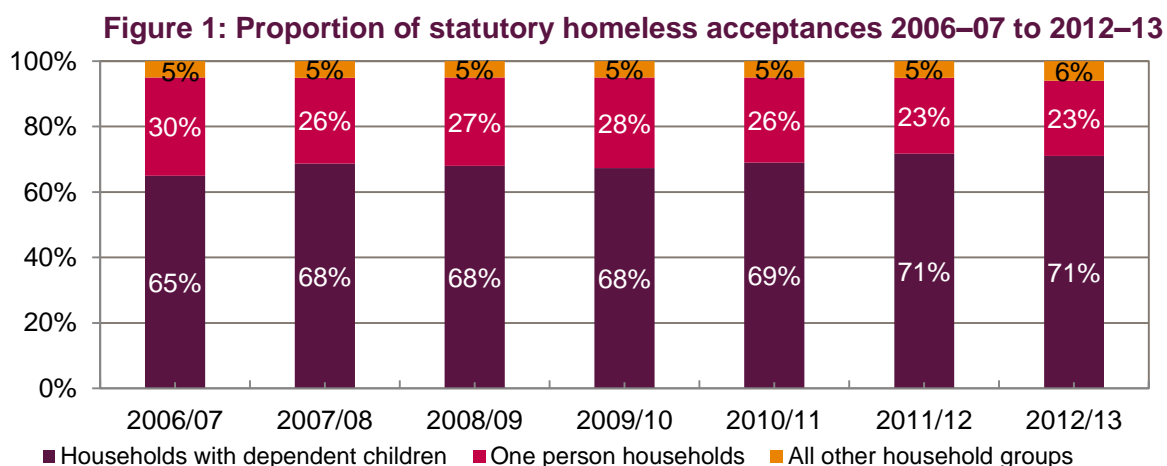
Single homeless people owed a statutory homeless duty

Although many single homeless people are not eligible for housing support from their local authority, vulnerable single people may meet 'priority need' criteria. This can include people who are vulnerable due to being elderly, young (16-17 year olds), a care leaver, physically disabled, mentally ill, drug or alcohol dependent, a former asylum seeker, or people facing threats of violence or domestic violence.

Quarterly figures are available on the levels, types and outcomes of homelessness applications received by Local Authorities across England. This data includes how many single households are accepted as statutorily homeless.

In 2012-13, 53,540 households were accepted as statutory homeless. This included 7,100 single men and 5,420 single women. However, 8,420 households were deemed to be homeless and in priority need but intentionally homeless, and a further 19,790 households were found to be homeless but not in priority need. A large proportion of these are likely to be single homeless people.

There is evidence that the proportion of acceptances for single homeless households has been decreasing over the years. Figure 1 shows that acceptances for households with dependent children (couples or lone parents) increased from 65% to 71% during the period 2006-07 to 2012-13. Conversely, the proportion of acceptances for single person households decreased from 30% to 23%.



Source: DCLG

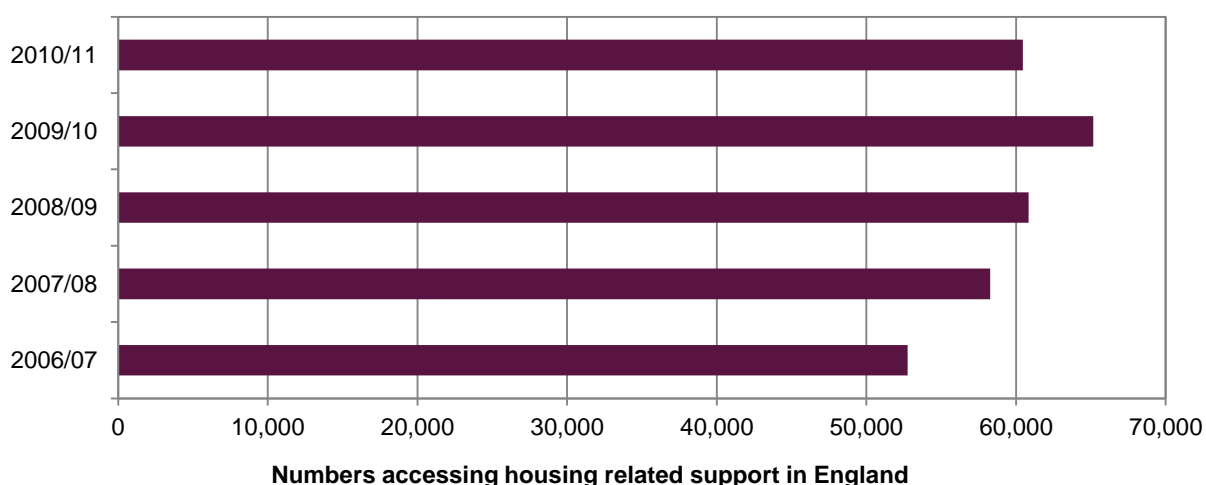
Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Single homeless people with support needs accessing housing related services

Supporting People data is based on information collected about people who enter housing-related support services. Prior to April 2011, data collection was mandatory but has since become the responsibility of individual administering authorities. Administering authorities are top tier local authorities that receive the Supporting People grant and administer contracts for Supporting People services. Consequently, there is substantial missing data from April 2011 onwards, and data collected after this period cannot reliably be compared with previous years. Data from this source is available on people categorised as 'single homeless people with support needs', and is reported for each financial year. From the data which was collected during the period 2006-07 to 2010-11, the numbers of single homeless people with support needs receiving housing related support rose steadily (Figure 2).

Figure 2: People accessing housing related support 2006–07 to 2010–11

Source: Centre for Housing Research, University of St Andrews



During 2012-13, 'single homeless with support needs' was the most common client group (26%) in housing support, with 36,299 single homeless people receiving housing-related support. Numbers are likely to be an underestimate as only 93 out of 152 administering authorities submitted data. The majority of these people receiving support were men (71%), aged 18-24 (32%) and White British (76%). 18% reported having a disability. People most commonly reported that they had previously been living with family (17%), sleeping rough (16%), or living with friends (14%). One in ten had previously lived in supported housing.

Single homeless people sleeping rough

Most people sleeping rough are single homeless. Since 2010, counts and estimates on the numbers of rough sleepers in each local authority in England have been published on an annual basis. These figures are snapshots of the number sleeping rough on a single night, and are not therefore an indication of the total number of people sleeping rough during a given year.

The latest government figures for autumn 2013 show that the total of rough sleeping counts and estimates was 2,414. This is an increase of 105 (5%) from the autumn 2012 when there was a reported total of 2,309. More than one in five rough sleepers are based in London. The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) provided by the charity Broadway, is a database of people sleeping rough in the London area. Data for 2012-13 showed that 6,437 people were sleeping rough at some point in the year, up from 5,678 the previous year. Of those sleeping rough,

88% were men, 58% were aged 26-45, 47% were White British, and 28% were from Central and Eastern European countries.³

According to Supporting People data⁴, 3,363 rough sleepers received housing-related support during 2012-13. Again, this is likely to be an underestimate and does not cover those sleeping rough who were not accessing housing-related support. Of this figure, 86% were male, 59% were aged 25-45 and 80% were White British. One in five reported having a disability.

Single homeless people who are hidden

Due to its nature, it is difficult to assess the scale and trends of hidden homelessness, by which we mean those who exist out of sight in places such as bed and breakfasts, squats, or on the floors or sofas of friends and family. A 2011 report found that of the 437 single homeless people surveyed, 92% had experienced hidden homelessness, and 62% were hidden homeless on the night they were surveyed. Furthermore, for every month the hidden homeless spent in formal homeless provision, over three months had been spent sleeping rough or in other hidden situations.⁵

Some forms of hidden homelessness can be determined from official statistics by looking at trends in the number of 'concealed', 'sharing' and overcrowded households. According to the Homelessness Monitor, the numbers of hidden homeless people residing in concealed, overcrowded and shared households have been estimated to be rising for over ten years. These rises have been linked to the limited availability of affordable housing.⁶

- 'Concealed households' are family units or single adults living within other households.
 - In 2012, the Labour Force Survey showed that there were an estimated 1.45 million concealed households in England involving single people, as well as 245,000 concealed couples and lone parents.
- 'Sharing households' are those households who live together in the same dwelling but who do not share either a living room or regular meals together. In practice, the distinction between 'concealed' and 'sharing' households is a very fluid one.
 - There was an increase in the number of sharing households in the period 2007-2010, which appears consistent with constrained access to housing during the recession, and then a modest decline to 2012 (Labour Force Survey).
- 'Overcrowding' is defined according to an insufficient number of bedrooms to appropriately house all members of the household.⁷
 - Based on data from the English Housing Survey, overcrowding increased markedly from 2003 to 2010, from 2.4% to 3.0% of all households, reversing previous declining trends, although there was a slight decline in 2011.

Case Study 1 describes some of the situations of hidden homelessness and an example of services set up to support those people who are 'hidden homeless'.

³ The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN), www.broadwaylondon.org

⁴ <https://supportingpeople.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.cfm>

⁵ Reeve, K. and Batty, E. (2011) *The hidden truth about homelessness - Experiences of single homelessness in England*. London: Crisis

⁶ Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. & Watts, B. (2013) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2013.*, Crisis and Joseph Rowntree Foundation

⁷ One bedroom should be allocated to each couple or lone parent, one to each pair of children under 10, one to each pair of children of the same sex over 10, with additional bedrooms for individual children over 10 of different sex and for additional adult household members.

Case Study 1: Hidden homelessness

Thames Reach set up a Targeted Rapid Intervention Outreach programme (TRIO) in London in April 2013. Funded by London Councils for two years and working in partnership with Eaves and Addaction, TRIO is an outreach service that focuses specifically on 'hidden homeless' people and groups of rough sleepers living in 'hotspot' areas. It also supports people vulnerable to abuse or trafficking, particularly women, and others sleeping rough who would not be found by mainstream outreach services.

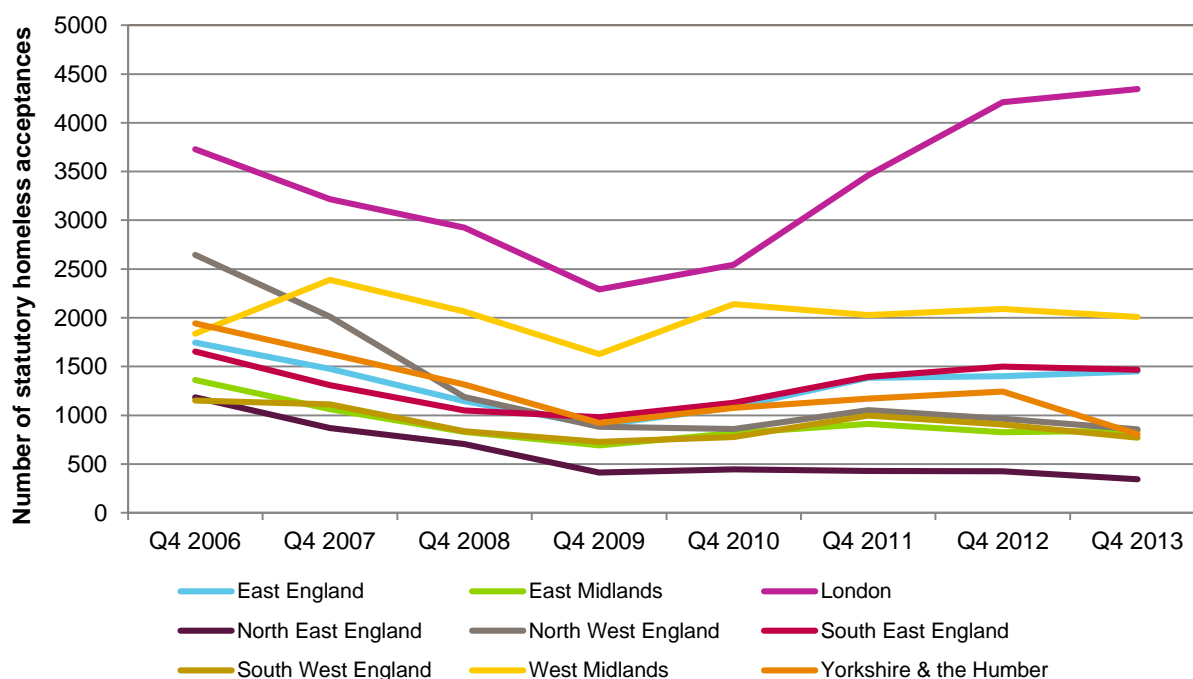
TRIO currently works with 1,396 people (Q2 Aug-Oct 2013) across 33 London boroughs. It is set up to work flexibly with rough sleepers, including giving a rapid response and making contact as often as is needed. TRIO assists people off the streets and into services that offer accommodation, as well as providing reconnection services, medical advice, literacy, counselling and employment support. Specialist drug and alcohol support is provided by Addaction and advice on maintaining tenancies, one-to-one support and life skills training from Eaves.

TRIO works alongside the police, immigration services and local councils. The programme also works to close down rough sleeping hotspots quickly and safely. These include sites in parks, garages, waste grounds, bin sheds, airports, and abandoned car parks.

1.3 WHERE ARE PEOPLE HOMELESS?

Many of the recent rises in statutory homelessness are more apparent in the South East and London. Figure 3 shows that since 2009, homelessness acceptances in Quarter 4 of each year have been rising most dramatically in London. The East of England and South East have also seen increases, although the South East saw a small decline in Q4 2013. Changes have been less marked elsewhere and quarter 4 of 2013 saw a drop in acceptances in most regions.

Figure 3: Trends in statutory homeless acceptances Q4 2006–13



Source: DCLG

More than one-fifth of people sleeping rough (22%) are in London. However, the total number sleeping rough on a given night in autumn 2013 (543) was down 3% compared to the previous year.

Within London there are several areas with consistently high numbers of rough sleepers, most notably Westminster which had a count of 140 in autumn 2013.

1.4 WHAT EXTERNAL FACTORS ARE INFLUENCING HOMELESSNESS?

The causes of homelessness tend to be defined as both structural and individual. Structural factors include poverty, inequality, housing supply and affordability, unemployment, welfare and income policies. Individual factors include vulnerabilities and support needs such as poor physical health, mental health problems, alcohol and drugs issues, bereavement, offending, experience of care and/or prison. Structural and individual factors are often inter-related; individual factors can arise from structural disadvantages including poverty and lack of education. Interpersonal factors, such as family and social relationships can also be put under pressure by structural factors.⁸

Labour market conditions

Links between labour market change and homelessness are complex, but researchers have identified two ways in which unemployment can affect homelessness; directly via higher levels of mortgage or rent arrears and other debt, and indirectly through pressures on family and household relationships. These effects tend to be lagged insofar as it may be some time before the effects are really felt, and also tend to be mediated by a range of other factors, crucially welfare provision. However, young people have been disproportionately affected by unemployment and the latest figures for October-December 2013 show 917,000 16-24 year old unemployed with the youth unemployment rate at 19.9% compared to 7.2% for the general population).⁹ In addition, average full-time earnings fell in real terms between 2005-11 and there has also been a decrease in full-time employment and an increase in part-time employment.¹⁰

Welfare reform changes

Evidence from this year's annual review suggests a number of changes to welfare reform are having an impact on homelessness, some of which are briefly outlined below.

Changes to Local Housing Allowance

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) supports people in private rented property who are unemployed, unable to work, or on a low income, to pay their rent. LHA has been capped based on the number of bedrooms the household is deemed to need and local market rent prices. At Autumn Statement 2012, the Government announced that most LHA rates will be increased by a maximum of 1% in 2014-15 and 2015-16.¹¹ As a consequence a more limited amount of private rented sector accommodation will be available at or under LHA rates, with the effects particularly being felt in London and the South East.¹²

Shared Accommodation Rate

The Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) is a lower rate of LHA based on age and the amount of rent required to share a property. Previously people were eligible to receive the SAR up to the age

⁸ Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. & Watts, B. (2013) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2013.*, Crisis and Joseph Rowntree Foundation

⁹ Office for National Statistics, Labour Market Statistics, February 2014 <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/february-2014/index.html>

¹⁰ ¹⁰ Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. & Watts, B. (2013) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2013.*, Crisis and Joseph Rowntree Foundation

¹¹ In recognition of the fact that rental markets differ across the country, the Government committed to increase rates in some areas by more than the 1% limit. The funding for this is known as the 'Local Housing Allowance Targeted Affordability Funding'. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/262080/lha-call-for-evidence-response.pdf

¹² See for example 'The affordability of private renting for families claiming local housing allowance' (Shelter 2012)

of 25, but this has now been extended up to the age of 35, with some exemptions.¹³ This change is placing further pressure on a limited supply of affordable shared accommodation across most of England, for example with research suggesting only 5.5% properties in London were affordable within the SAR¹⁴. Evidence has also found that landlords are less willing to rent to younger people, further reducing their accommodation options available to them.¹⁵

Removal of the Spare Room subsidy and Benefit Cap

The size criteria (or spare room subsidy) in the social rented sector restricts housing benefit to one bedroom for each person or couple living as part of the household. If you are assessed as having 'spare' bedrooms, your housing benefit will be reduced by 14% of your total rent for one room, and by 25% for two or more rooms. In April 2013 there was also the introduction of a limit to the total amount of money a household can receive from all benefits. The 'benefit cap' limits the total amount of benefits that can be received to a maximum amount of £500 per week for single parents and couples with children, and £350 per week for single people.

It is still unclear to what extent these policies will impact upon single homeless people living in hostels or supported housing. Anecdotally, homelessness agencies inform us that increased demand for smaller properties created by the removal of the spare room subsidy is making it harder to resettle people from hostels, as previously, cheaper two bed properties could be used for move-on accommodation. In a few areas single homeless people living in two-bedroomed "hard-to-let" social housing are being hit by the loss of the spare room subsidy and face arrears.

Discretionary Housing Payments

In order to help soften the impact of changes to the welfare system and help plug the gap produced by reductions in housing benefit on a short term basis, there has been an increase in the budget for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs). However, DHPs are made at the discretion of the Local Authority, subject to an annual cash limit, where the claimant 'appears to (the) authority to require some further financial assistance...in order to meet housing costs'. Figures published by DWP show that six months into the year 2013/14, 70% of councils had paid out less than half of their total DHP allocation, prompting some concern about the criteria and accessibility of these funds. There is limited evidence so far about how accessible DHP is to single homeless people.

Conditionality and Sanctions

A new conditionality and sanctions regime was introduced in 2012 with increased conditionality and higher levels of sanctions, for example, a minimum period of four weeks up to a maximum of three years. There is evidence that vulnerable people are at more risk of being sanctioned, and that meeting the conditions for receiving benefits is more challenging for those homeless people with chaotic lifestyles.¹⁶ Research found that a third of homeless people on JSA and nearly one in five on ESA had received a sanction, compared to 2.7-3% of the general population.¹⁷ An independent review of aspects of the Sanctions regime was recently conducted, and at the time of publication the results from this are reported to be available in the Spring 2014.

¹³ Exemptions include those for people who have lived in a homeless hostel for at least three months <http://homeless.org.uk/shared-accommodation-rate-FAQ#Exemptions>

¹⁴ Nowhere to Move: Is renting on the Shared Accommodation Rate in London affordable?, Homeless Link, 2013, http://homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/attached-downloads/No%20Where%20To%20Move_FINAL.pdf; see also 'Mapping the number of extra housing units needed for young people', (Cambridge Centre for Planning and Research, December 2012.)

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ A High Cost To Pay: The impact of benefit sanctions on homeless people, Homeless Link, 2013, http://homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-downloads/A%20High%20Cost%20to%20Pay%20Sept13_0.pdf

¹⁷ Ibid

Universal Credit

Universal Credit (UC) attempts to simplify the benefits system and make work pay. While many agencies have welcomed the commitment to simplify the benefits system and address punitive withdrawal rates, the actual structure of UC presents numerous problems for services working with vulnerable and transitory individuals.

Particular concerns have been expressed about how the housing costs in supported accommodation will be managed under UC and the payment arrangements, which will mean most claimants will receive benefits in a single monthly, direct payment. Although there is some guidance for cases where payments may be made directly to landlords (such as for people with a history of rent arrears and vulnerable people) these are yet to be fully developed and tested.

Local Welfare Assistance

In April 2013, crisis loans and community care grants, formerly part of the Discretionary Social Fund, were abolished. These were an important source of funding for homeless people to help them at particular times of crisis or transition, such as during the resettlement process from hostels to more independent housing.

The localisation and administration of funding to local authorities to provide their own Local Welfare Assistance has led to many different schemes being introduced, many with distinct eligibility criteria (for example residency qualifications) and limits to the type of support available. This has prompted concerns about how far this support is accessible for homeless and other vulnerable people.¹⁸ Current proposals indicate that central, ring fenced funding for local welfare assistance will be withdrawn from April 2015.

Cuts to services

Changes to benefits are occurring at a time when efficiency savings due to the need to address the deficit are leading to a reduction in the amount of funding available to provide services and support to vulnerable people. From 2003, the Supporting People (SP) programme funded support to people who needed help to live independently in the community, including homelessness services. In 2009, the ring-fence was removed from the Supporting People budget, and in 2011-12 it was rolled into the Formula Grant given to local authorities. It is now a wholly decentralised programme, 'housing-related support', and there have been substantial reductions in some local authorities as the funding is prioritised for other services.¹⁹ In some areas, funding for homelessness services has been cut by as much as 80%.²⁰

1.5 WHO IS HOMELESS?

The findings from this section of the report are based on surveys carried out by Homeless Link of the services that support homeless people in England (see Appendix 1: Methodology).

Of people currently staying in accommodation projects in England, seven in ten are men (70%, Figure 4). A substantial proportion (53%) are young people, with only one in ten (10%) aged 50 or over. Around one in four (27%) have a history of offending, and 15% are recent rough sleepers. Very small numbers of current service users are irregular or undocumented migrants, or have no

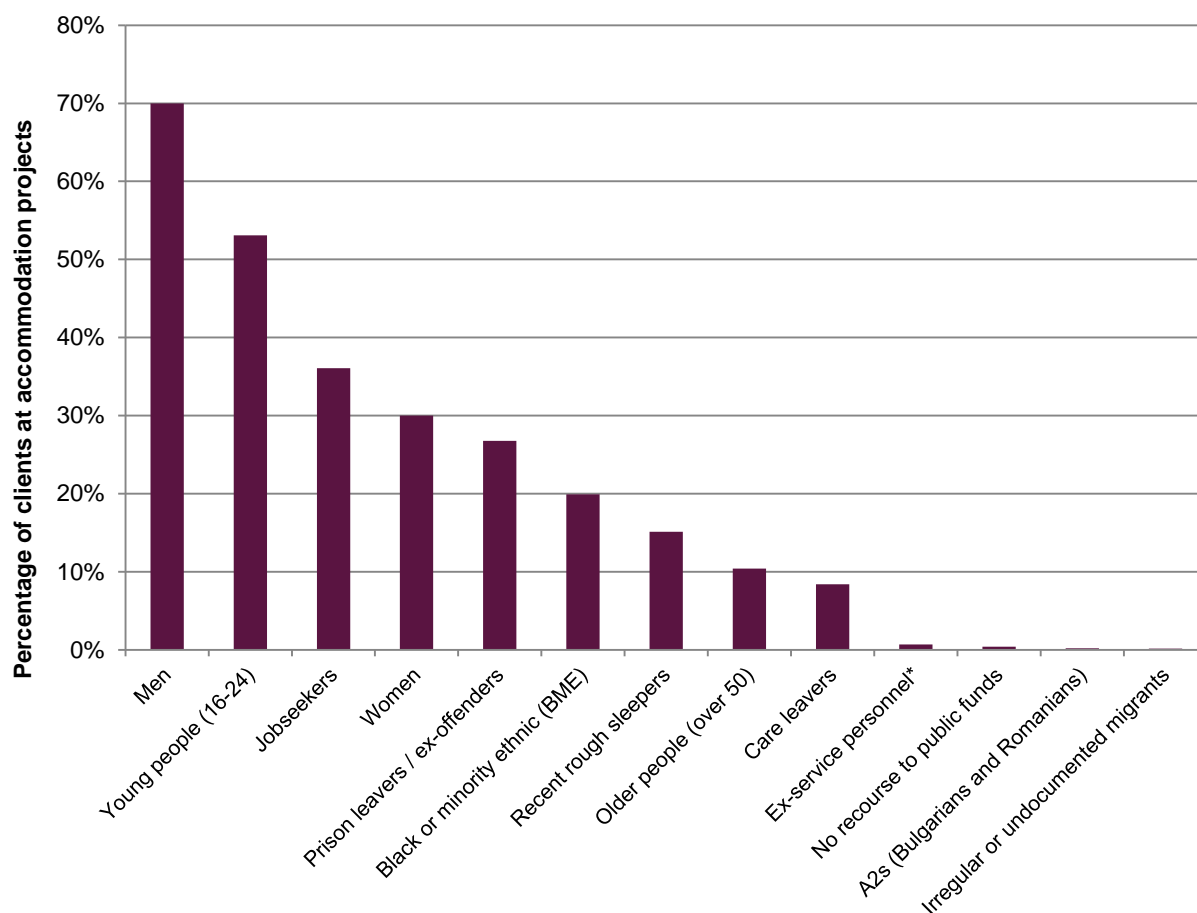
¹⁸ See for example *Nowhere to Turn* (Children's Society 2013)

¹⁹ Who is supporting people now? Experiences of local authority commissioning after *Supporting People*, Homeless Link, 2013, <http://homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/Who%20is%20supporting%20people%20now%20Report%20Jan13.pdf>

²⁰ <http://www.theguardian.com/society/patrick-butler-cuts-blog/2013/nov/22/homelessness-cuts-the-slow-painful-demise-of-supported-housing>

recourse to public funds, reflecting the commissioning of most accommodation provision to work with people who are eligible to claim Housing Benefit.

Figure 4: Service users in accommodation projects in England

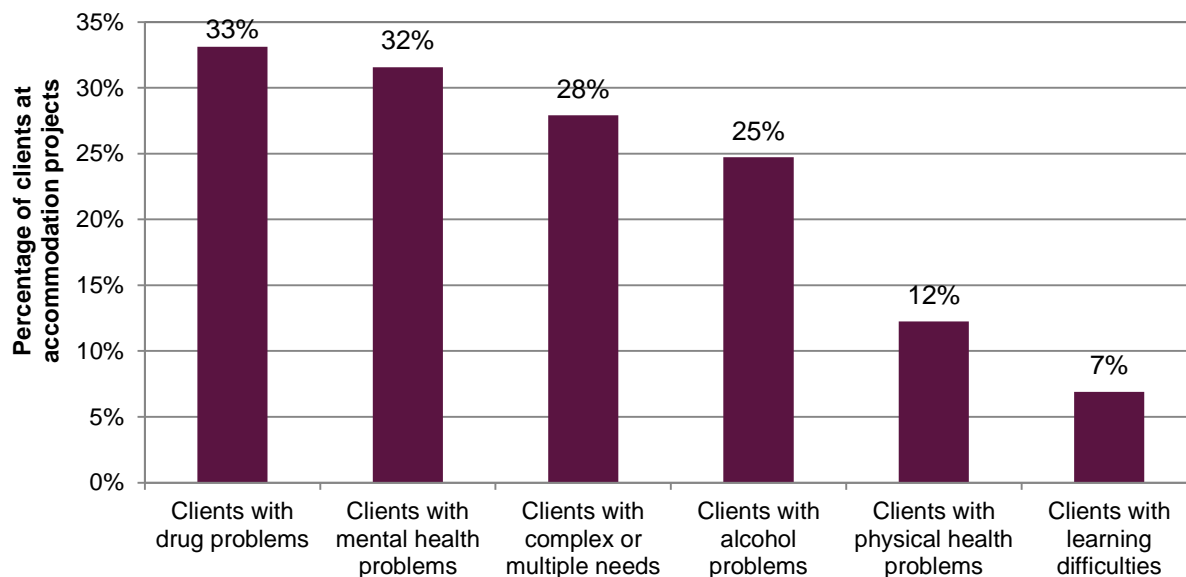


*Excludes one large project that targets ex-service personnel. With this project included, the proportion of ex-service personnel increases to 10%.

Source: Accommodation provider data return, N = 218 projects (5,229 clients)

In terms of the needs that homeless people have, around a third of people currently using accommodation projects have drug related needs (33%) and the same proportion have mental health issues (32%, Figure 5). Over a quarter (28%) have complex or multiple needs, which would include those with dual needs (substance use and mental health issues), and could also include needs relating to offending. Case Study 2 describes how one accommodation project is taking more referrals from people with complex needs. Please note as those using services may have more than one need, Figure 5 and other subsequent graphs present multiple responses so percentage based figures will amount to more than 100%.

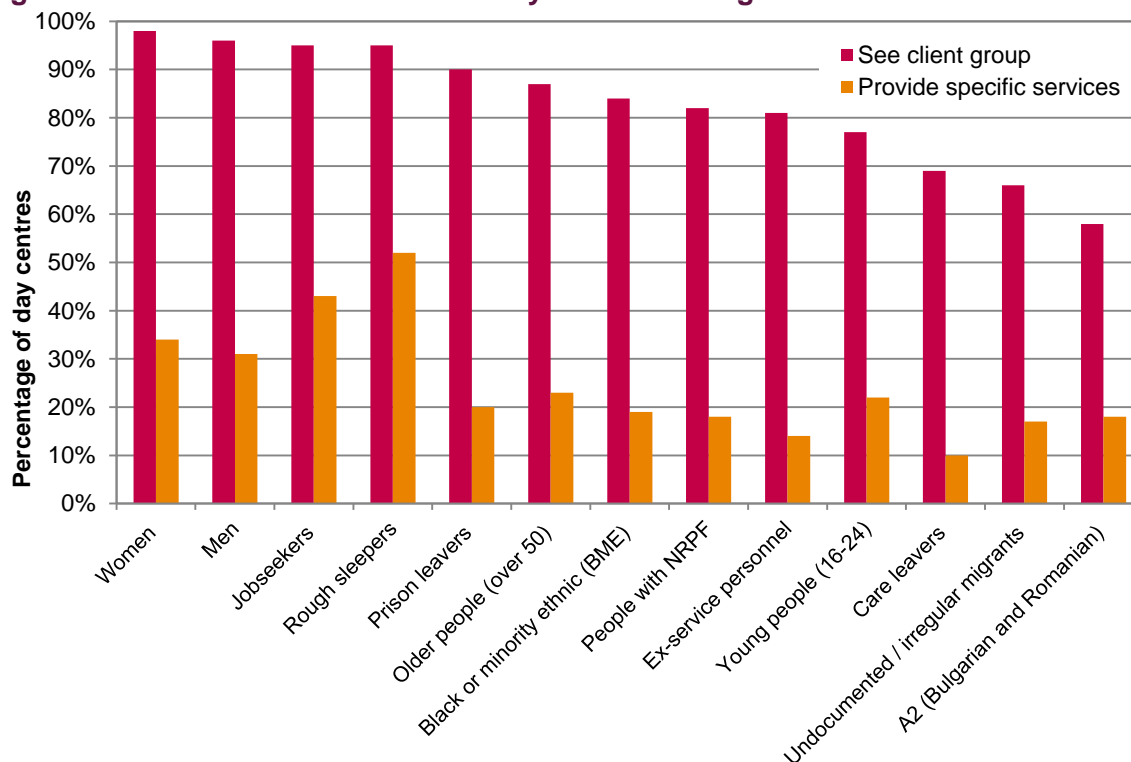
Figure 5: Needs of service users in accommodation projects in England



Source: Accommodation provider data return, N = 218 projects (5,229 clients)

The profile of people using day centres differs from accommodation projects (Figure 6). Almost all day centres (95%) see rough sleepers and 90% see prison leavers. People with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)²¹ are more likely to use day centres, as their access to other services is often limited, with more than 4 in 5 day centres (82%) seeing those with NRPF.

Figure 6: Homeless service users in day centres in England



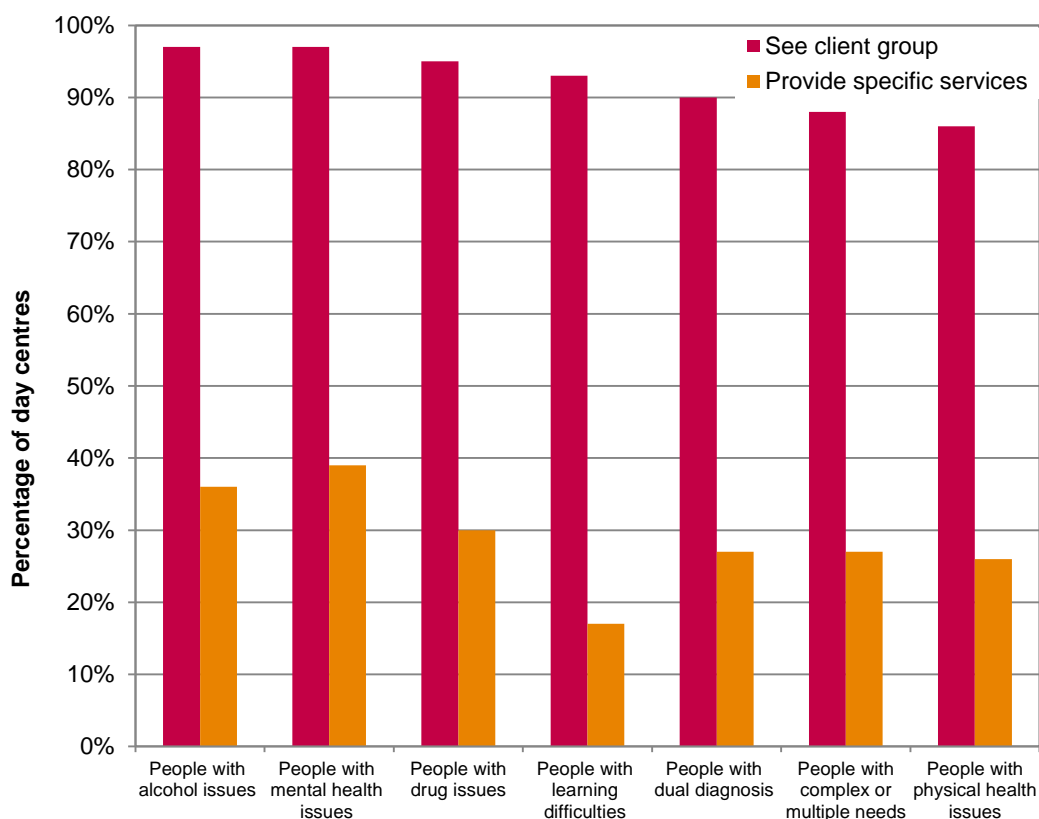
Source: Day centres survey, N = 103

²¹ No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) refers to destitute people from abroad who are subject to immigration control and have no entitlement to welfare benefits, Home Office support for asylum seekers or public housing.

Most day centres also support people with a range of needs (Figure 7): most see people who have alcohol issues (97%); mental health issues (97%); and drug issues (95%).

However, day centres provided fewer targeted services for specific client groups. Rough sleepers are the most commonly targeted with specific services (52% of day centres), which may include particular support like showers, meals and also advice. Nearly half of day centres (43%) provide specific services for jobseekers, which could include training, access to computers for job searches, advice, or literacy skills.

Figure 7: Needs of homeless service users at day centres in England



Source: Day centres survey, N = 103

Case Study 2: Providing for service users with complex needs

Oxford Homeless Pathways has supported homeless and vulnerable people in the city for over 25 years. Its main project, O'Hanlon House, is a 56-bed hostel in the city centre providing emergency accommodation and day services for people who have been sleeping rough in Oxfordshire. Next to the hostel is the Luther Street Medical Centre, a dedicated homeless health centre that offers GP services, dentistry, podiatry and drug services as well as referral to specialist health care.

In 2012, No Second Night Out (NSNO) was rolled out in Oxford, providing a rapid response to new and returning rough sleepers. Rough sleepers are referred by the city's street outreach service, assessed at O'Hanlon House which provides 7 assessment beds, and offered longer-term support, reconnection or accommodation.

O'Hanlon House is now the first point of access for many rough sleepers who have been identified through NSNO. With NSNO focusing attention on rough sleeping, O'Hanlon House now accommodates more people who were previously living on the street – now almost all service users come direct from the street, compared to about half previously. 70% of service users have drug issues, half have alcohol issues, and some both, as

well as mental health issues, and often demonstrate challenging behaviour. The majority of current residents also have a history in the criminal justice system.

Because of these changes, there is now less diversity in the level of needs of people staying at O'Hanlon House. Whereas previously some residents had been homeless for a short time and needed minimal support to find housing and employment, most of the current residents have complex needs and require a higher level of support from staff. The same proportion of residents' move on in a positive way (around 65%) but, whereas previously more moved into their own accommodation or into employment, most now are to other high-support hostels in Oxfordshire.

There have also been funding reductions from the hostel's Supporting People contract, resulting in staff reductions and real-terms pay decreases.

Having more residents with higher support needs has changed the way staff at O'Hanlon House are working with clients. There is more tolerance of challenging behaviour and fewer exclusions are given. This means that staff are dealing with more behaviour incidents than before: the number of incidents has remained the same from previous years, but more are now occurring inside the building with residents, rather than outside with day service clients. There have also been more incidents involving the police.

More residents are unable to pay service charges, with payment falling from about 80% previously to about 50% now. This seems to be due in part to greater financial abuse of residents by people supplying them with drugs. A greater proportion of residents who have complex needs are also now receiving benefit sanctions.

To respond to changing client needs, O'Hanlon House now has a benefits adviser to help residents understand and appeal sanctions, as well as maximise their income. They have recently arranged for payments to be made directly to the hostel rather than to residents to help tackle growing arrears, which is helping some service users. Staff are having clinical supervision to support them in working with residents with complex needs, as well as training on working in a Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE).

CHAPTER 2: SUPPORT FOR SINGLE HOMELESS PEOPLE

Key Headlines

- There are currently 1,271 accommodation projects for single homeless people in England providing around 38,500 bed-spaces, this is a decrease of 3% (33 projects) from last year.
- The number of bed-spaces provided by accommodation projects is 38,534, a reduction of 3% (1,104 bed-spaces) from last year.
- 216 day centres for homeless people are currently operating in England, an increase from 211 in the previous year
- More accommodation projects than last year refuse access to homeless people: 91% (79% last year) refused access because the homeless person was high risk to other clients or staff and 74% (63% last year) refused access for people whose needs were too high for the project to manage.
- Many homeless services are operating at full capacity with 72% (47% last year) refusing access because their project was full.
- 58% (76% last year) of accommodation projects said Housing-Related Support (previously Supporting People funding) was their primary source of funding. 38% of accommodation projects reported a fall in funding compared to the previous year, with an average reduction of 20%.
- 89% of day centres said fundraising was their primary funding source, followed by local authority grant funding (50%). 26% of day centres reported a funding decrease from last year while 31% reported an increase.
- Accommodation projects reported lower numbers of full-time staff than in the previous year, with an average of 8.7 full-time equivalent staff compared with 10.4 last year.
- 32% of people in accommodation services were ready to move-on but could not, mainly because of a lack of suitable accommodation.

This chapter examines:

- The provision available for single homeless people in England
- Access to homelessness provision
- How provision is resourced
- The support services offered to single homeless people
- The outcomes homeless people achieve in this provision

For single homeless people who are not owed a statutory duty from the local authority, assistance is generally provided by organisations that offer accommodation as well as support to help them into independent living and/or work, as well as addressing other needs.

This chapter examines the provision of support for single homeless people in England. In particular, it explores the support given by hostels, second-stage accommodation and day centres. The terms used to describe this provision are not universally defined, but in this report we use the following descriptions:

Hostels tend to provide short-term emergency accommodation for single homeless people. Some have a pre-defined referral route, such as via the local authority or an NSNO hub, whereas others accept self-referrals. Hostels often provide single rooms with shared facilities or a canteen. We have not included night-shelters in this group, which provide very short-term, i.e. over-night support, often on a seasonal basis.

Second-stage accommodation projects provide longer-term accommodation – often for up to two years – to single homeless people. They tend to offer a range of support, with some focusing on

people with high needs and others offering a lower level of support. Second-stage accommodation is often delivered as groups of bedsit flats, or single rooms with shared kitchens. Some have dispersed move-on houses for when people leave the accommodation. This group does not include specialist accommodation for people with substance use, mental health and/or offending needs.

Day centres offer non-accommodation-based support for rough sleepers, homeless people or people at risk of homelessness. They often differ widely, shaped by their history, local needs and funding, but tend to have an element of open access combined with structured support. Some offer a wide range of advice, training and activities, as well as providing access to specialist support such as healthcare or housing.

2.1 THE AVAILABILITY OF ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

There are currently around 1,271 accommodation projects for single homeless people in England, a small decrease of 3% from last year (Table 1). While data on why projects have closed is not available for all these projects on Homeless UK, where it is recorded reasons include services being re-configured and decommissioned.

Table 1: Accommodation projects for homeless people in England

	Nov-12	Nov-13	Net change	Net % change
Hostels	238	230	-8	-3%
Second stage	1066	1041	-25	-2%
Total accommodation projects	1304	1271	-33	-3%

Source: Homeless Link, Homeless UK database

There has also been a small reduction in the number of bed-spaces available in accommodation projects – 1,104 fewer than last year, a decrease of 3% (Table 2). Most of the reduction has occurred in hostels, where there are now 6% fewer bed-spaces.

Table 2: Bed-spaces in accommodation projects for homeless people in England

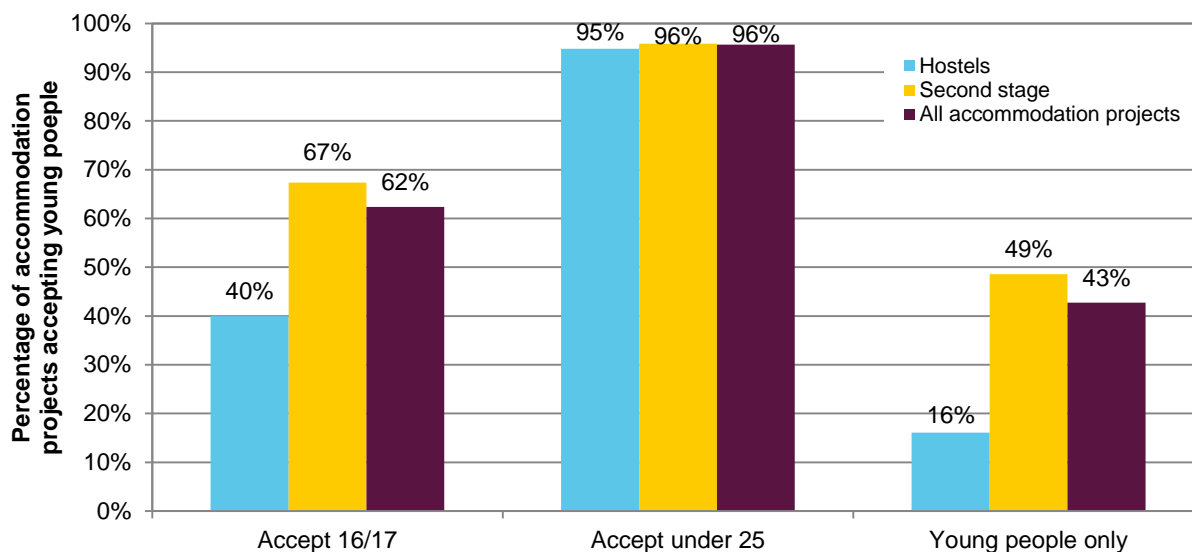
	Nov-12	Nov-13	Net change	Net % change
Hostels	8,666	8,158	-508	-6%
Second stage	30,972	30,376	-596	-2%
Total accommodation projects	39,638	38,534	-1104	-3%

Source: Homeless Link, Homeless UK database

Most projects have mixed accommodation, with single rooms available for both men and women (81%).²² A smaller proportion of accommodation projects have some men-only (14%) and women only provision (13%).

Most accommodation projects accept young people under the age of 25 (96%, Figure 8). Fewer take children aged 16 or 17, especially hostels where only 2 in 5 accept under 18 year olds, reflecting the recognised risks to very young people in mixed emergency hostels.

²² Homeless UK database, November 2013, N=1,271. Some accommodation providers will have separate men-only, women-only and mixed provision, so the total does not sum to 100%.

Figure 8: Accommodation projects accepting young people

Source: Homeless UK database, November 2013 (total, N=1,271; hostels, N=230; second stage, N=1,041)

Half of second stage accommodation projects (49%) are exclusively for young people, aged 18-25, such as foyers which focus on education and training. These longer-term accommodation projects often target particular groups of homeless people. Only 16% of hostels, however, are exclusive to young people, reflecting the more generic nature of emergency provision.

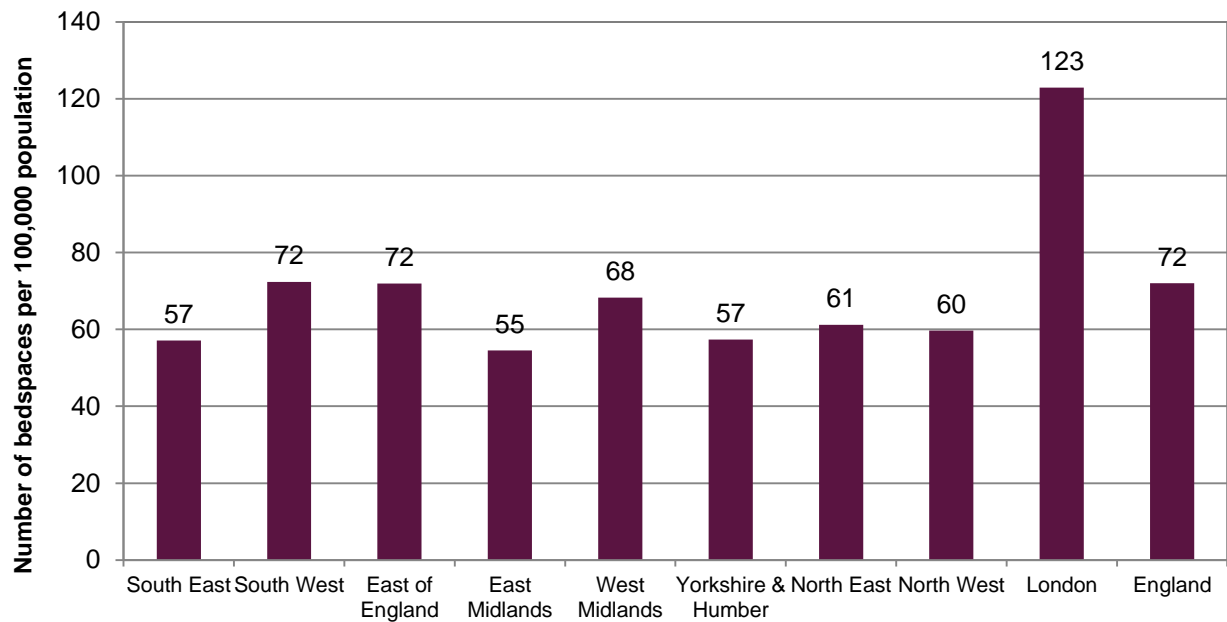
Regional differences

The provision of accommodation projects varies widely by region. London has the highest number of projects in total (199) and the North East has the least (64, Figure 9). Taking account of population size, London still has the highest rate of bed-space provision, with 123 bed-spaces per 100,000 population, (based on data from ONS, Figure 10). Provision in the other regions is broadly similar, with the lowest rate in the East Midlands (55 per 100,000 population).

Figure 9: Accommodation projects in England, by region



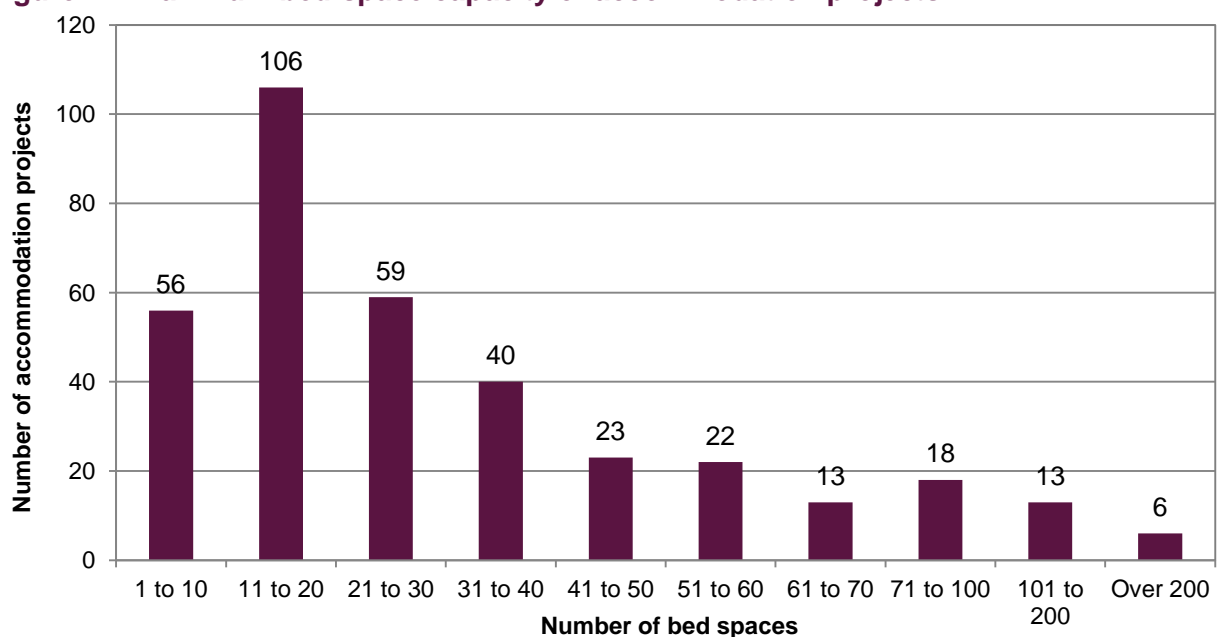
Total accommodation projects in England:
 Second stage: 1041
 Hostels: 238
TOTAL: 1271
 Source: Homeless UK database, November 2013

Figure 10: Number of bed-spaces per 100,000 population, by region

Source: Homeless UK database, November 2013 (N=38,534)
ONS population estimates for England and Wales, mid-2012 (June 2013)

Bed-space capacity in the homelessness sector

Most accommodation projects are relatively small. Nearly half (46%) have 20 beds or fewer, and only 1 in 5 had over 50 bed-spaces (Figure 11). Some projects with high numbers of bed-spaces in total will be made up of several smaller dispersed properties. This reflects developments in accommodation provision over the past decade through Places of Change, a capital improvement programme, and recognition that smaller projects often provide better support to homeless people as they can offer more personal or intensive support.

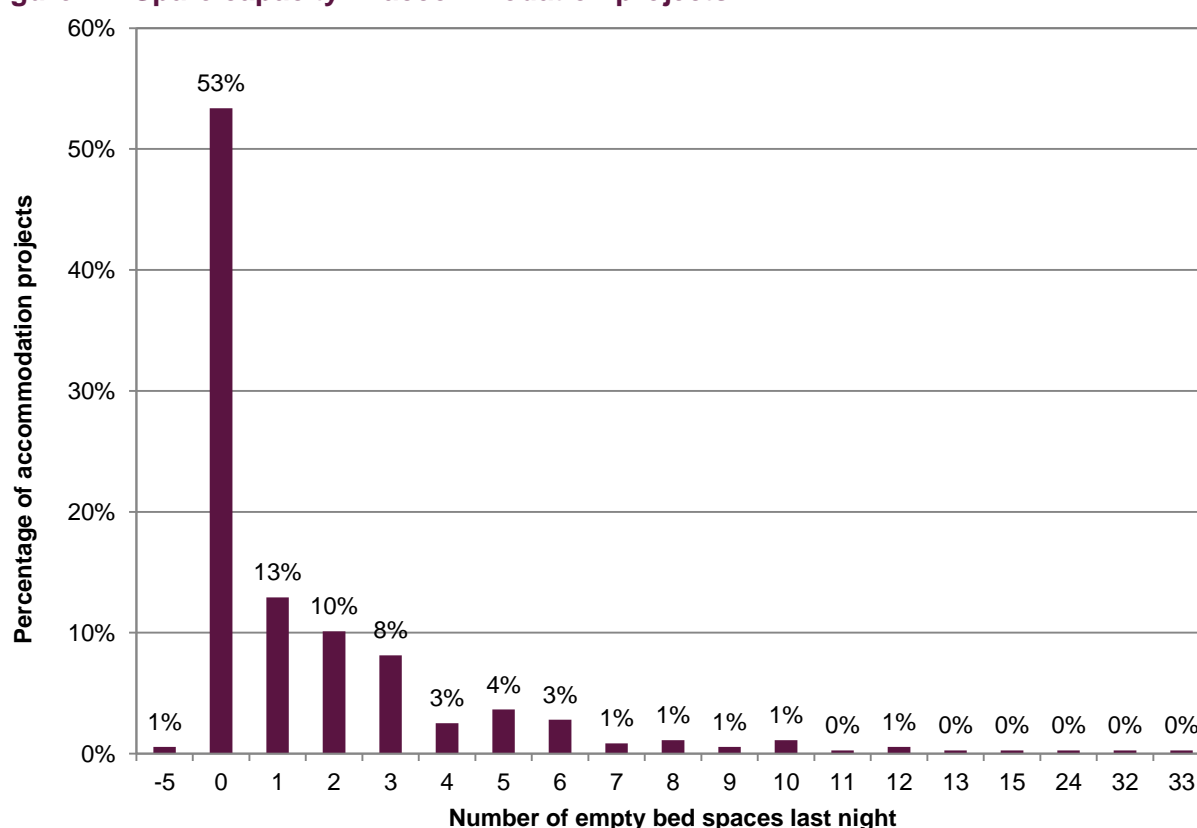
Figure 11: Maximum bed-space capacity of accommodation projects

Source: Accommodation provider survey, N = 356

Over half of accommodation projects are operating at full capacity (Figure 12). Over half (53%) had no spare bed-spaces, and a further quarter (23%) had only one or two beds spare on a given night.²³ Only a very small proportion of projects (3%) had ten or more beds spare. In some projects, beds are reserved for specific groups, such as women or couples, or from specific referral routes, such as No Second Night Out schemes (NSNO) many of which offer rapid access to accommodation to new rough sleepers.²⁴

Beds may also be unoccupied if rooms are undergoing refurbishment or for other maintenance reasons. Nearly half of reported voids (43%) were due to refurbishment, and a further 12% were 'contracted' voids where bed-spaces were reserved for people with particular needs according to contractual terms.²⁵ Around 2 in 5 voids (39%) were unplanned.

Figure 12: Spare capacity in accommodation projects



Source: Accommodation provider survey, N = 356

Length of time in accommodation projects

Individuals in accommodation services stay for different periods of time, depending on their needs, how the service is commissioned, and other local factors such as availability of move-on accommodation. This year's survey showed that the majority of homeless people (69%) stayed in accommodation for less than 6 months. Over a third of people stay for 3 months or less, and only 3% for two years or more.

²³ Analysis from the self-completed data returns supports these findings: 56% of those projects reported having no voids on the previous night. Of those which did report a void, the average number of voids last night at 1.4.

²⁴ Figure 12 shows a small number with '-5' spare beds which is likely to reflect some projects acting over capacity – eg adding additional beds to cope with emergency demand.

²⁵ Analysis of the self-completed data returns provided by 218 accommodation projects, which reported 290 voids on the previous night. The reasons for the remaining 6% of voids were not given.

Table 3: Length of time spent in accommodation projects

Length of time leavers had stayed in accommodation project	Number of clients leaving	Percentage of leavers
Leavers staying <1month	3,246	34%
Leavers staying 1-6 months	3,382	35%
Leavers staying 7-12 months	1,572	16%
Leavers staying 1-2 years	953	10%
Leavers staying 2+ years	323	3%

Source: Data return from 218 accommodation providers, November 2013

2.2 THE AVAILABILTY OF DAY CENTRE SERVICES

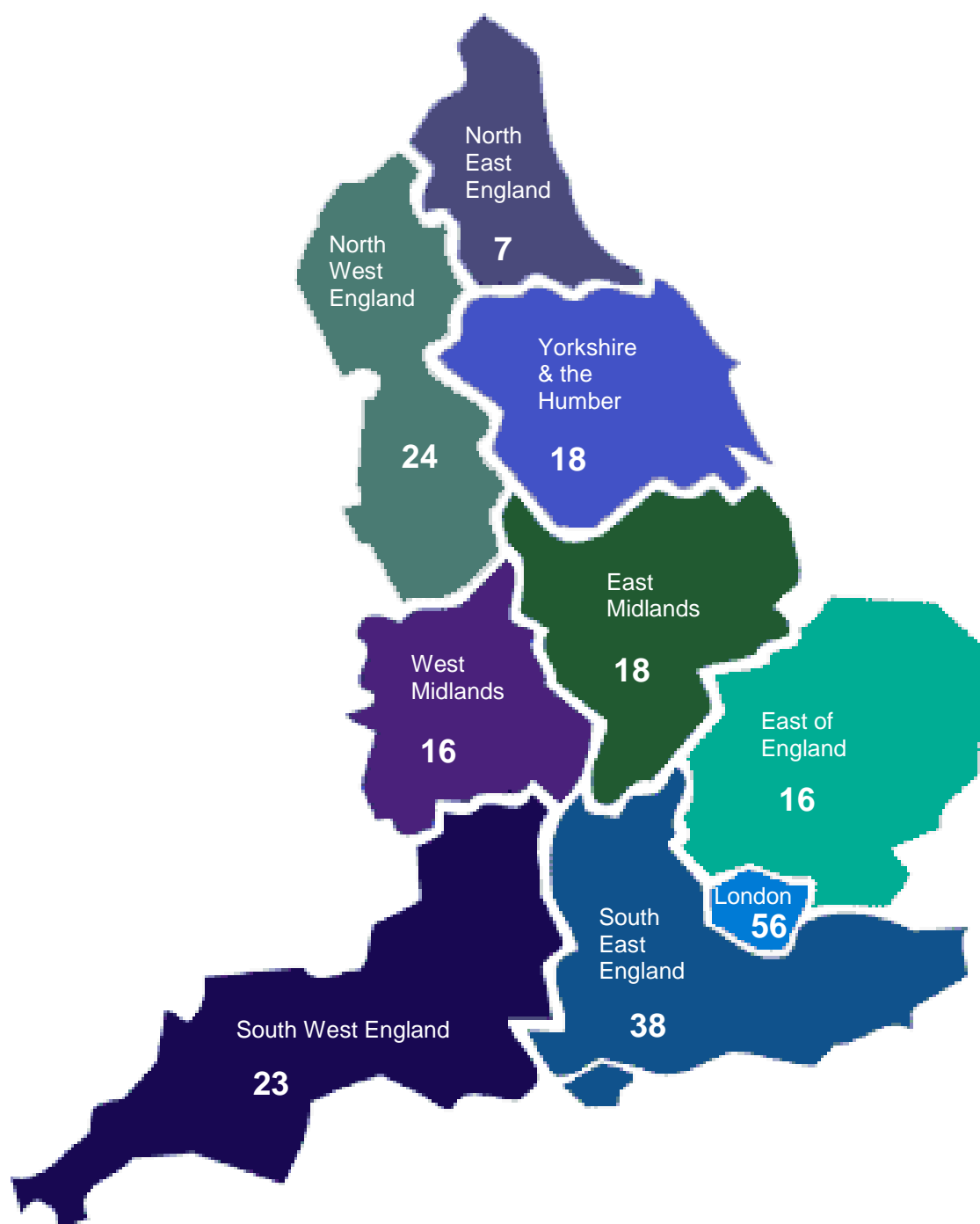
Day centres can play a crucial role in ending homelessness by tackling rough sleeping, supporting move-on, preventing tenancy breakdown, and promoting employment, education and social networks.

Day centres often work with people who have the most difficult journey from the street to independent living. They often develop flexible, innovative ways of working, including outreach and specialist services. Day centres also support socially excluded people to sustain their tenancies and break the cycle of repeat homelessness.

This year's survey shows there are 216 day centres working with homeless people recorded in England (Figure 13). This is a slight increase from the previous year when 211 day centres were recorded.²⁶

As with accommodation projects, London has the most day centres (56) and the North East the fewest (7).

²⁶ 211 day centres were recorded on the HUK database, see *SNAP 2013* (Homeless Link)

Figure 13: Day centres for homeless people in England, by region

Total number of day centres: 216

Source: Homeless Link, UK Advice Finder Database

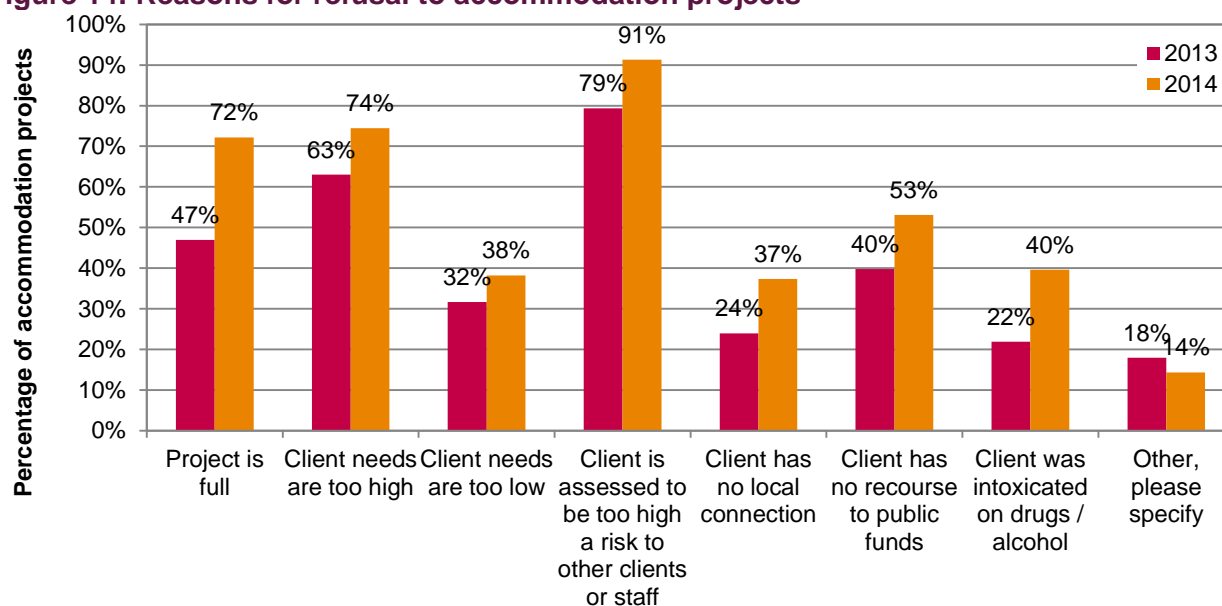
2.3 ACCESS TO ACCOMMODATION PROVISION

Most accommodation projects have referral criteria which determine which homeless people can be accepted into their services. These criteria are sometimes determined by the commissioner, such as only accepting people who have a proven local connection to the area, or by the project itself, who might have criteria related to level of people's support needs or perceived level of risk (for example related to offending behaviour), so that this can be managed safely in the accommodation.

This year, more projects than last year reported that they refuse access to homeless people for a variety of reasons. Almost all accommodation projects (91%) reported refusing access to homeless people who were assessed as being too high a risk to other clients or staff, which has increased by 12% since last year (79%, Figure 14). Three-quarters (74%, 63% in 2013) reported refusing access for people whose needs were too high for the project to manage, and 40% refused access to people intoxicated on drugs or alcohol, up from 22% from last year. This suggests that those people with the most challenging behaviour and with the highest needs are finding it more difficult to get access to support to help them.

Another major reason for refusing access was because the project was full – increasing from 47% of projects last year to 72% this year. There was also an increase in the proportion of projects refusing access to people with no recourse to public funds (40% to 53%) and for those with no local connection (24% to 37%).

Figure 14: Reasons for refusal to accommodation projects



Source: 2014: Accommodation provider survey, N = 356
2013: SNAP 2013, accommodation projects only, N = 430

457 of the 1,271 accommodation projects known in England (36%) indicated that clients being referred must have a local connection to stay in their services.²⁷ A further 355 (28%) would give priority to homeless people who had a local connection. Only 1 in 3 accommodation projects (461, 36%) did not require referrals to have a local connection. Of the 5,229 homeless people staying in 218 services in November 2013, 77% (4,004) had a local connection.²⁸

²⁷ Analysis of Homeless UK database, November 2013. This finding is supported by analysis of data from 218 accommodation projects: of the 5,229 clients they accommodated last night, 77% had a local connection, and only 1 in 5 (20%) had no local connection.

²⁸ Analysis of data from 218 accommodation projects, supporting a total of 5,229 homeless people.

People with a history of serious offences are often also excluded from accommodation projects. A quarter (298, 23%) of the 1,271 accommodation projects in England reported refusing access to people who had been convicted of sex offences, and 2 in 5 (490, 39%) reported refusing those with convictions for arson. Other reasons given include not fulfilling the age criteria, having a history of other serious offences, and if clients' needs are too high or they are seen to be too vulnerable.

Overall, while there has only been a modest reduction in the bed-spaces available, the data suggests that where accommodation is available, criteria for accessing this is becoming tighter. This is likely to mean that those with the highest needs and those from outside the local area have more limited access to support.

2.4 HOW PROVISION IS RESOURCED

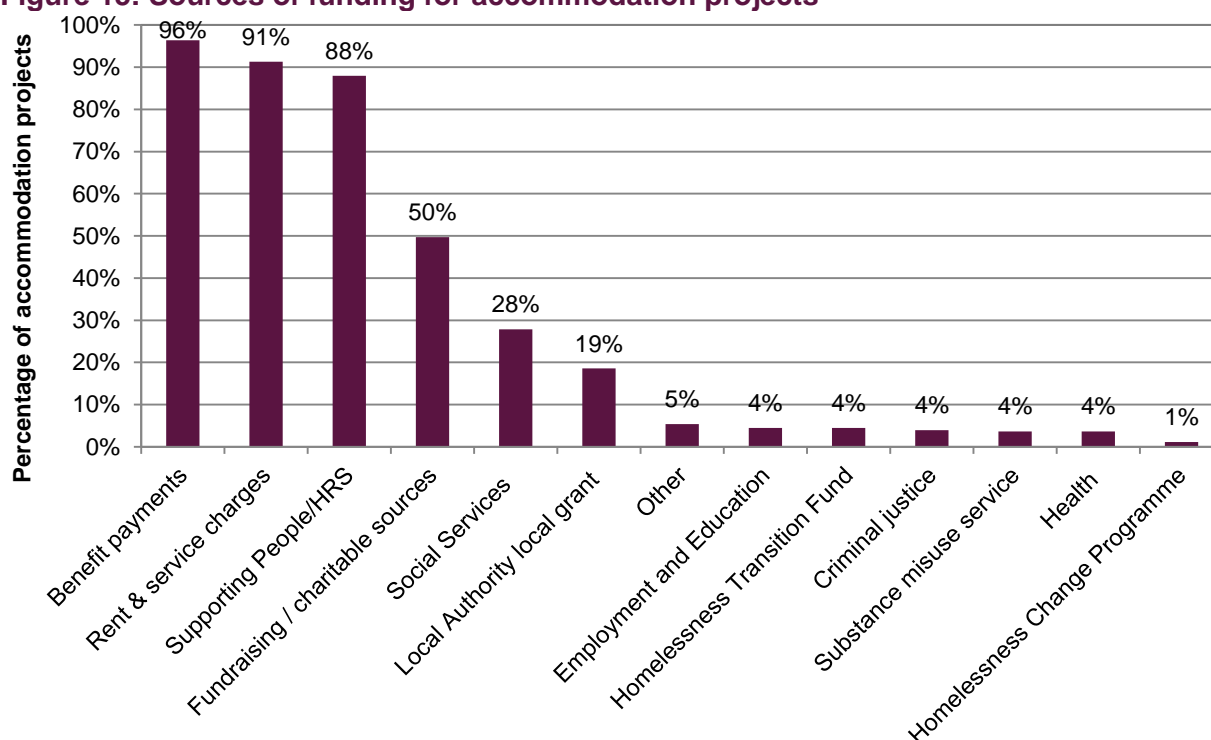
This section of the report describes the sector's funding sources. As in previous years, projects continue to receive some funding from a wide range of sources. However, as detailed below, there is change in the primary source of funding for accommodation services.

Funding

Accommodation provision for homeless people tends to be funded from a range of statutory and voluntary sources, with funding depending on local needs, commitment from statutory services, fundraising opportunities such as through faith groups, and historical sources of funding.

Almost all accommodation projects (96%) receive funding from benefit payments, as Housing Benefit claimed by residents pays for their rent (Figure 15). 9 in 10 projects (91%) receive funding from rents and service charges which pay for the housing management costs that Housing Benefit does not cover. Most accommodation projects receive some funding from housing-related support (88%, previously Supporting People). There has been little change in the range funding sources from previous years.

Figure 15: Sources of funding for accommodation projects



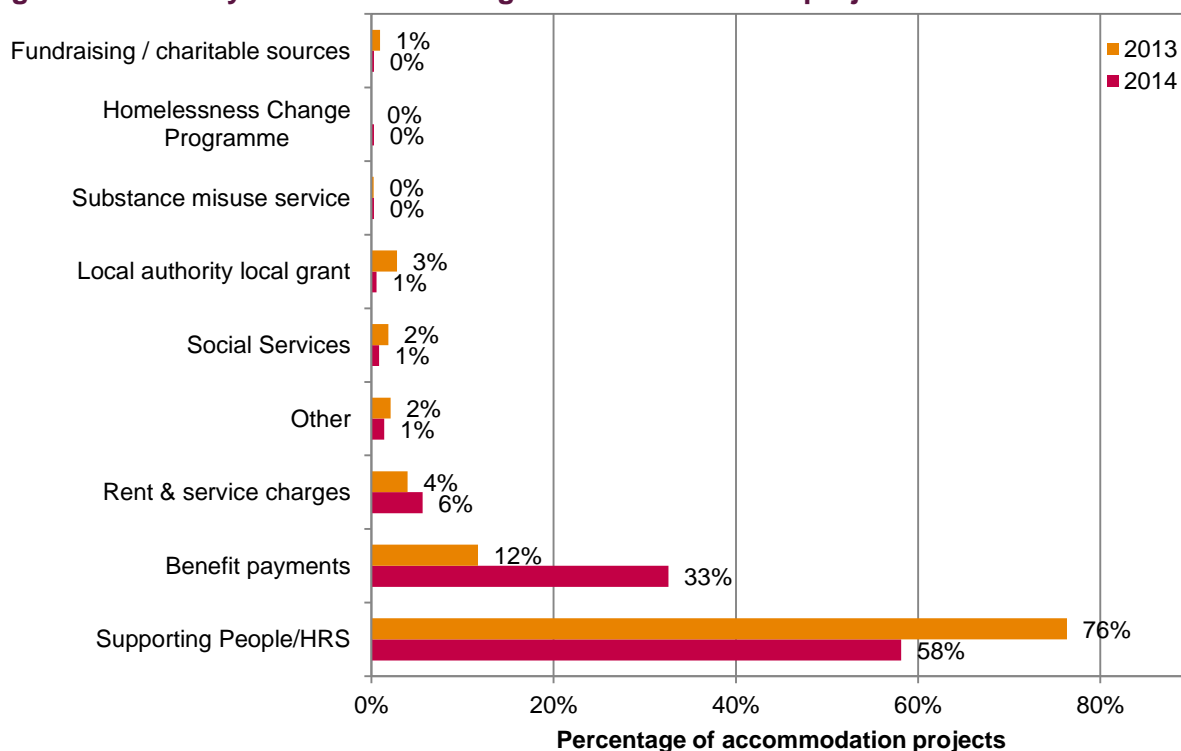
Source: Accommodation provider survey, N = 356

Only half of accommodation projects (50%) fundraise. Social services and local authority grants are also significant funding streams, providing some funding to 28% and 19% of accommodation projects respectively. As in previous years, the funding contribution from other statutory services such as criminal justice, health and substance misuse is very low, with each providing funding for only around 4% of accommodation projects. A few accommodation projects had funding from other specific sources including the Big Lottery Fund, philanthropic trusts and foundations, and social enterprises.

Primary Funding Source

There is continued reliance by accommodation based services on a small number of funding sources. For accommodation projects, the main primary funding source remains housing-related support (or Supporting People as previously known) (Figure 16). There has, however, been a substantial reduction in the proportion of projects for which this is the main source of funding, falling from three-quarters last year (76%) to just over half this year (58%). This reduction is likely to reflect the significant funding cuts that many local authorities have made to housing-related support over the past year, including re-commissioning services. At the same time, Housing Benefit payments are now the main funding source for a third (33%) of accommodation projects, compared to 12% last year, reflecting the increasing relative importance of this source for projects with reducing funding from elsewhere.

Figure 16: Primary sources of funding for accommodation projects



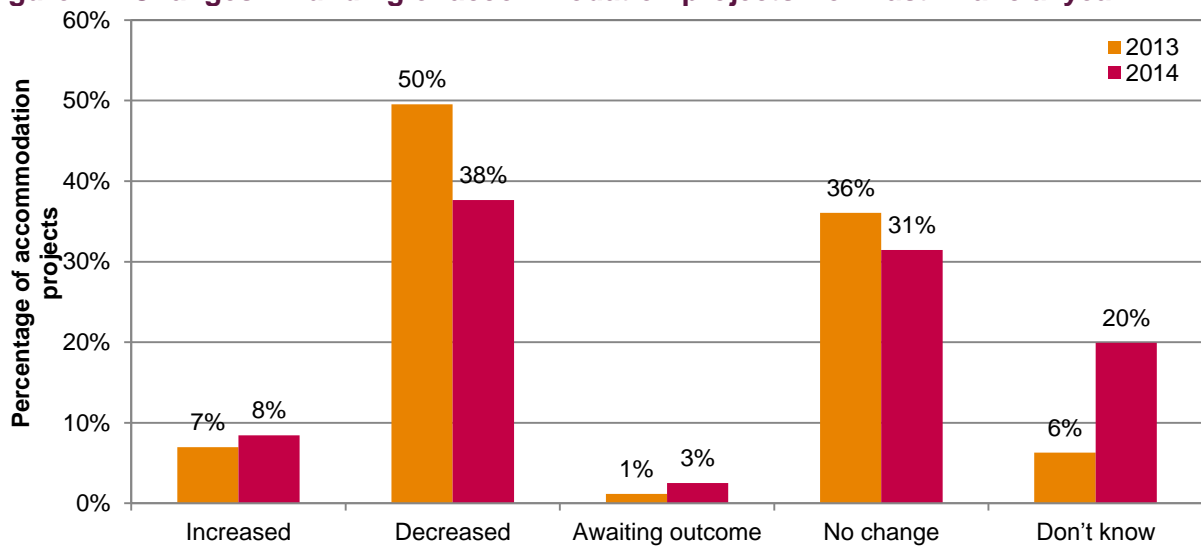
Source: 2014: Accommodation provider survey, N = 356
2013: SNAP 2013, accommodation projects only, N = 427

Changes in funding from 2013

In terms of overall funding, more than a third of accommodation projects (38%) have experienced a decrease in their funding since last financial year, down from a half (50%) in 2013 (Figure 17). 31% reported no change, and 8% (30 services) had an increase in funding this year, compared to 9% last year. 1 in 5 respondents did not know if there had been a change. Of those projects that saw a

decrease this year, their funding has reduced on average by 20%. For those projects that had reported a rise in funding, the average increase was 10%.

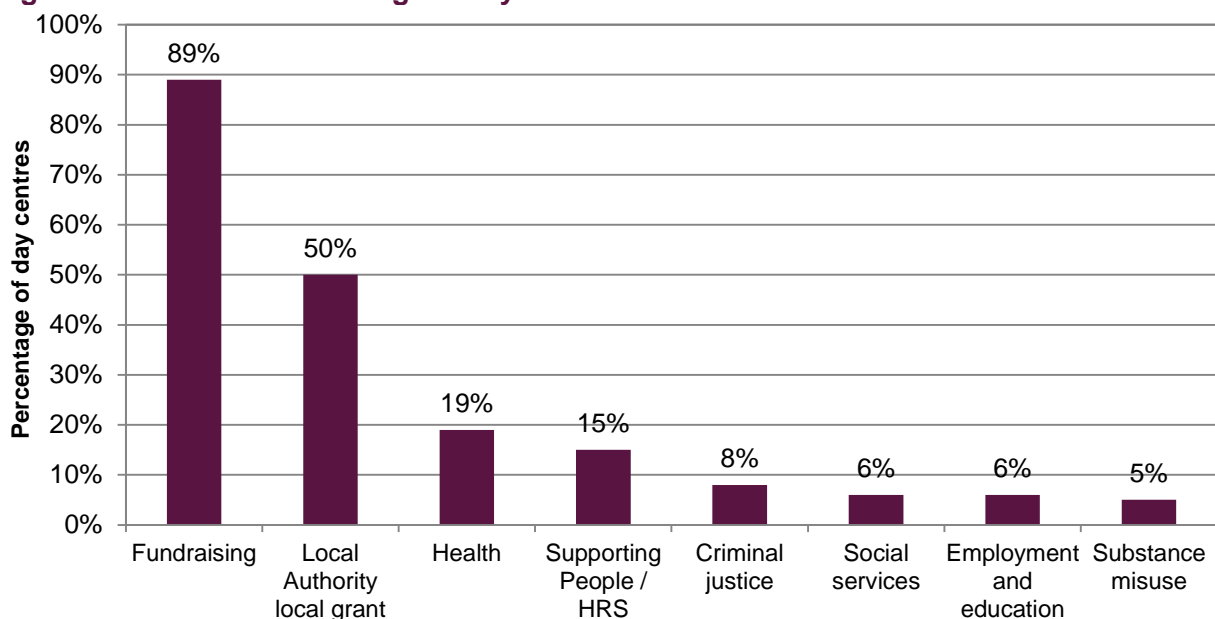
Figure 17: Changes in funding of accommodation projects from last financial year



Source: 2014: Accommodation provider survey, N = 356
 2013: SNAP 2013, accommodation projects only, N = 430

Funding for day centres differs considerably from accommodation projects, reflecting their historical basis as voluntary organisations and the role of faith-based organisations in running them (Figure 18). Nine out of 10 day centres are involved in fundraising (89%), with half (50%) receiving funding from the local authority local grant. Compared with accommodation projects, more day centres receive funding from a wider range of sources, with health (19%) and housing-related support (15%) representing other significant sources. Some also receive funding from the Big Lottery Fund and from trusts and foundations.

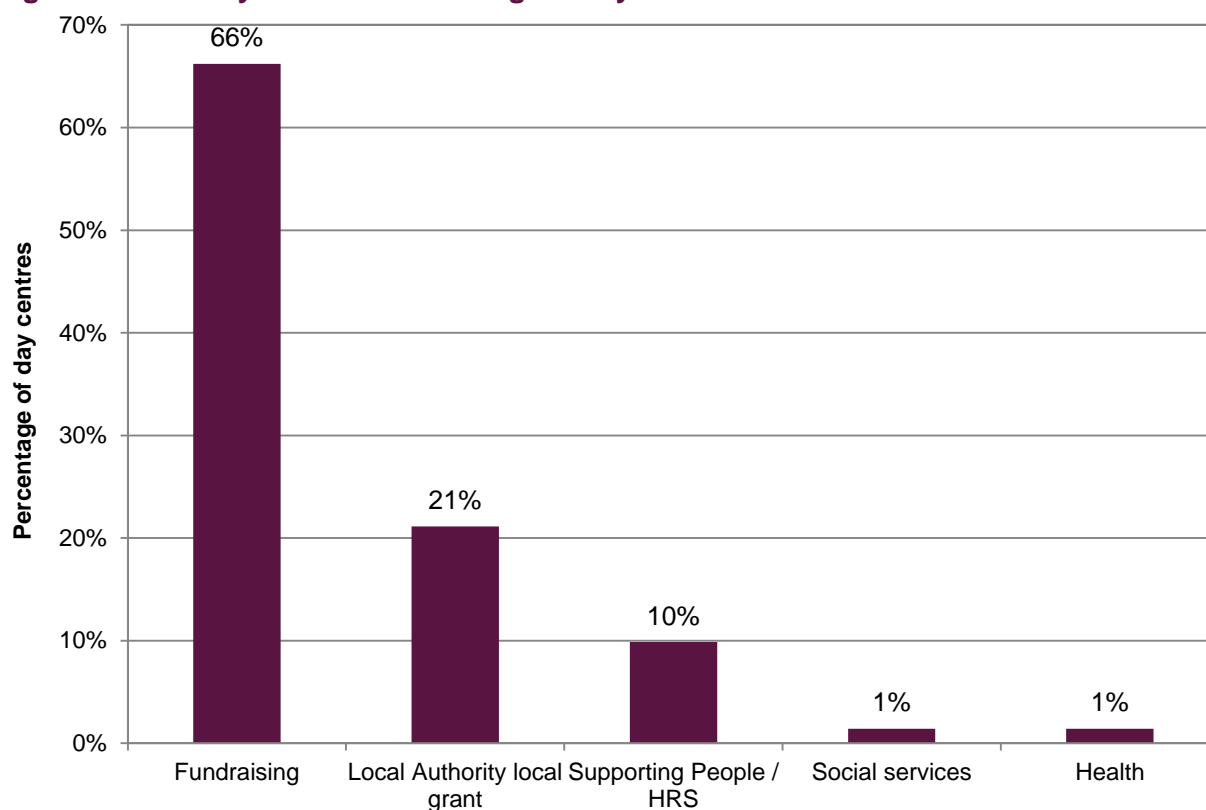
Figure 18: Sources of funding for day centres



Source: Day centres survey, N = 103

Fundraising is the primary funding source for two-thirds (66%) of day centres, followed by local authority local grant (21%) and housing-related support (10%, Figure 19).

Figure 19: Primary sources of funding for day centres



Source: Day centres survey, N = 71

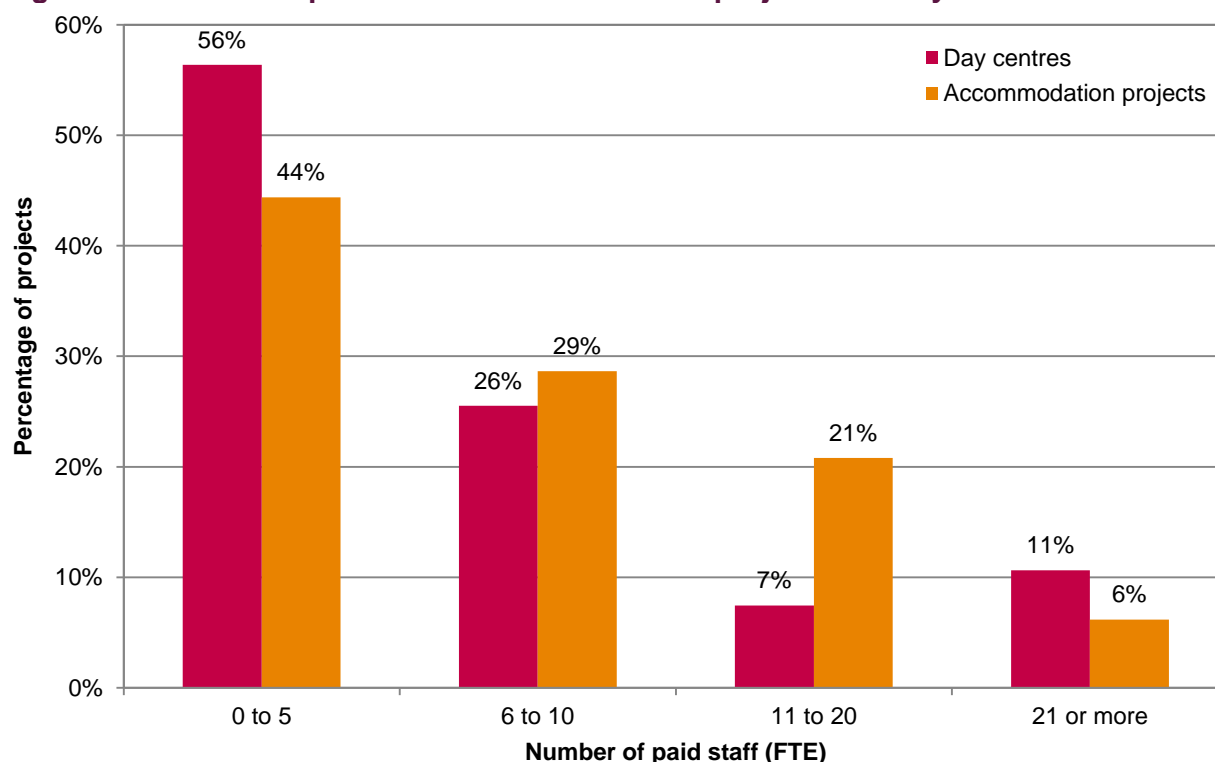
Changes in funding from 2013

Compared to the previous year, Day centres reported a more mixed picture of funding changes. Nearly a third of day centres (31%) had an increase in their funding this year, by an average of 16%. A quarter (26%) had a decrease in funding, by an average of 31%. Generally, an increase in funding has led to a positive change in services, with most day centres that experienced an increase in funding reporting a positive impact (85%, N = 26). A decrease in funding has tended to lead to negative changes on services, with half of day centres with a decrease reporting a negative impact (48%, N = 23). However, a third of day centres with a decrease in their funding reported no change in their services (30%, N = 23).

Staffing

Homelessness services tend to be staffed by a combination of paid staff, both part- and full-time, and volunteers, with each taking different roles. Paid staff often have particular specialisms, such as training, keyworking, employment support, or providing technical advice on issues such as welfare benefits.

Nearly half of accommodation projects (44%) have up to 5 full time equivalent staff (FTE), with around one in four (27%) having 11 staff or more (Figure 20). The average number of staff reported in 179 accommodation projects was 8.7 FTE staff, with nearly three-quarters being full-time staff. This is down from 10.4 FTE staff reported by accommodation projects last year. 55% of day centres have between 1 and 5 paid FTE staff, and a further 26% have between 6 and 10 staff. These shares are broadly similar to last year.

Figure 20: Number of paid staff at accommodation projects and day centres

Source: Accommodation provider data return, N = 178
Day centres survey, N = 94

Accommodation projects reported receiving 11.6 volunteer hours a week on average.²⁹ Day centres received an average of 265 volunteer hours in a month³⁰ (around 66 hours a week), reflecting the greater reliance of day centres on volunteers, such as with preparing and serving food, mentoring and befriending and assisting with advice.

2.5 THE SUPPORT SERVICES OFFERED TO SINGLE HOMELESS PEOPLE

Homelessness services – both accommodation based and day centres - also provide support to people who are homeless to help them develop new skills, manage their health or positively address other issues. Much of the support is often delivered through one-to-one keyworking sessions, and supplemented by group sessions, training, work experience, counselling, arts and sports therapy, or other meaningful activities. Some services are delivered in-house whereas others, such as some statutory services, are by external referral only.

The Youth Hub in Birmingham is one example of a wide-ranging advice and support service that is jointly commissioned (see Case Study 3).

²⁹ N = 170 accommodation projects

³⁰ N = 92 day centres, month of September 2013

Case Study 3: Youth Hub, Birmingham

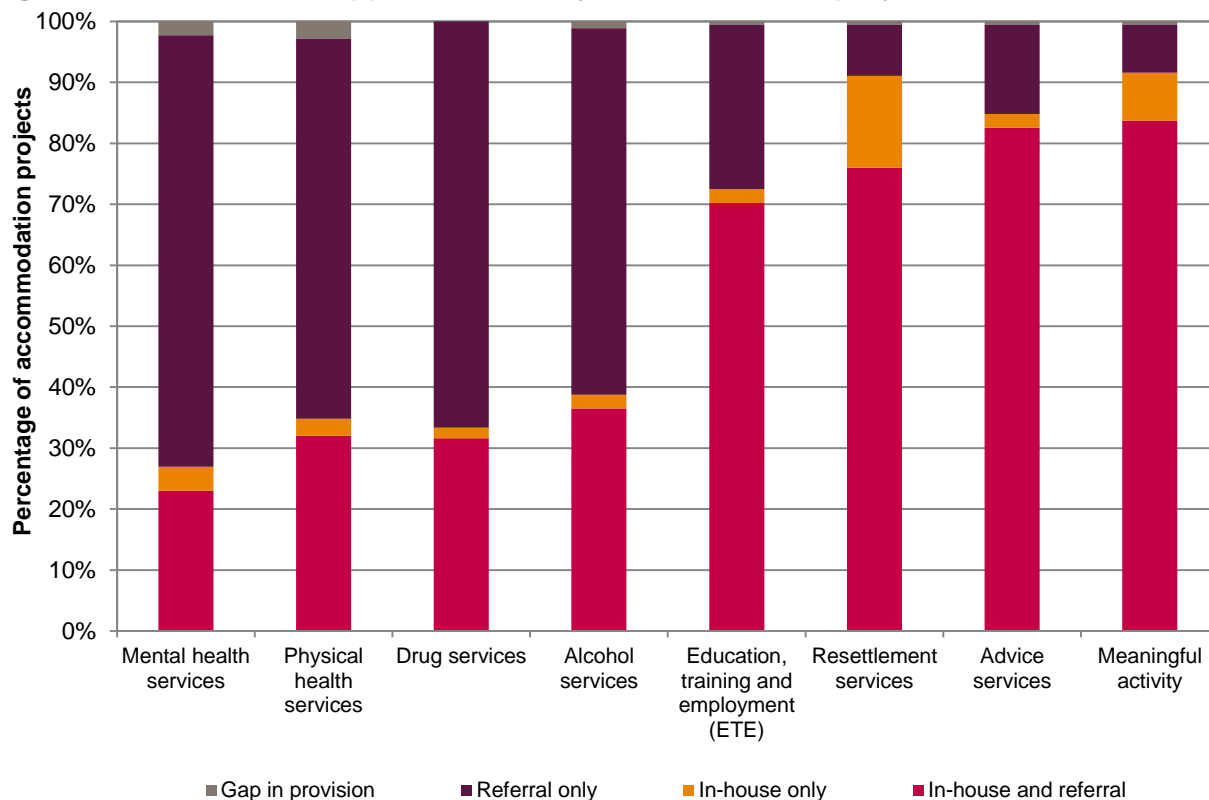
As the largest local authority in England, Birmingham has the highest number of statutorily homeless people, and also a large young homeless population.

In November 2010, it set up a pilot Youth Hub which provided a centre of excellence for advice and support for young people, separate from the mainstream housing advice centres. The Hub is delivered by St Basil's and was re-commissioned in 2013. It is a multi-agency service and offers a range of support including: family or landlord mediation; statutory homelessness support and access to temporary accommodation; advice on benefits, health, education and employment; and specialist drug and alcohol and mental health services. Alongside the Hub, St Basil's delivers YouthLine, which is the first point of call for young people to access other housing-related support services.

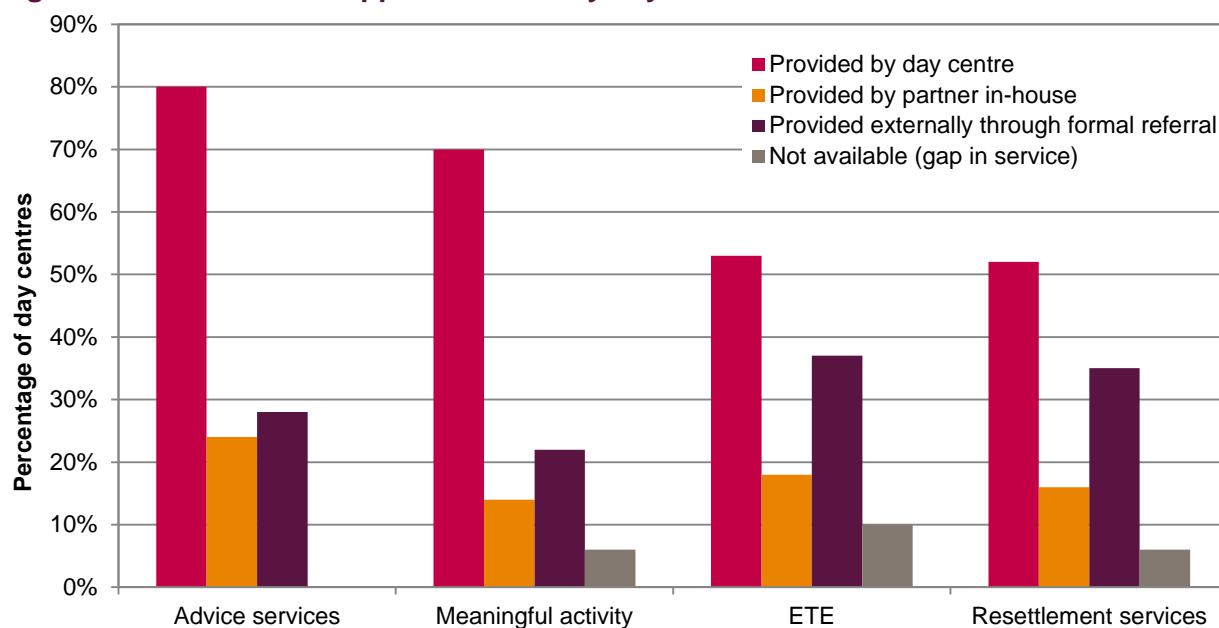
The Youth Hub is jointly funded by Housing Policy and Commissioning, Housing Related Support (formerly Supporting People programme) and Children's Services. The pilot phase demonstrated the benefits of working more closely together and commissioning services in partnership. In particular, it is now much clearer for young people how to access support at times of crisis. For the commissioners, there is now one set of outcomes to manage, and a single relationship between the local authority and service users.

Across both accommodation projects and day centres, some services tend to be provided in-house and other types are available through referral. In accommodation projects, the four most common services provided in-house are meaningful activities (by 92% of projects, which includes activities such as art, sport, gardening, and informal learning), resettlement services (91%), advice services (85%, Figure 21) and Education, Training and Employment (ETE, 72%). 80% of day centres provide advice services in-house and 70% provide meaningful activity in-house (Figure 22).

Figure 21: Provision of support services by accommodation projects

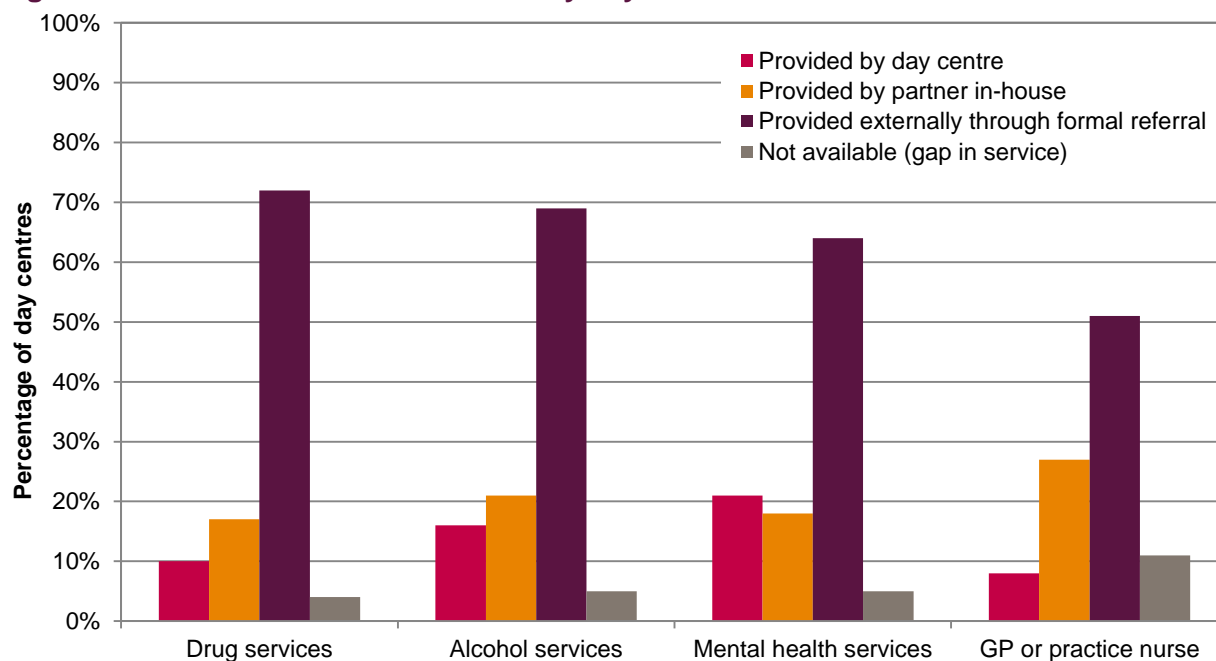


Source: Accommodation provider data return, N = 177 to 179

Figure 22: Provision of support services by day centres

Source: Day centres survey, N = 103

Where services are not available or not appropriate to deliver in-house, most accommodation projects and day centres have referral routes to external organisations. Most projects provide access to health services by referral only: nearly three-quarters (71%) of accommodation projects provide access to mental health by referral only, and two-thirds (67%) provide drug services by referral (Figure 21). Similarly, most day centres provide health services by referral only (Figure 23). The most common health service for day centres to provide in-house via a partner is a GP or practice nurse, reflecting the important role that day centres play in helping homeless people access primary health care.

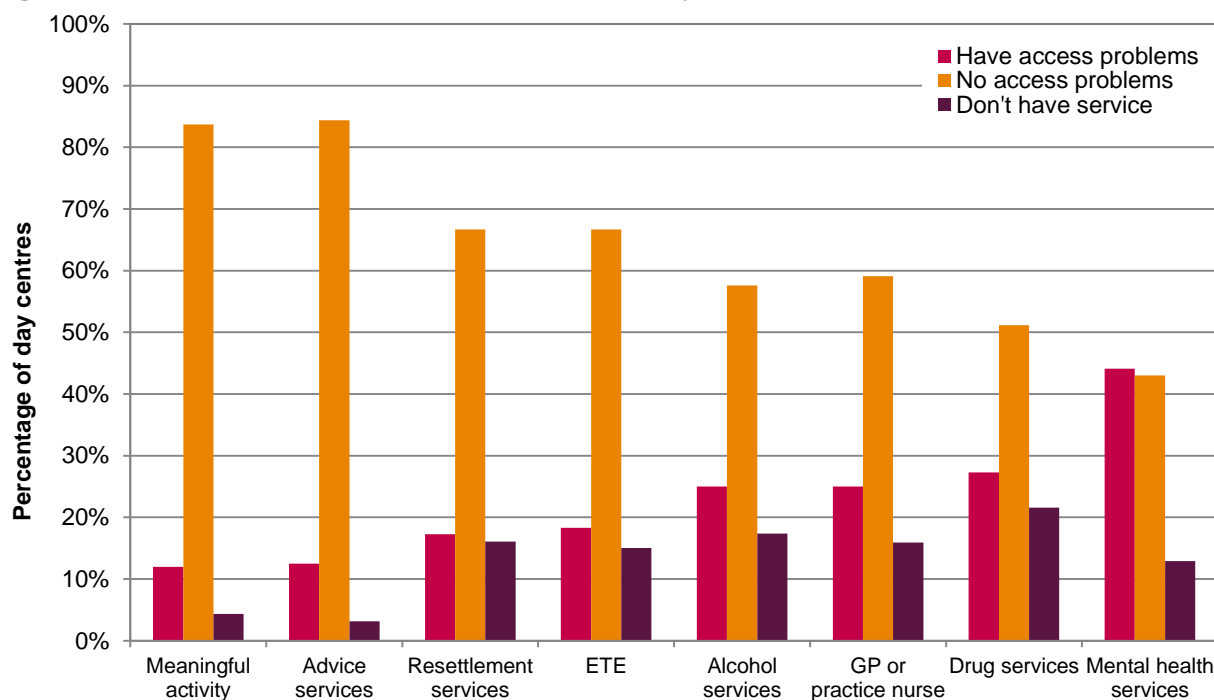
Figure 23: Provision of health services by day centres

Source: Day centres survey, N = 103

Only a small proportion of accommodation services reported gaps in services, which were mostly in physical (3%) and mental health (2%) services (Figure 21). Day centres, however, reported more substantial gaps in services, particularly in access to a GP or practice nurse (11%), employment, training and education services (10%) and resettlement services (6%, Figure 22 and Figure 23).

Projects described some problems with accessing external services. Most day centres experienced no problems with accessing meaningful activity and advice services – which are mostly delivered in-house (Figure 24). The greatest difficulties with access were to mental health services, with 44% of day centres experiencing problems, and a range of health support: drug services (27%), GP or practice nurse (25%) and alcohol services (25%).

There were difficulties for people at day centres who have no recourse to public funds accessing health and drug treatment services, and for people with no fixed abode or who displayed disruptive behaviour accessing a GP. Other day centres described long waiting lists to get service users access to statutory provision, as well as high access thresholds restricting the support available to people with lower levels of health need. Several day centres noted difficulties for people with complex needs or chaotic behaviour in attending appointments. Case Study 4 describes how day centres in Brighton are working together to provide better support to people with complex needs.

Figure 24: Service users' access to services at day centres

Source: Day centres survey, N = 103

Case Study 4: Working with rough sleepers in Brighton

Brighton and Hove has historically had a large number of people who sleep rough. In 2013, a group of services that work in partnership with Brighton and Hove City Council as part of the Day and Street Services Working Group (DSSWG) came together to try to understand why the number remained high despite sustained efforts to find accommodation for people sleeping rough.

The organisations found that people sleeping rough were using a range of services throughout the city, often being offered different solutions from each service. There was also a strong seasonal dimension to rough sleeping, with substantial numbers of people new to the city coming during the summer months.

As a result, in May 2013 the DSSWG set up a coordinated way of working for the outreach team, CRI Rough Sleepers Street Services Relocation Team (RSSRT), BHT First Base Day Centre and Project Anti-Freeze – the Coordinated Agency Interventions to End Rough Sleeping (CAIERS) – to share resources, knowledge and expertise. They combined their information and identified the 110 people sleeping rough. Each of the named 110 rough sleepers was allocated to a category to indicate their experience of sleeping rough, recognising their different needs– from category 1 for those spending their first night out, to category 8 for those who had disengaged from services and had spent a significant time rough sleeping. Each category also provided a target timescale to works towards a positive accommodation outcome based on those needs.

Each week, the organisations combine their information, and update on progress and issues with individuals via a simple database. Each person sleeping rough who is new to the list is allocated a single key contact - whilst clients can work with any agency they choose, the assigned worker is kept informed of work that other organisations are doing with them. The approach has helped the organisations keep better track of each person and makes it easier to follow up on agreed interventions.

Having segmented the rough sleeping population into groups, the three organisations developed different approaches to address accommodation issues. People in the first category were supported through No Second Night Out (NSNO), managed by CRI. CRI's assertive outreach team worked particularly with people in the highest two categories, who needed more intensive support to their period of rough sleeping and obtain appropriate accommodation. Under the CAIERS scheme the day centres can now use CRI's reconnection budget to help return home the high numbers of people who are sleeping rough for short periods who come to

Brighton and Hove from outside the area.

CAIERS identified a group of around 30 people who had extensive periods of sleeping rough, some of whom would not engage with the outreach team or attend any sessions at the day centres. They had previously had very limited success in helping these individuals move off the street and into accommodation. CRI is now piloting a personalised approach with 8-9 people with complex needs to move them into housing using a Housing First model.

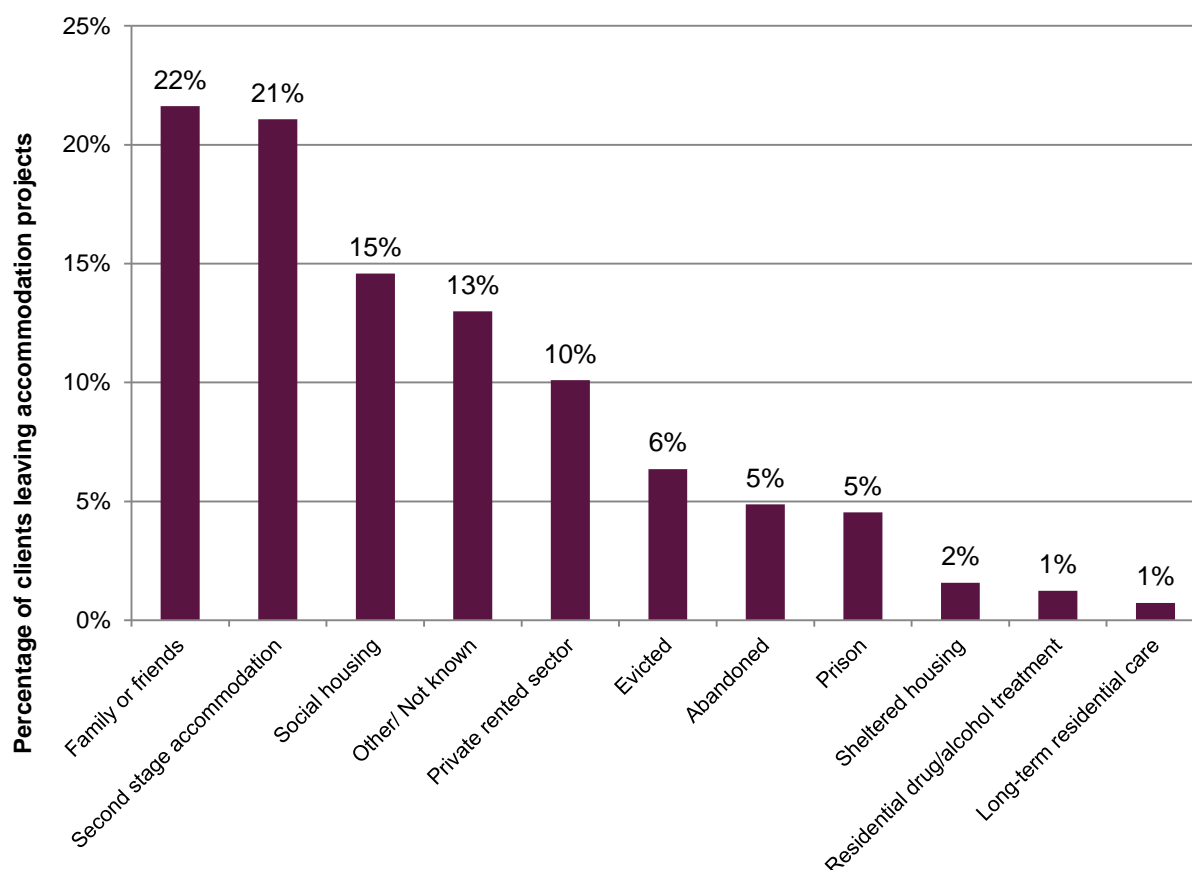
For other people who persistently sleep rough, BHT, CRI and Sussex Police are piloting an Emergency Assessment Centre (EAC). The Centre aims to find accommodation solutions for those who have previously not engaged with existing services. It runs on designated nights at BHT's First Base, with the police bringing people to the EAC who are sleeping rough and known to be disengaged or not known to services. The EAC offers a range of services in one place including mental health assessments, an alcohol nurse, a GP, and a homeless person's officer from the local authority.

In the first six months, CAIERS worked with 688 people who had slept rough, of which half are known to have a positive accommodation outcome. Of those, nearly a quarter had been relocated or returned home. Because of the detailed combined information, the approach to tackling rough sleeping in Brighton and Hove has become more evidence-based and more open to innovation.

2.6 OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY HOMELESS SERVICES AND THEIR SERVICE USERS

Both accommodation projects and day centres support people who are homeless to help them address issues they are facing and move on with their lives. Although achieving independent accommodation is often a major aim for many homeless people, better management of health, reducing offending, engaging with education, skills development and work, as well as building confidence through joining in group activities, are all important outcomes.

For those who leave accommodation projects, the most common move-on outcomes are either a return to friends or family (22% of leavers) or a move into second-stage accommodation (21%) for those who need longer-term support (Figure 25). Some have less positive outcomes, such as eviction (6%), abandonment (5%) or entering prison (5%). A small number of homeless people enter residential treatment or residential care on leaving services.

Figure 25: Destination of individuals leaving accommodation projects

Source: Accommodation provider data return, N = 218 projects (9,686 clients)

As we have noted in previous annual reports, there are often substantial difficulties for homeless people who are ready to move on from supported housing into independent accommodation. Local pressures on the housing market and the paucity of suitable accommodation can make this transition slow and challenging; in some cases people are staying in supported housing for longer than they need.

On average, accommodation projects reported that nearly a third (32%) of people currently staying in their services were ready to move on but had not yet moved. Of those that were waiting to move, half (52%) had been waiting for up to three months, a quarter (27%) for between 3 and 6 months, and one in five (21%) had been waiting for more than six months.³¹

The main barrier to moving on by far is the lack of suitable accommodation locally, affecting two-thirds (66%) of accommodation projects. Other barriers included lack of affordable accommodation (8%) and clients having existing rent arrears (5%).³² Some projects described local reasons including needing to prove local connection, landlords not accepting young people without a guarantor, the impact of the bedroom tax,³³ and having exclusions from local accommodation due to previous behaviour issues.

Case Study 5 describes how one area is responding to these challenges to help people move on into suitable accommodation.

³¹ Accommodation provider survey, N = 319

³² Accommodation provider survey, N = 356

³³ That is, a reliance on a limited supply of one-bedroom accommodation, or need to find suitable sharers for a 2+-bedroom property.

Case Study 5: Individual support fund for homeless people in Nottingham

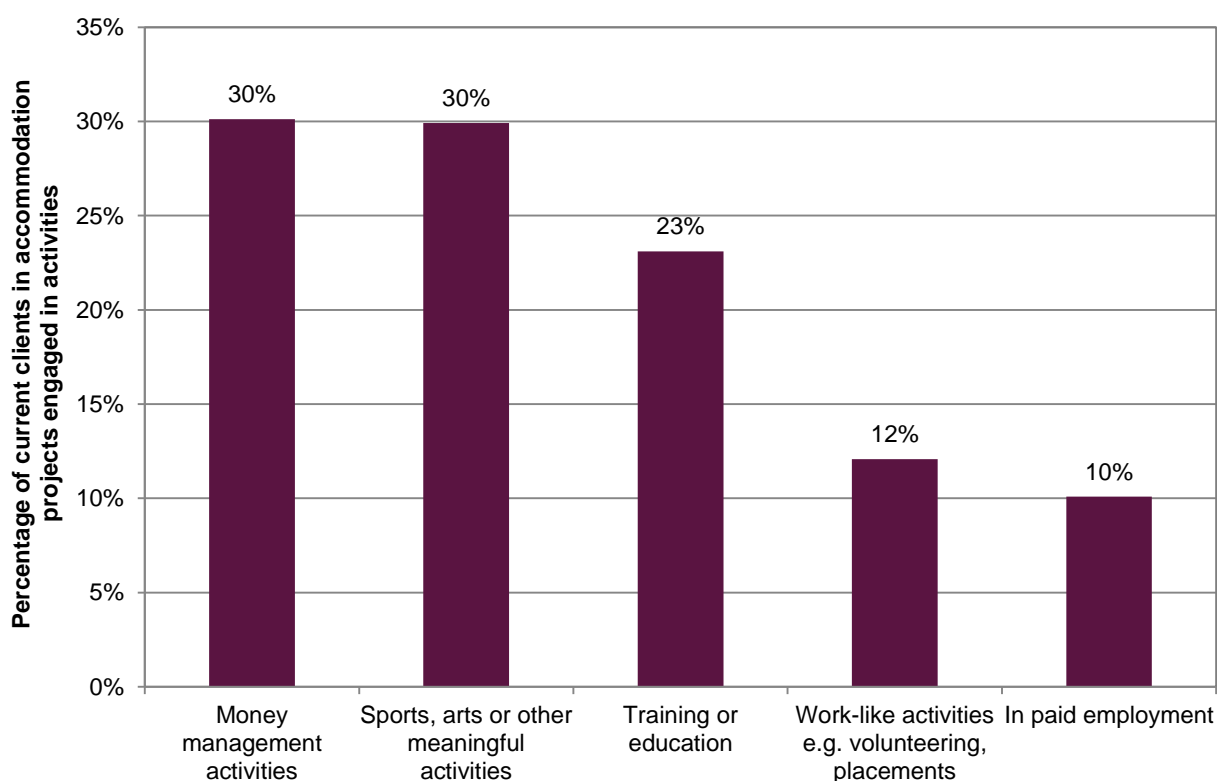
Following a 50% capacity reduction in housing-related support in 2011-12, Nottingham City Council carried out in 2012 a strategic review of support to people at risk of social exclusion. The review found that the current model of temporary supported housing for homeless people was not delivering consistently positive outcomes with, for example, few of those leaving supported housing moving on to independent living; repeat use of supported housing; and, in some cases, supported housing exacerbating people's existing support needs.

Building on the findings of the review, the city council redesigned its model of temporary supported housing. It will now provide intensive support for people with high levels of need, such as chronic alcohol use, those with complex needs, and people with other substantial vulnerabilities such as mental health. For people with low or no support needs, who are not owed a statutory homelessness duty, the council has set up a £70,000 fund which aims to provide immediate short-term accommodation whilst more sustainable accommodation is found for them.

This individual support fund will be used to facilitate access to emergency accommodation within a day of request and will last for up to a month, whilst the council works to find alternative housing. It can be used flexibly, such as by accessing very short-term private lets, facilitating B&B accommodation, a place in a shared house or in a non-supported hostel. The council intends that this flexible, rapid response will divert those homeless people with very low or no support needs from having to access supported housing options.

People supported by homelessness services also achieved other positive outcomes, through engagement in wider activities. Around a third of people using accommodation projects (30%) were engaged in money management skills development, and in sports, arts or other meaningful activities (Figure 26).

Figure 26: Activities of people using accommodation projects

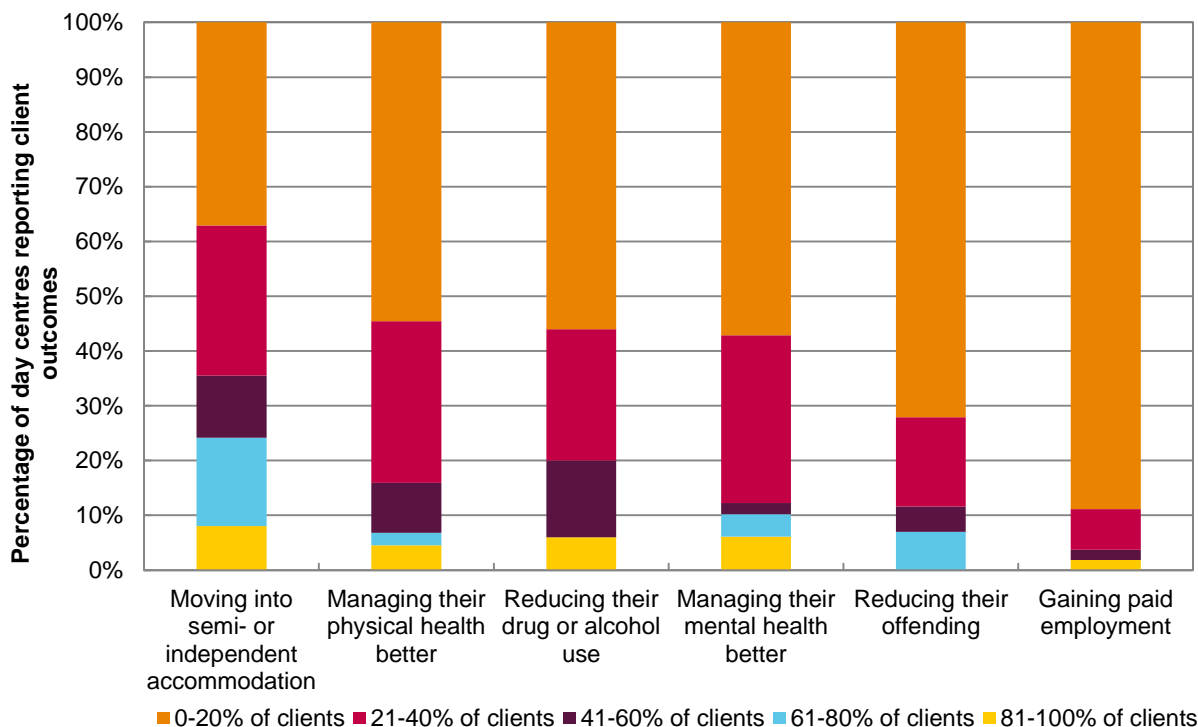


Source: Accommodation provider data return, N = 218 projects (5,229 clients)

Gaining paid employment was the least common outcome for homeless people using services (Figure 27). This is likely to be because many homeless people have limited skills, due to disrupted education and training, and may be far from being work-ready, such that improved literacy and numeracy, and work experience, are more common outcomes than achieving paid work. This support is vital in encouraging and helping homeless people progress in their journey to employment.

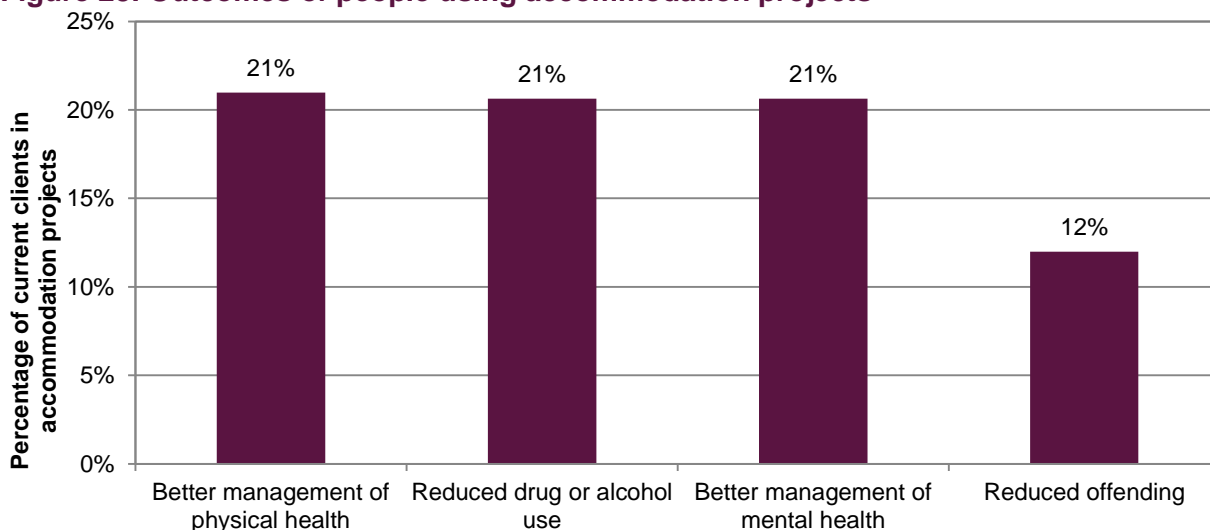
However, one in five people using accommodation projects (21%) were managing their health better, including reducing substance use (Figure 28), which was about the same in day centres.

Figure 27: Percentage of day centre clients achieving outcomes



Source: Day centres survey, N = 44 to 62

Figure 28: Outcomes of people using accommodation projects



Source: Accommodation provider data return, N = 218 projects (5,229 clients)

There are, however, some challenges with measuring outcomes that service users achieve. While many agencies do collect data about the clients they work with, one in eight day centres (12%) do not record client outcomes³⁴ and half of accommodation providers (48%) do not record longer-term outcomes for those who have moved into independent or semi-independent accommodation.³⁵ This can make it difficult to measure the relative effectiveness of different types of support for homeless people. Improving data collection needs to be a continued priority for agencies to demonstrate outcomes in the future.³⁶

Case study 6 shows how one service works toward helping long term rough sleepers achieve positive outcomes.

Case Study 6: Intensive support for long-term rough sleepers

Lancaster and District Homeless Action Service (LDHAS) provide day services to rough sleepers and vulnerably housed people in Lancaster. Over the past few years, it has evolved its working practices to focus more on people's medium- and long-term goals, rather than just meeting their immediate needs, although the service does still offer support with food, showers and clothing. Service users are encouraged to take part in a variety of regular activities. LDHAS also offers a range of volunteer opportunities ranging from helping out in the kitchen to fundraising in the community.

Some people using the day centre were identified as having particularly complex needs, cycling between sleeping rough, moving into accommodation with floating support, and then losing their tenancies. To support these service users, LDHAS successfully applied to the Big Lottery Fund in April 2013 for a five-year project, Homeless to Home (H2H).

H2H provides intensive support to those people with the highest levels of needs. There are two part-time intensive support workers who assist people to attend appointments and engage with statutory services; help them find appropriate housing; and keep supporting them once housed until they are ready to receive floating support. They act as advocates for service users, who give the support workers permission to speak to services on their behalf. Each intensive support worker has only a few people on their caseload, allowing them more time and flexibility to support service users in the way that they need. So far, four of the five service users at H2H have moved into accommodation, of which two have been allocated council housing. H2H also part funds two part-time case workers who support service users with a lower level of needs, as well as providing advice and guidance.

³⁴ Day centres survey, N = 86

³⁵ Accommodation provider survey, N = 356

³⁶ Systems such as Inform and the Outcomes Star help enables agencies record client outcomes. Homeless Link has a continued programme of work around data collection, see www.homeless.org.uk/picture-the-change

CHAPTER 3: CHANGES IN SUPPORT FOR SINGLE HOMELESS PEOPLE

Key Headlines

- The impact of funding changes on service delivery is complex: most accommodation projects working with the same number of people, but many of the services experiencing funding cuts are reducing the number of staff they employ and some are reducing the support offered (for example provision of meaningful activities and keyworking) .
- Many services are using various new approaches to deliver support to homeless people:
 - 80% of projects are offering personalised support in some form
 - 23% of accommodation projects are providing a Housing First approach
 - 26% of projects are providing private sector leasing schemes
 - 10% are providing peer landlord schemes.
- Only 6% of accommodation projects are currently commissioned on a payment by results basis and there are varied views about how this approach can lead to better outcomes for homeless people.
- Welfare reform is having a substantial impact on homeless people and on services.
- There continue to be a number of gaps in services that will impact on future provision. For accommodation projects the biggest gap is in the availability of affordable or suitable move-on accommodation. For day centres lack of access to crisis or emergency accommodation is the biggest gap they face.

This chapter examines:

- Changes in resourcing services that support homeless people
- New models of provision
- The impact of welfare changes on homeless people
- Future developments in homelessness support

Over the past few years, there have been changes to the way support for homeless people is commissioned and the funding that is available for these services in many areas.³⁷ While there has been investment in some forms of support for homeless people at a national level – with for example the Government investment of £470 million over the current spending review period to help local authorities and voluntary sector partners prevent and tackle homelessness, rough sleeping and repossessions – the localisation of this funding with no ring fence has led to varied levels of money being committed at a local level. This has led to a reduction to local authority funding for housing related support in many areas, with some commissioners changing or reducing support services and others requiring the same level of provision for less money.³⁸ Homelessness services have needed to make efficiency savings as well as restructure services and even reduce the support given to homeless people.

There have also been developments in the ways in which services are delivered. Some new models of support are increasingly used, including personalised services, Housing First³⁹ and peer

³⁷ An overview of some of these changes can be found in 'Who is supporting people now? Experiences of local authority commissioning after *Supporting People*', Homeless Link, 2013, <http://homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/Who%20is%20supporting%20people%20now%20Report%20Jan13.pdf>

³⁸ 'Who is supporting people now? Experiences of local authority commissioning after *Supporting People*', Homeless Link, 2013, <http://homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/Who%20is%20supporting%20people%20now%20Report%20Jan13.pdf>

³⁹ The housing first model was developed in the United States and has demonstrated positive outcomes in both housing and supporting those who are chronically street homeless with multiple and complex needs. The model works on the principle of supporting people straight into accommodation without preconditions of addressing wider social care and support needs.

landlord schemes. Some commissioners are also starting to use payment by results as a funding model that focuses more on sustained outcomes.

In addition, fundamental changes to welfare provision are impacting on homeless people and the longer-term housing and support options available to them, including the Shared Accommodation Rate, benefit sanctions and the increasingly localised provision of welfare support.

3.1 CHANGES IN RESOURCING OF HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

As outlined in chapter two, around a third of accommodation projects reported a decrease in funding over the past 12 months. For day centres, nearly a third (31%) reported an increase in their funding this year, and a quarter (26%) reported a decrease in funding. This section explores the impact of these changes in more detail.

The Impact of funding changes

The impact of changes in funding on accommodation projects is complex. Most projects experienced no change in the numbers of service users that they were able to support, including those with complex needs (Table 4). However the findings highlight that reduced funding has had an impact on the level of support (meaningful activities and key working) that is being offered by many services, along with many services reducing the level of staffing. This is a concern as it may impact on services' capacity to support their clients to progress and move on into more independent accommodation. When considered alongside the significant increase in those projects saying they are unable to offer support to those with high and complex needs, there is an emerging trend towards more generic service provision, which will require further monitoring.

Levels of support

The main changes in provision of services due to funding changes are in keyworking and meaningful activity. For those accommodation projects which saw an increase in funding, a quarter increased the provision of keyworking and over a third (37%) increased meaningful activity.

Conversely where accommodation agencies experienced a decrease in funding, a fifth (19%) reduced the level of keyworking available, and a third (33%) reduced the provision of meaningful activities.

Staffing

The other substantial changes were in staffing. As might be expected, 40% of accommodation projects with an increase in funding grew their frontline staffing capacity, and 10% increased their back-office capacity.

Of those with a decrease in funding, nearly half reduced their frontline (48%) and back-office (41%) capacity. All projects, whatever their funding position, have increased their use of volunteers and partnership working over the past year.

There may be other factors affecting changes in accommodation projects' services. Over half of projects (56%), however, indicated that their funding was the only reason for the changes they had experienced. For the other 44% of projects, reasons affecting change included welfare changes (12%), commissioning or contract changes (11%), and internal organisational changes (9%).

Projects that experienced funding reductions have made various adaptations to manage their smaller budget. The two main changes were reducing the number of staff in the project (23%), and restructuring the project (23%).⁴⁰ Other responses include reducing other staff costs (11%), using more volunteers or junior staff (10%), making financial or organisational management changes (10%), and reducing the hours or support given to service users (8%).

⁴⁰ Accommodation provider survey, N = 134 (those with a decrease in funding)

Table 4: Impact of funding changes on accommodation projects that reported a change in funding

	Increase in funding (N=30)			Decrease in funding (N=134)		
	Increase	Decrease	No change	Increase	Decrease	No change
Total number of clients in the project	23%	3%	70%	10%	6%	80%
Number of complex needs clients the project supports	40%	0%	57%	34%	7%	51%
Provision of key working	23%	3%	67%	10%	19%	68%
Provision of meaningful activities	37%	3%	57%	11%	33%	54%
Frontline staffing capacity	40%	0%	57%	4%	48%	47%
Back office staffing capacity	10%	3%	80%	4%	41%	46%
Floating support capacity	13%	0%	47%	8%	16%	29%
Use of volunteers	30%	3%	53%	41%	3%	36%
Partnership working with other organisations	50%	0%	40%	42%	10%	43%

Source: Accommodation provider survey, N = 164

Case Study 7 shows how one service has changed its provision to deliver a more streamlined service for young people.

Case Study 7: Supporting young homeless people in Leicester

The Y in Leicester provides supported housing for young people as well as homeless services for the city. It helps young people make a positive transition to adulthood, particularly at points of high needs such as for young offenders or those leaving care. It runs a homeless drop-in centre, supported housing, education, a professional theatre, sports and children's work.

In 2009, The Y changed its processes for tackling housing management issues, replacing its previous 'warning' system with a much more positive approach to understanding the causes of tenancy problems, agreeing goals with each young person about their conduct or to meet their rent requirements. This has resulted in significant reduction in unplanned moves and abandonments.

In 2013, The Y re-designed its approach to referrals and access to its services. Previously, staff would interview referred young people to find out various sensitive and personal issues that might affect the decision to accommodate them. The interviews were seen by some as intrusive, and were usually followed by a decision-making process that could take up to two-weeks before the outcome was communicated.

Following feedback and the experiences of running its new Y-POD project, The Y changed its assessment process. Staff will now review existing paperwork before meeting with a young person, only holding an information-gathering interview when necessary. Instead, young people are invited to visit the accommodation service and meet staff, as well as have a more informal discussion about what The Y can offer them.

Like many local authorities, Leicester City Council is planning to reduce its spending on homelessness provision, by over £0.9m a year of its £6.6m annual budget. In May 2013, the council agreed proposals to reduce the number of voluntary sector hostel bed-spaces from 248 to 130, intending to focus its spending on homelessness prevention instead. The council will also run a Single Access and Referral Service to all homelessness provision in the city.

The Y has been reviewing how the council's changes will impact on its services. Its re-design of referrals and access will help it prepare for the introduction of the single point of access.

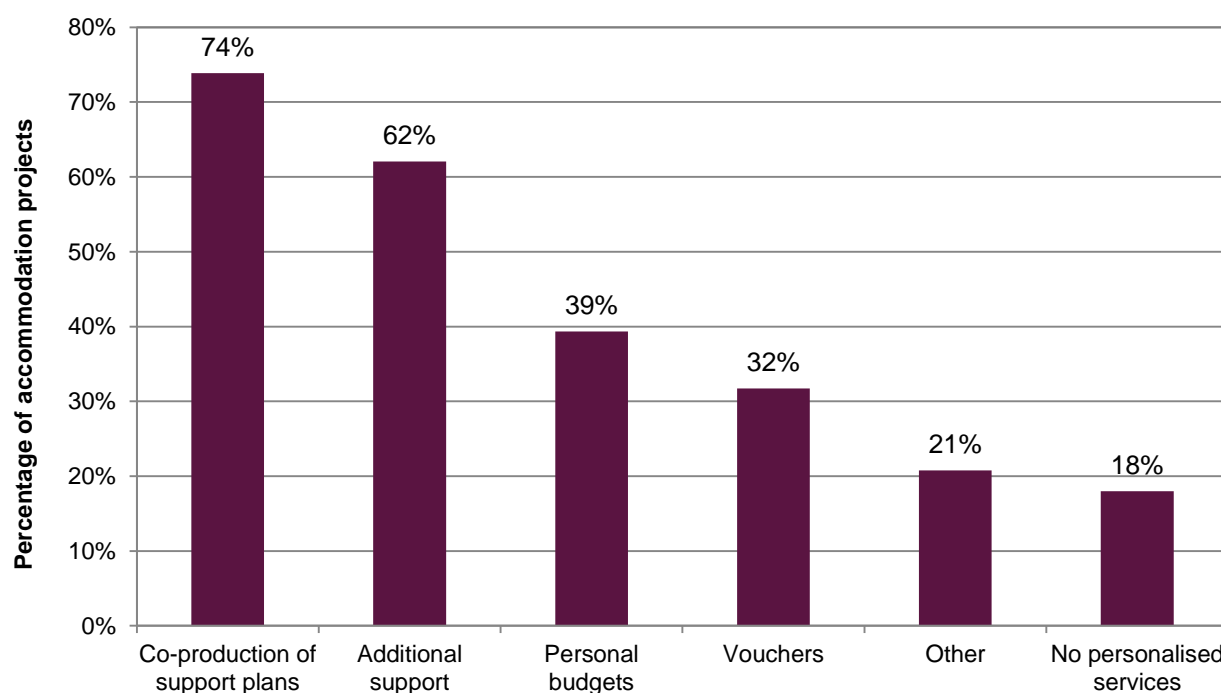
3.2 EMERGING MODELS OF HOMELESSNESS PROVISION

To improve the support they offer, homelessness services innovate and develop new types of provision. One approach is personalisation, in which support services have more flexibility to suit the needs of people using them, rather than offering a specific type of support.⁴¹ Personalised approaches have been used quite widely amongst services for a number of years, but they are implemented using a very wide range of definitions, ranging from low-level client involvement to more substantial client-led support.

Most services offer some degree of personalised support, with less than one in five (18%) offering none (Figure 29). The most common type of support was co-production of support plans, which three-quarters (74%) of accommodation projects provide, in which service users are directly involved in identifying their goals, and the support they want to meet these.

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of accommodation projects provided some flexibility for service users to receive additional personalised support. Personal budgets were provided by 39% of accommodation projects, and vouchers by 32%, although there is wide variation in the projects' practice in providing this financial flexibility – some, for example, will have allocated personal budgets for some or all services users, whereas others will have a small shared fund that can be allocated to specific items. It is important that any personal budgets are viewed alongside other aspects of delivering a personalised service.

Figure 29: Personalised services at accommodation projects



Source: Accommodation provider survey, N = 356

The most common commissioner of personalised services in accommodation projects was the local authority, in nearly a third (31%) of projects (Table 5). A quarter of projects (23%), however, indicated that the personalised service was not commissioned specifically, but was part of the project's practice, such as a usual process for engaging service users in co-producing their support

⁴¹ Personally Speaking: a review of personalised services for rough sleepers, Homeless Link, December 2013, http://homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/Personally%20speaking%20Dec%202013_0.pdf

plans. The variation in practice around personalisation suggests this is still emerging in many projects and merits further support and development in the future.

Table 5: Commissioners of personalised services in accommodation projects

	Frequency	Percentage
Local Authority	110	31%
Not commissioned (project practice)	81	23%
Don't have service	79	22%
Other	40	11%
More than one commissioner	20	6%
Charitable funding	18	5%
Social care	6	2%
Health	2	1%

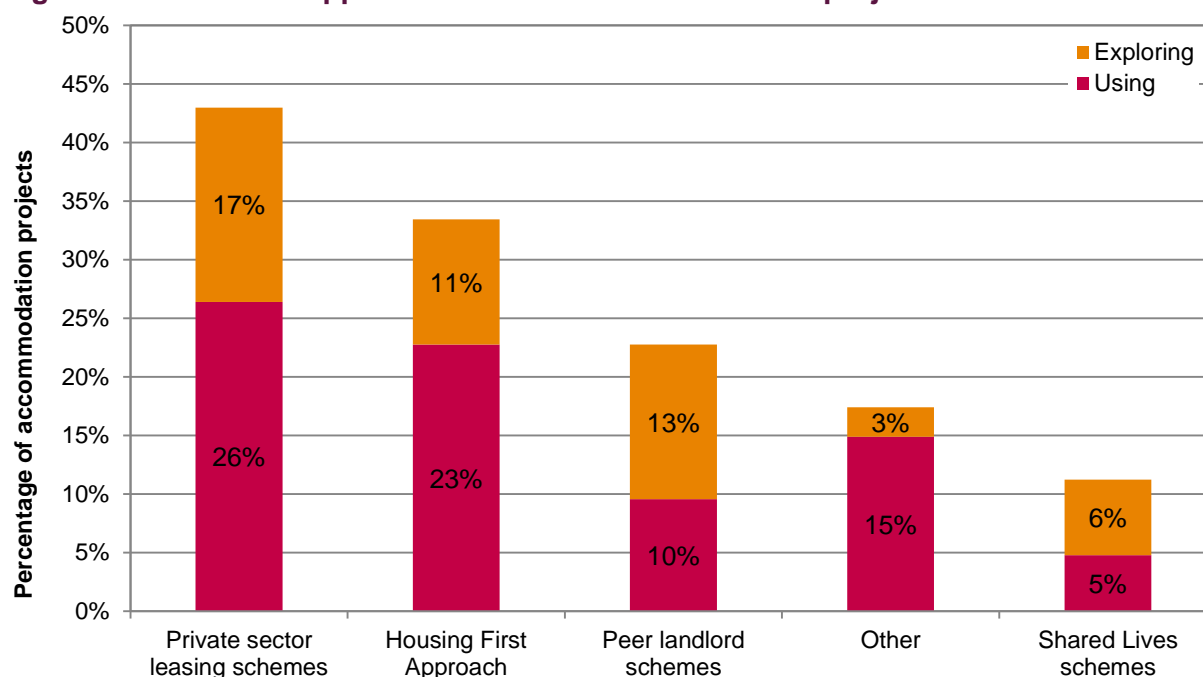
Source: Accommodation provider survey (N = 356)

Many other approaches are also being used across the homelessness sector to improve the accommodation and other longer term options available to homeless people (Figure 30). Private sector leasing schemes are the most common, used by a quarter (26%) and being explored by a further 17% of accommodation projects – whereby homelessness services lease accommodation from a private sector landlord and use it to house service users who are ready to move on. Just over a third (34%) of accommodation projects are either using (23%) or exploring (11%) Housing First approaches⁴² although, as with personalisation, there is a range of practice in how these schemes are delivered by projects.

Peer landlord schemes, in which a client with lower support needs take on some landlord responsibilities for other residents (often other former homeless people), are used by only 10% of accommodation projects, with another 13% exploring this model (see Case Study 8). Shared Lives schemes, in which support and accommodation are provided by living with a carer in a home setting, are the least common approach. Other approaches that services identified include a range of access schemes for the private rented sector, such as brokerage with local landlords, peer advice schemes, and Psychologically Informed Environments (PIEs).⁴³

⁴² The Housing First model was developed in the United States and has demonstrated positive outcomes in both housing and supporting those who are chronically street homeless with multiple and complex needs. The model works on the principle of supporting people straight into accommodation without preconditions of addressing wider social care and support needs.

⁴³ Operating a Psychologically Informed Environments 'PIEs' recognises and seeks to meet the psychological and emotional needs of people who have experienced homelessness, are sleeping rough or living in insecure accommodation. Guidance from the DCLG and National Mental Health Development Unit on PIEs was published in 2010 <http://www.nmhd.org.uk/silo/files/meeting-the-psychological-and-emotional-needs-of-people-who-are-homeless.pdf>

Figure 30: Innovative approaches used in accommodation projects

Source: Accommodation provider survey, N = 356

Case Study 8: Thames Reach's peer landlord scheme

Moving into privately rented accommodation can be challenging for people who have been homeless, especially when they are looking for work, with high rents and the need to manage multiple bills independently. To improve its accommodation provision for homeless people moving into employment, Thames Reach consulted with service users about what would help them manage this transition, and in 2011 developed a peer landlord scheme in partnership with the action learning charity Commonweal Housing.

The scheme offers an alternative to traditional models of shared, supported housing, and uses the private rented sector as a substitute for hostel accommodation. Commonweal Housing purchased 8 three-bedroom houses across London for the scheme, updating them to a high specification, before handing them over to Thames Reach to manage. Thames Reach contracts with tenants in each property, offering an attractive rent within the Local Housing Allowance. A peer landlord, who also lives there, deals with day to day issues in the shared house and acts as a role model to other tenants in managing the tenancy, finding and maintaining work.

People using Thames Reach's services, who are preparing for or already in work, can apply to join the scheme either as a peer landlord or a tenant. There is no support attached to the scheme, although tenants may have separate floating support, so Thames Reach staff assess applicants' suitability to move into a tenancy situation. Tenants are then invited to view the property and meet the peer landlord and other residents.

Before joining a shared house, both peer landlords and tenants attend training as part of the assessment process. Peer landlords, for example, need to be confident to raise issues and deal effectively with potential disagreements. They are also trained in informal mentoring and supporting other tenants in the shared house.

For formerly homeless people moving into employment, the peer landlord scheme offers a more affordable rent in high standard private rented accommodation. It can be a stable place from which people can rebuild relationships with children and family, away from a hostel environment.

Along with the Thames Reach properties, Commonweal Housing is also testing the peer landlord model with Catch 22, assessing its impact for a younger client group (16-25 year olds), care leavers and other young people who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness.

As well as different models for delivering services, there are also new approaches to commissioning services in the homelessness sector. Payment by results is becoming more common in health, social care and criminal justice services, whereby all or part of the payment is given only when certain agreed outcomes have been achieved. Only 6% of accommodation projects, however, are currently commissioned on a payment by results basis.⁴⁴

Views on payment by results vary: 19% of accommodation projects either agreed or strongly agreed that this approach would lead to better outcomes for homeless people, but 42% disagreed or strongly disagreed (Table 6). Some projects considered that payment by results encourages good performance and provides an incentive for delivering more effective support that leads to change. Others, however, argued that it can be difficult to measure positive outcomes for people with complex needs, as it can take a long time to demonstrate changes in their lives. As a consequence, services were concerned that payment by results would encourage ‘cherry-picking’, with the more vulnerable clients who have higher needs ignored by services as they would take more investment to show a positive outcome.

Table 6: Accommodation project responses ‘To what extent you agree that delivering services via payment by results will lead to better outcomes for single homeless people’

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	14	4%
Agree	52	15%
Neither agree nor disagree	97	27%
Disagree	90	25%
Strongly disagree	59	17%
Don't know	44	12%

Source: Accommodation provider survey (N = 356)

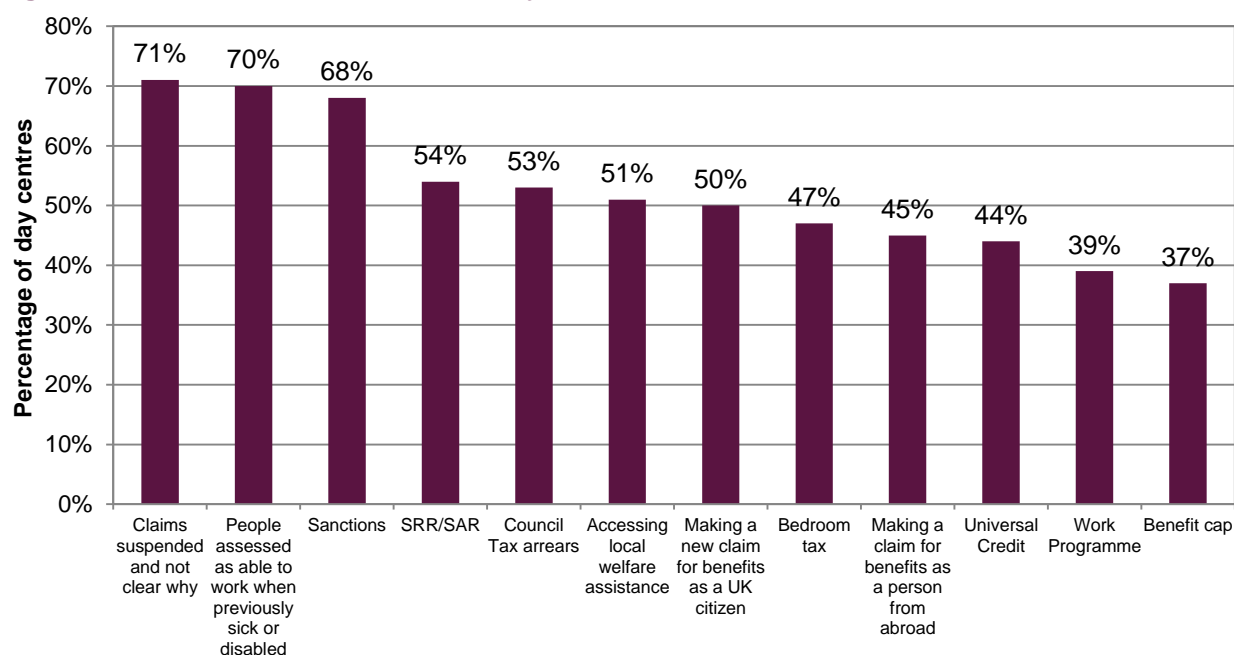
3.3 THE IMPACT OF WELFARE CHANGES ON HOMELESS PEOPLE

Changes to welfare provision are having a substantial impact on homeless people and the services that support them. Homelessness services, particularly day centres, are often the first place people go to get advice on benefits issues, but services are also impacted by clients’ rent arrears and limited ability to move on from services when they are ready, because of a difficult housing market.

On average, each day centre advised around 100 people a month on welfare or benefits issues.⁴⁵ People most commonly came for advice for three reasons (Figure 31): because their claim was suspended and they did not know why (71% of day centres); because they were assessed as able to work when previously they had been identified as sick or disabled (70%); and because they were affected by benefit sanctions (68%).

⁴⁴ Accommodation provider survey, N = 356

⁴⁵ Day centres survey, month of September 2013, N = 78, Mean = 105, Minimum = 4, Maximum = 800

Figure 31: Welfare advice issues at day centres

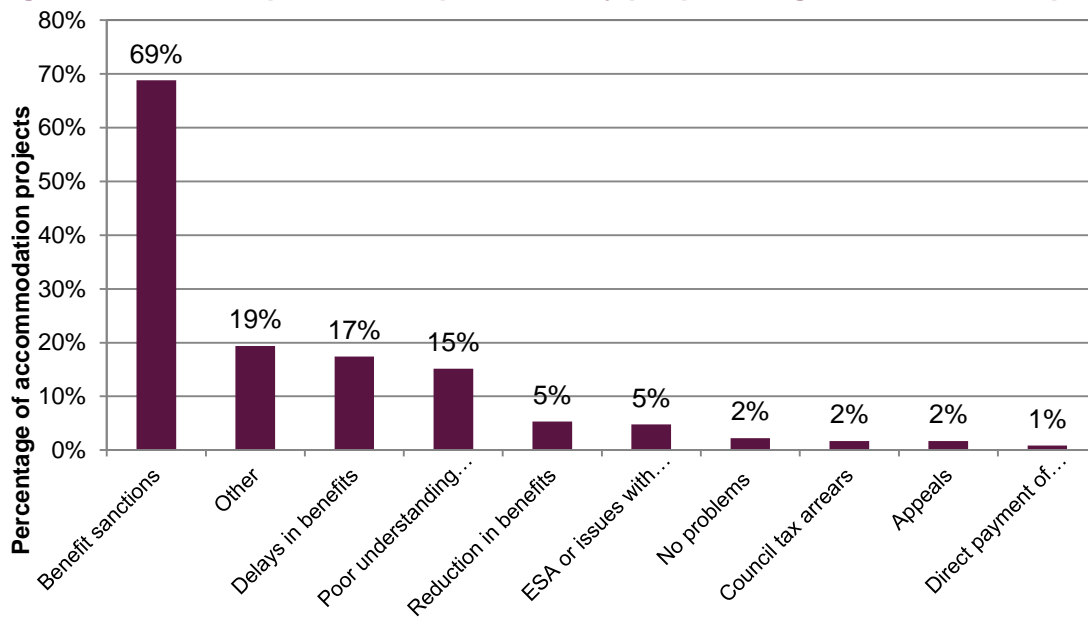
Source: Day centres survey, N = 103

Day centres described seeing an increase in poverty and destitution as a result of welfare changes, particularly the impact of sanctions and changes from individuals moving from incapacity to job-seeking benefits. Services also reported that their service users were experiencing increased anxiety about making ends meet, and there was a large increase in the use of food parcels. Several described rent arrears as an issue, as well as staff spending more time helping to sort out welfare problems for service users, which can impact on other areas of support.

Similarly, by far the most common benefits problem experienced by homeless people using accommodation projects was sanctions with over two-thirds (69%) of projects reporting that this was a problem for clients (Figure 32). This supports Homeless Link's previous research into benefits sanctions which also found that homeless people with complex needs were particularly affected by sanctions, leading to increased debt, anxiety and depression, and risk of eviction when people could not pay rent or service charges.⁴⁶ Other benefit problems included delays in receiving Housing Benefit and when moving between benefits, or with a change of circumstances.

The difference in welfare issues at day centres and accommodation projects is likely to reflect the wider range of housing situations of people using day centres, including those who are vulnerably housed, rough sleepers, as well as those in supported accommodation.

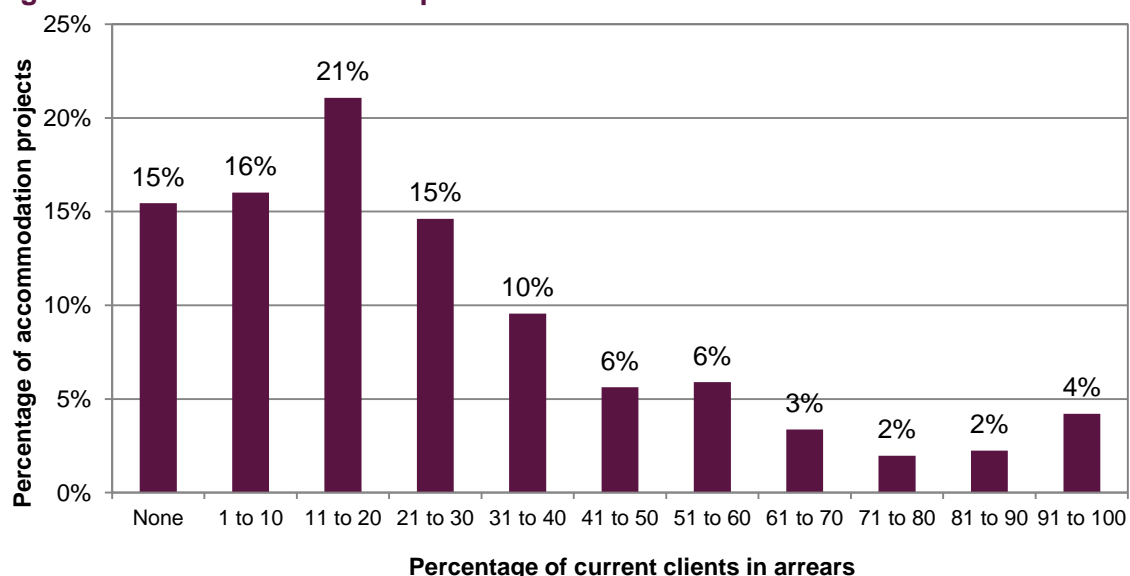
⁴⁶ A High Cost to Pay: the impact of benefit sanctions on homeless people, Homeless Link, September 2013, http://homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-downloads/A%20High%20Cost%20to%20Pay%20Sept13_0.pdf

Figure 32: Benefits problems experienced by people using accommodation projects

Source: Accommodation provider survey, N = 356

As most people using homelessness services claim benefits, any difficulties that they experience with their claims are likely to impact on services themselves. Our sanctions research, *A High Cost to Pay*, found that services were experiencing loss of Housing Benefit, as although claimants should continue to receive Housing Benefit if sanctioned, some homeless claimants did not know to notify the local authority of their circumstances and found their Housing Benefit was being stopped. This in turn impacted on rental income; service charge arrears; and rent arrears.⁴⁷

85% of accommodation projects reported having rent arrears from at least some current service users (Figure 33). On average, projects had 27% of clients in arrears, although some had none and in a small number of projects all service users were in arrears. Please note rent arrears are not solely due to the impact of sanctions.

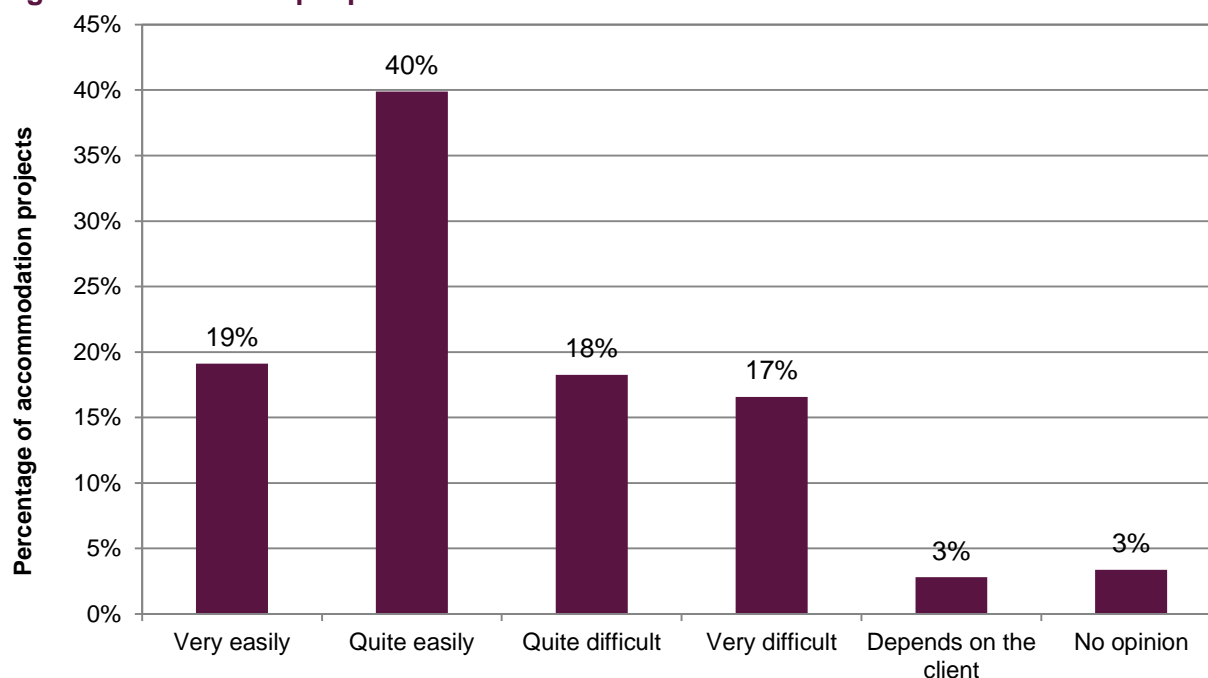
Figure 33: Rent arrears due to problems with service users' benefits

Source: Accommodation provider survey, N = 356

⁴⁷ Ibid

When people are in crisis or cannot meet essential needs, they can apply for support through their local welfare assistance scheme. These schemes replaced the discretionary aspects of the Social Fund in April 2013 and are managed by local authorities, who have introduced a broad range of different practices and eligibility criteria. Some schemes are only available to people with a local connections, and other schemes exclude people for other reasons, for example if they have been sanctioned. Homeless people's experience of accessing Local Welfare Assistance varies, which is likely to reflect the local variation in how schemes are delivered (Figure 34).

Figure 34: Homeless people's ease of access to Local Welfare Assistance schemes



Source: Accommodation provider survey, N = 356

3.4 FUTURE CHANGES IN HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT

As well as funding, homelessness services are affected by a wide range of other local and national policy and practice changes. In this year's survey, as previous years, we asked agencies about the main changes which were affecting the individuals they worked with. Analysis of these responses found a number of common changes, including:

- Decrease in local homelessness provision, including decommissioning of services
- Reduced provision of wider support, such as advice services for young people
- Stricter eligibility requirements for supported housing, such as local connection
- Limited suitable move-on accommodation
- The impact of the Shared Accommodation Rate
- More service users with complex needs
- Rapid response through No Second Night Out
- Landlords not taking tenants who claim Housing Benefit.

With variations in homelessness provision at a local level, accommodation providers identified that the major gap in services for homeless people was affordable or suitable move-on accommodation. Other gaps included:

- Limited access to mental health services, substance use services, and dual diagnosis services
- Suitable move-on accommodation for homeless people with multiple or complex needs
- Lack of supported housing for specific groups of homeless people, including women, mothers and babies, couples, and people with dogs
- Limited provision of emergency or crisis accommodation or drop-in services
- Lack of access to the private rented sector, such as through rent deposit schemes
- Lack of facilities for young people, including advice services and supported housing
- Limited access to funding to furnish move-on accommodation (i.e. Local Welfare Assistance).

Day centres described similar gaps in access to appropriate, affordable move-on accommodation, particularly for people with mental health or alcohol issues. A particular issue for people using day centres was a lack of access to crisis emergency accommodation. There was also seen to be limited access to healthcare for people with low-level mental health needs and for those with dual diagnosis.

Other changes that accommodation providers wanted to see included more consistent funding or more staffing hours to provide better support to service users. Easier referrals to social care services were also seen as a necessary change, as well as changes to supporting homeless people after they find work, such as by easing the transition off JSA and Housing Benefit. Some providers described the need for more specialist staff.

For day centres, changes that would lead to better support for homeless people included more mental health provision within day centres; more support for people with high needs; better co-operation with statutory services; and more assistance, such as immigration advice, to people with no recourse to public funds.

CONCLUSION

This year's survey presents a homelessness sector at a time of change, when funding pressures and welfare reform changes have required the sector to respond and adapt so that it can continue to support the increase in demand from people who are experiencing homelessness.

As with previous years, the survey shows how services provide a wide range of support to people experiencing homelessness, helping them to achieve a range of positive outcomes, not just around their housing but also improvements to their health, and readiness and access to work. Alongside the case studies included this year, the findings highlight some of the exciting practice and new models of support that the sector is developing as it responds to the external environment and the changing needs of those it seeks to help.

The survey has shown that although over a third of accommodation services have experienced funding cuts, this has not resulted in a drop in the numbers of people receiving support. While this might be attributed in part to the sector's resilience and ability to respond to changing needs, it is important to consider the strain and pressures this is causing. Findings have shown that many services have responded to funding changes through reducing staffing levels and limiting the level of support and range of services available – particularly more specialist services. More services are reporting that they are restricting access to people with higher levels of need or perceived risk. If services are not able, or lack capacity, to accept those with the most complex needs, this presents a serious risk to some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. In addition, while many have adjusted their provision in order to absorb funding changes, there will be a limit to how much further this can happen.

This year's findings also show how changes to welfare are having an effect on homeless people and services providing support. The impact of benefit sanctions on homeless people can be devastating, setting back their ability to move on from homelessness and increasing anxiety and financial worries. The consequent increase in rent arrears is also affecting homelessness services and is putting their financial situation under increasing strain.

As in previous years, finding suitable accommodation for homeless people to move on to when they leave services remains a problem. The lack of available affordable accommodation in many areas combined with the changes to welfare benefits, particularly the Local Housing Allowance and Shared Accommodation Rate changes and increasing restrictions from landlords on accepting people on Housing Benefit, are having a significant effect on people's ability to move on when they are ready to leave services, leading to a silting up effect. This also then prevents those who are in desperate need of support from homelessness services from gaining access to this.

This review shows the wide range of areas where homelessness services provide support and the new projects and approaches which are being tried, as agencies seek to work more effectively and efficiently. It is essential investment is protected so that this can continue. The survey renews the need for a longer term strategy for the provision of homelessness services, which values these services and recognises the investment needed to achieve the longer term savings and support more people away from homelessness.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology differed slightly from that used in previous year's SNAP reports. Two separate surveys were carried out for accommodation projects and for day centres, compared to the one survey for both project types in previous years. Details of how the sample was selected can be found below. Two surveys were used so we could better capture the different characteristics of these services and the issues they face. This year, we also used a self-completed data return form to capture information about services' size, capacity, voids, and staffing numbers. In previous years, we asked projects for these data in our survey.

There were six elements to the fieldwork, which was carried out between September and December 2013.

1. Telephone survey of accommodation projects

Homeless Link's policy team developed a questionnaire for accommodation projects, with input from DCLG and Homeless Link's National Advisory Council, and with input from the contractor, James Lambley & Associates. The questions were similar to those asked for SNAP 2013 so that some comparisons could be made, but also asked relevant topical questions. The telephone survey was substantially shorter than in previous years, with many factual quantitative questions about the projects being separated out into a self-completion data return (see below).

The telephone survey was administered by James Lambley & Associates, who had also carried out the survey for SNAP 2013. An email request was sent by Homeless Link to all accommodation projects listed on the Homeless UK database (1,271 projects in total) to notify them that they may be selected to take part in the survey. Projects were stratified by type and local authority area, before the areas were randomised, ensuring that interviewers could inform project/service managers whether other projects under their management would be approached. A total of 356 accommodation projects took part in the telephone survey. The data was analysed by Homeless Link using SPSS⁴⁸.

2. Data return from accommodation projects

This year, a self-completion data return was emailed to all 1,271 accommodation projects listed on Homeless UK, and was administered by James Lambley & Associates. The data return was designed by Homeless Link with input from DCLG and James Lambley & Associates, and requested information about projects' size, capacity, voids, staffing numbers, etc. In total, 218 accommodation projects provided a data return, giving a response rate of 17%. The data was analysed by Homeless Link using SPSS.

3. Web survey of day centres

This year, the questions for day centres were separated out from those asked of accommodation projects, reflecting the different experiences of different types of provision. Questions for the day centres survey were developed by Homeless Link's policy team, with input from DCLG. Homeless Link's day centres specialist provided expertise in creating appropriately worded questions that would be suitable for day centres.

The web survey was administered by Homeless Link, using Survey Monkey. The day centres specialist emailed all day centres in England that work with homeless people (216 in total), using information from the UK Advice Finder database. A total of 103 day centres provided a response, giving a response rate of 48%. The data was analysed by Homeless Link using SPSS.

4. Secondary data analysis

⁴⁸ SPSS is a software package used for statistical analysis.

Homeless Link's policy team analysed the statutory homelessness (P1E) data published by DCLG to examine trends over time. The Supporting People data published by the Centre for Housing Research, University of St Andrews, was also analysed to examine local authority-funded support for homeless people in England.

5. Analysis of Homeless UK and UK Advice Finder databases

Homeless Link's information team and policy team analysed data held in two databases managed by Homeless Link: Homeless UK, which holds information about accommodation projects; and UK Advice Finder, which holds information about advice services, including day centres for homeless people.

There are 1,271 accommodation projects in England for single homeless people, which includes direct access hostels, emergency hostels, foyers for young people, and second-stage accommodation for different ages. Specialist accommodation (such as for people with mental health or substance use issues, or for people fleeing domestic violence) was excluded from the analysis.

The data on accommodation projects was cleaned and coded by Homeless Link's information team, and then analysed to explore issues such as: accepted age ranges; genders accepted in projects; number of bed-spaces in projects; location; and acceptance criteria including need for a local connection.

There are 216 day centres in England that cater for homeless people. The only analysis carried out on day centres was to examine their spread by region.

6. Case studies

8 case studies were gathered to provide examples of different elements of the research. The case studies were chosen by Homeless Link's policy team, following consultation with Homeless Link's Regional Managers and Innovation and Good Practice teams. The case studies were not analysed, but were used to provide in-depth examples of different types of provision for homeless people in England.

KEY DATA TABLES

Table A1: Accommodation projects and day centres in England

	Hostels		Second stage accommodation		Day Centres	
	No.	% of tot.	No.	% of tot	No.	% of tot
East Midlands	21	9.1	80	7.7	18	8.3
East of England	24	10.4	108	10.4	16	7.4
London	36	15.7	163	15.7	56	25.9
North East	12	5.2	52	5.0	7	3.2
North West	37	16.1	148	14.2	24	11.1
South East	30	13.0	142	13.6	38	17.6
South West	22	9.6	157	15.1	23	10.6
West Midlands	24	10.4	106	10.2	16	7.4
Yorkshire & Humber	24	10.4	85	8.2	18	8.3
Total	230	100.0	1041	100.0	216	100.0

Sources: Homeless UK; UK Advice Finder

Table A2: Bed-spaces in accommodation projects for homeless people in England

	Hostels		Second stage accommodation	
	No.	%	No.	%
South East	1,204	15	3,777	12
South West	700	9	3,164	10
East of England	528	6	3,724	12
East Midlands	697	9	1,795	6
West Midlands	1,169	14	2,686	9
Yorkshire & Humber	697	9	2,353	8
North East	455	6	1,138	4
North West	937	11	3,294	11
London	1,771	22	8,445	28
Total	8,158	100	30,376	100

Source: Homeless UK

Table A3: Service users in accommodation projects in England

% of clients at accommodation projects

	SNAP 2014	SNAP 2013
Women	30%	31%
Men	70%	68%
Jobseekers	36%	*
Recent rough sleepers	15%	*
Prison leavers	27%	11%
Older people (over 50)	10%	11%
Black or minority ethnic (BME)	20%	18%
People with NRPF	0%	*
Ex-service personnel	1%^	2%
Young people (16-24)	53%	51%
Care leavers	8%	10%
Undocumented / irregular migrants A2 (Bulgarian and Romanian)	0%	0%
<hr/>		
Clients with:		
drug problems	33%	26%
mental health problems	32%	26%
complex or multiple needs	28%	*
alcohol problems	25%	24%
physical health problems	12%	*
learning difficulties	7%	9%

* Comparative data for 2013 are not available

^ Excludes one large project that targets ex-service personnel. With this project included, the proportion of ex-service personnel increases to 10%.

Source: 2014: Accommodation provider return, N = 218; 2013: SNAP 2013, N = 430

Table A4: Homeless service users in day centres in England

% of day centres

	See client group	Provides specific services
Women	98%	34%
Men	96%	31%
Jobseekers	95%	43%
Rough sleepers	95%	52%
Prison leavers	90%	20%
Older people (over 50)	87%	23%
Black or minority ethnic (BME)	83%	19%
People with NRPF	82%	18%
Ex-service personnel	81%	14%
Young people (16-24)	77%	22%
Care leavers	69%	10%
Undocumented / irregular migrants	66%	17%
A2 (Bulgarian and Romanian)	58%	18%
Clients with:		
alcohol issues	97%	36%
mental health issues	97%	39%
drug issues	95%	30%
learning difficulties	93%	17%
dual diagnosis	90%	27%
complex or multiple needs	88%	27%
physical health needs	86%	26%

Source: Day centres survey, N = 103

Table A5: Reasons for refusal to accommodation projects

	SNAP 2014	SNAP 2013
Project is full	72%	47%
Client needs are too high	74%	63%
Client needs are too low	38%	32%
Client is assessed to be too high a risk to other clients or staff	91%	79%
Client has no local connection	37%	24%
Client has no recourse to public funds	53%	40%
Client was intoxicated on drugs / alcohol	40%	22%
Other, please specify	14%	18%

Source: 2014: Accommodation provider survey, N = 356; 2013: SNAP 2013, accommodation projects only, N = 430

Table A6: Number of paid staff at homelessness projects

	Day centres		Accommodation projects	
	No of projects	% of tot	No of projects	% of tot
Number of staff				
0 to 5	53	56%	79	44%
6 to 10	24	26%	51	29%
11 to 20	7	7%	37	21%
21 or more	10	11%	11	6%
Total	94	100%	178	100%

Source: Accommodation data return, N = 178; Day centres survey, N = 94

Table A7: Support services available through day centres

	Provided by day centre	Provided by partner in-house	Provided externally through formal referral	Not available (gap in service)
Drug services	10%	17%	72%	4%
Alcohol services	16%	21%	69%	5%
Mental health services	21%	18%	64%	5%
GP or practice nurse	8%	27%	51%	11%
Advice services	80%	24%	28%	0%
Meaningful activity	70%	14%	22%	6%
ETE	53%	18%	37%	10%
Resettlement services	52%	16%	35%	6%

Source: Day centres survey, N = 103

Table A8: Support services available through accommodation projects

	In-house and referral	In-house only	Referral only	Gap in provision
Mental health services	23%	4%	71%	2%
Physical health services	32%	3%	62%	3%
Drug services	32%	2%	67%	0%
Alcohol services	37%	2%	60%	1%
Education, training and employment (ETE)	70%	2%	27%	1%
Resettlement services	76%	15%	8%	1%
Advice services	83%	2%	15%	1%
Meaningful activity	84%	8%	8%	1%
Other	36%	50%	11%	4%

Source: Accommodation provider data return, N = 177 to 179

Table A9: Sources of funding for accommodation projects

	Receive any funding*				Primary funding source			
	SNAP 2014		SNAP 2013		SNAP 2014		SNAP 2013	
	No.	% of tot.	No.	% of tot.	No.	% of tot.	No.	% of tot.
Benefit payments	343	96%	388	90%	116	33%	50	12%
Rent & service charges	325	91%	381	89%	20	6%	17	4%
Supporting People/HRS	313	88%	399	93%	207	58%	326	76%
Fundraising / charitable sources	177	50%	228	53%	1	0%	4	1%
Social Services	99	28%	71	17%	3	1%	8	2%
Local Authority local grant	66	19%			2	1%	12	3%
Other	19	5%			5	1%	9	2%
Employment and Education	16	4%	25	6%	0	0%	1	0%
Homelessness Transition Fund	16	4%			0	0%		
Criminal justice	14	4%	12	3%	0	0%	1	0%
Substance misuse service	13	4%	15	3%	1	0%	1	0%
Health	13	4%	21	5%	0	0%	1	0%
Homelessness Change Programme	4	1%			1	0%		
Total projects	356		430		356		430	

* Some projects receive funding from several sources

Source: SNAP 2014: Accommodation provider survey, N = 356; SNAP 2013: N = 430.

Table A10: Sources of funding for day centres

	Receive any funding*				Primary funding source			
	SNAP 2014		SNAP 2013		SNAP 2014		SNAP 2013	
	No.	% of tot.	No.	% of tot.	No.	% of tot.	No.	% of tot.
Fundraising	92	89%	62	89%	47	66%	33	47%
Local Authority local grant	52	50%	36	51%	15	21%	9	13%
Health	20	19%	17	24%	1	1%	2	3%
Supporting People / HRS	15	15%	19	27%	7	10%	11	16%
Criminal justice	8	8%	5	7%	0	0%		
Social services	6	6%	6	9%	1	1%	2	3%
Employment and education	6	6%	7	10%	0	0%		
Substance misuse	5	5%	4	6%	0	0%		
Total respondents	103		70		71		70	

* Some projects receive funding from several sources

Source: SNAP 2014: Day centres survey, N = 103; SNAP 2013: N = 70.

Table A11: Change in funding at accommodation projects since the previous year

	SNAP 2014		SNAP 2013	
	No.	% of tot.	No.	% of tot.
Increased	30	8%	30	7%
Decreased	134	38%	213	50%
Awaiting outcome	9	3%	5	1%
No change	112	31%	155	36%
Don't know	71	20%	27	6%
Total	356	100%	430	100%

Source: SNAP 2014: Accommodation provider survey, N = 356; SNAP 2013: N = 430.

Table A12: Change in funding at day centres since the previous year

	SNAP 2014		SNAP 2013	
	No.	% of tot.	No.	% of tot.
Increase	30	31%	17	24%
Decrease	25	%	20	29%
Awaiting outcome	17	18%	1	1%
No change	20	21%	32	46%
Don't know	4	4%	0	0%
Total	96		70	

Source: SNAP 2014: Day centres survey, N = 103; SNAP 2013: N = 70

Table A13: Impact of funding changes on accommodation projects

	Increase in funding (N = 30)			Decrease in funding (N = 134)		
	Increase	Decrease	No change	Increase	Decrease	No change
Total number of clients in the project	23%	3%	70%	10%	6%	80%
Number of complex needs clients the project supports	40%	0%	57%	34%	7%	51%
Provision of key working	23%	3%	67%	10%	19%	68%
Provision of meaningful activities	37%	3%	57%	11%	33%	54%
Frontline staffing capacity	40%	0%	57%	4%	48%	47%
Back office staffing capacity	10%	3%	80%	4%	41%	46%
Floating support capacity	13%	0%	47%	8%	16%	29%
Use of volunteers	30%	3%	53%	41%	3%	36%
Partnership working with other organisations	50%	0%	40%	42%	10%	43%

Source: Accommodation provider survey, N = 164

Table A14: Impact of funding changes on day centres

	Increase in funding (N = 26)	Decrease in funding (N = 23)
Yes positive change	85%	17%
Yes negative change	0%	48%
No change	15%	30%
Don't know	0%	4%

Source: Day centres survey, N = 49




WHAT WE DO

Homeless Link is the national, membership charity for organisations working directly with homeless people in England. With over 500 members, we work to make services for homeless people better and campaign for policy change that will help end homelessness.

LET'S END HOMELESSNESS TOGETHER

Homeless Link
Gateway House, Milverton Street
London SE11 4AP
020 7840 4430
www.homeless.org.uk

 [@Homelesslink](https://twitter.com/Homelesslink)

 www.facebook.com/homelesslink