

SHELTER

**EVERYONE IN:
WHERE ARE
THEY NOW?**

The need for a roadmap
out of street homelessness in England

AUGUST 2021



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SETTLED COMMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EVERYONE IN: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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1. The Government's ambition to get 'everyone in' during the pandemic showed us just how much can be achieved with the right political will and funding.
2. Though not perfect – with many still stuck on the streets during the deadly pandemic – 'Everyone In' represents a watershed moment in this country's history.
3. It has shown us that we have the power to end rough sleeping for good. With many people brought in off the streets in this pandemic, we have an opportunity like never before. And we can't afford to squander it by failing to make sure people can move on into permanent accommodation.
4. As the country prepares to return to 'normal', while still managing further infections and waves over winter, we can't throw people helped during the early stages of the pandemic back on the streets. And we can't abandon people new to the streets to the trauma of sleeping rough, or being forced into a communal night-shelter, during the on-going pandemic.

It's time to fight for **home. It's time to end the rough sleeping emergency for good.**

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

5. As the latest round of COVID-19 restrictions lift and Government withdraws emergency protections, it's crucial that everyone supported under the emergency measures for rough sleepers are helped into suitable permanent accommodation and not pushed back onto the streets ahead of the winter.
6. Government state that 37,000 people have been helped under 'Everyone In', with 26,000 helped into longer-term accommodation.
7. But this report details new research that finds that fewer than **1 in 4 (23%) people had moved into settled accommodation** of at least six months – that's an estimated 8,600 people.
8. This means that **more than three-quarters (77%) of those initially accommodated under 'Everyone In' had not moved into settled accommodation**. This equates to an estimated 29,000 people.

9. This research, based on Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, highlights the need for a quantifiable and financed roadmap out of street homelessness in England.

ROADMAP TO END ROUGH SLEEPING



10. The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Robert Jenrick, state that they are personally committed to ending rough sleeping for good and Shelter is a strong supporter of the manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping by 2024.
11. MHCLG is currently working on its strategy to meet the manifesto commitment – a welcome initiative. To protect lives, both during the on-going pandemic and beyond, this strategy must learn lessons from ‘Everyone In’, including a thorough review of outcomes for those helped, and set out a roadmap to end rough sleeping. Because it’s clear that despite the noble ambition during the pandemic, people fell through the gaps. We hope this report will help inform the Government’s new strategy and we know there are reports from other organisations that back the same or similar calls such as the Local Government Association¹, The Public Accounts Committee² and the Kerslake Commission³.

¹ LGA, [Lessons learnt from councils’ response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), 19 November 2020

² House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, [COVID-19: housing people sleeping rough](#), 8 March 2021

³ Kerslake Commission (2021), [When we work together – learning the lessons, Interim report July 2021](#), St Mungo’s

12. A roadmap to end rough sleeping must address the following elements:

EVALUATE: To learn lessons from 'Everyone In', MHCLG must properly assess its impact on those it was designed to protect and move on

Recommendation 1: MHCLG should collate, publish and analyse more robust and detailed statistics on the outcomes of those helped under 'Everyone In' so that the effectiveness of the emergency funding can be properly assessed.

PROTECT: An offer of emergency accommodation and adequate support to everyone at risk of the streets for at least the duration of the on-going pandemic

Without clear guidance from MHCLG on who should be accommodated during the pandemic, along with continued dedicated funding for emergency accommodation, more people are at risk of being asked to leave emergency provision without suitable accommodation to move on to. In addition, more people are coming onto the streets every week having been legally or illegally evicted, including for covid arrears; fleeing violence and abuse (both domestic and neighbourhood); experiencing relationship breakdowns or being asked to leave by family and friends; leaving institutional accommodation such as prisons, hospitals and asylum support. If guidance and funding isn't forthcoming, people coming onto the streets every week will have nowhere to go.

The pandemic is far from over. In fact, we are likely to see further waves as we head into autumn and winter and homeless health organisations and support agencies report that people at risk of the streets are less likely to be partially or fully vaccinated. Even though the self-isolation rules have changed for those double vaccinated, there will still be requirements to self-isolate if you test positive. This is already an issue within hostels and shared accommodation spaces where it will prove difficult for people to self-isolate and is already resulting in people being asked to leave.

Consequently, people at risk of the streets are still at serious risk of becoming infected and infecting others, falling seriously ill, developing Long Covid or dying. UCL predicted that 'Everyone In' saved more than 250 lives, so without a similar provision continuing lives will be lost, especially when there are more cases come the winter. When people are accommodated, partner agencies report it's much easier to help people with GP registration and vaccination, especially if vaccinations are offered in hotels and hostels.

No one should be left on the streets during a pandemic.

Recommendation 2: Following the *Ncube* judgment, MHCLG must urgently issue robust guidance to local authorities that they should offer emergency accommodation and adequate support to everyone at risk of the streets.

Recommendation 3: MHCLG guidance to councils must make clear that people should not have to be 'verified' as bedded-down in order to access emergency accommodation. Some people are too frightened to do so.⁴

Recommendation 4: MHCLG must provide local authorities with adequate, dedicated funding to continue to procure emergency accommodation and adequate support for people at risk of the streets.

PREVENT - stop people becoming street homeless

If the Government continues to focus its funding on helping people off the streets, rough sleeping is unlikely to be ended by 2024. This is because more people are coming onto the streets every week. To the adviser on the end of the helpline, it feels like just as fast as people are helped off the streets, more people take their place.

The economic and social impact of lockdowns is likely to result in a big increase in all forms of homelessness as evictions increase. Now that the eviction ban has ended, housing possession cases are working their way through the courts and more people face eviction from both social and private rentals. Furlough is now only covering 60% of earnings and is due to end entirely in September, as is the £20 per week uplift to Universal Credit. There have been large increases in the number of people claiming housing benefit (such as the housing element of Universal Credit) due to redundancy or reduced incomes – particularly those in private rented accommodation.

Focussing funding on keeping people off the streets in the first place is more cost effective and prevents trauma and risks to health. This can be very costly to remedy in the long-term, for example in terms of health and social care spending. More funding needs to be focussed on preventing eviction, homelessness and rough sleeping, especially where this is the result of housing benefit shortfalls and/or COVID-arrears.

⁴ Kleynhans, S., '[We need urgent action to keep people safe through the second lockdown](#)', Shelter, November 2020.

Recommendation 5: People at risk of eviction due to COVID-arrears, including people with no recourse to public funds, must be offered payments to help clear or reduce them. As part of the economic recovery from the pandemic, MHCLG must make a dedicated COVID-arrears fund available to prevent homelessness.

Recommendation 6: Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is a vital tool in preventing homelessness, which is mainly caused by affordability problems. It ensures people can keep or find a settled private rental home. We strongly welcome the Department of Work & Pension's restoration of rates to the cheapest 30% of the market to prevent homelessness during the first lockdown. The subsequent decision to keep this frozen risks growing shortfalls and arrears. DWP must end the freeze. DWP should also urgently review LHA rates because 45% of private renters are now claiming, so can't possibly all access the bottom 30% of the market.

Recommendation 7: The household benefit cap reduces still further the amount people can claim to cover their rent – limiting total monthly payments for both rent and all expenses to £1,116.67 outside London and £1,284.17 in the capital. The Government's main solution for capped households is to move into work. That solution is far less achievable during and immediately after a pandemic, when job opportunities may be more limited. DWP should abolish the household benefit cap, as it prevents former rough sleepers from moving on to a settled home.

Recommendation 8: People under 35 who need to move on from homeless accommodation must more easily be able to apply for their right to an exemption from the Shared Accommodation Rate of LHA, so they can access and afford self-contained accommodation.

BUILD – invest in suitable, settled homes for street homeless people

Homelessness can only be ended if people have access to suitable, settled homes, which they can sustain. Without a settled, self-contained home it's very difficult for people to start to address physical and mental health problems, including addictions.

Having a settled home makes it much easier to register with a GP and be referred to specialist health services, including vaccinations, and support services.

We applaud MHCLG's recognition of this in the £433m Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme. But the ambition should be to deliver new permanent and affordable homes, rather than transitional two-year tenancies, which leave people with a sense of continued insecurity. The road back from street homelessness can be very tough and take a long time. Stability is key.

For people with on-going support needs, the new homes delivered must be designed to meet these. In some cases, permanent, sheltered housing schemes with communal areas can help the alleviate the isolation people can experience when they leave the streets, can be part of the solution.

Sheltered housing schemes can offer the support of fellow residents and resident managers, while providing people with the independence and autonomy of their own self-contained flat. It can easier to provide health and social outreach to people in sheltered housing schemes than those living in the community. A lot can be learnt from successful sheltered housing schemes for older people.

Recommendation 9: MHCLG should continue to fund Housing First pilots, with a view to the roll-out of capital funding for new-build Housing First schemes. The 1990s Conservative Government’s Rough Sleeping Initiative delivered 4,000 new homes in London for former rough sleepers. In Finland, Housing First is successful because it’s built more than 1,500 permanent homes.⁵

Recommendation 10: The Government should invest in a new generation of social housing aimed at preventing homelessness. Many street homeless people don’t have high or long-term support needs, but still need a secure home as a foundation to recovering from the trauma of street homelessness and rebuilding their lives. So, they need rapid access to suitable, permanent general needs social housing.

SUPPORT- invest in homelessness support services

Our case evidence shows that people can lose or leave accommodation when they hit bumps in the road, particularly at times of isolation and mental health crisis.

People need adequate support to help them off the streets, while in emergency accommodation, in temporary accommodation and once they move on to a settled home to prevent them from returning to another cycle of street homelessness. Even people with low-level support needs value help to set up home, such as organising bills, registering with services and furnishing their home. They may also need help with moving into employment, such as volunteering opportunities or accessing further education or training.

Many lessons can be learned from the support provided to people during ‘Everyone In’.

⁵ Nicholas Pleace, Dennis Culhane, Riitta Granfelt and Marcus Knutagård, [The Finnish Homelessness Strategy: An International Review](#), Reports Of The Ministry of the Environment (Finland).

Recommendation 10: MHCLG must invest in long-term homelessness support services, which offer on-site or floating support to people in homeless accommodation, as well as private and social tenants. Housing-related support prevents repeat homelessness and helps people access healthcare. The Kerslake Commission recommends the government maintains the spend at £335.5m for the next three years instead of cutting it as planned.⁶

INVOLVE – value and listen to experts by experience

Support services also provide a route for people with lived experience of street homelessness to have a voice in how we end rough sleeping.

Surviving life on the streets takes great resourcefulness, strength and determination. The skills, experience and empathy that people have to offer should be valued and utilised in co-producing strategies and services to end homelessness.

Recommendation 11: MHCLG-funded homelessness support services should be encouraged to train and employ people with personal experience of street homelessness as peer support workers.

Recommendation 12: MHCLG and local housing authorities should seek the advice of people with personal experience of street homelessness in developing strategies to end rough sleeping. This should include people who received help under 'Everyone In', even if they returned to homelessness. They are in the best position to advise on what worked for them – and what didn't.

⁶ Kerslake Commission (2021), [When we work together – learning the lessons, Interim report July 2021](#), St Mungo's

2020: EMERGENCY RESPONSE

EVERYONE IN: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



2020: EMERGENCY RESPONSE

HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE ON THE STREETS IN MARCH 2020?

There's no way of telling exactly how many people were on the streets in March 2020, but we can estimate this by looking at data from Autumn 2019.

Government estimated **4,266 people** were sleeping rough in England in its annual one-night snapshot in autumn 2019. This was a 9% reduction (411 fewer people) from the previous year, but still **141% higher** (2,498 more people) than in 2010. We know this is also an underestimate of the total, as discussed below, but the figures give us the best sense available of trends over time in rough sleeping.

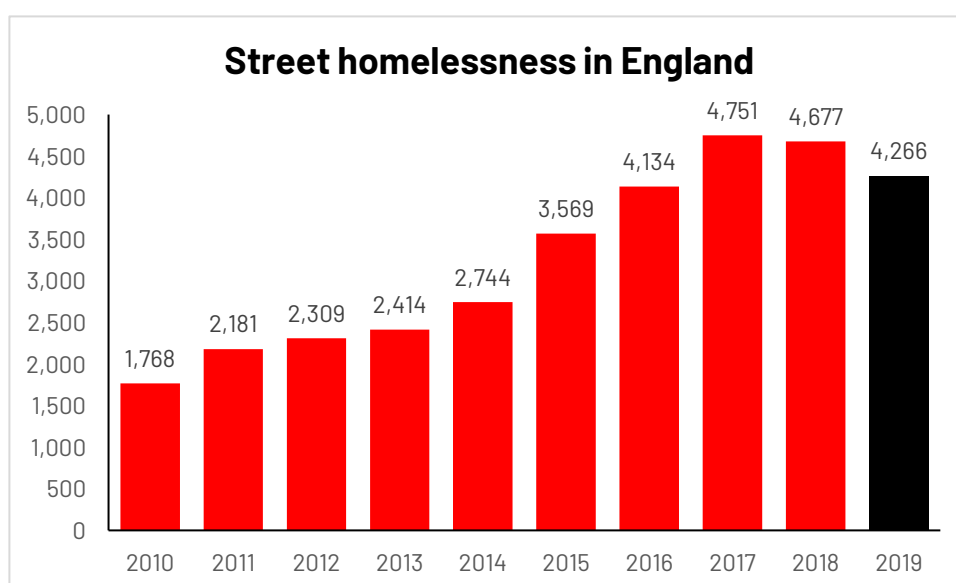


Figure 1 Number of people recorded as rough sleeping on a single Autumn night in England, 2010-2019, Source: MHCLG⁷

Over a quarter (27% or 1,136 people) were sleeping rough in London.⁸

GENDER

The vast majority of those recorded (**83%**) were men.

Only **614 women** (14%) were recorded. But there is evidence that women can be missed: they don't always bed down at night, or sleep in hidden places, because they are afraid of gender-based attack.⁹

⁷ MHCLG, [Official Statistics: Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2019](#), Table 1

⁸ MHCLG, [Official Statistics: Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2019](#), Table 1

⁹ Bretherton, J. and Pleace, N. [Women and Rough Sleeping: A Critical Review of Current Research and Methodology](#), 2018, University of York, Centre for Housing Policy for St Mungo's

NATIONALITY

While around two-thirds (**64%**) were from the UK, around **1 in 4** were foreign nationals. 22% of the total (937 people) were EU (non-UK) nationals and 4% (151 people) were from outside the EU and the UK. The nationality of 10% (443) was recorded as 'not known'.

However, in London, **half** were from **outside the UK**. 42% (481 people) were EU (non-UK) nationals and 7% (84 people) were from outside the EU and the UK. Only around a third (32% or 367 people) were from the UK. The nationality of the remaining 18% (204 people) was 'not known'.

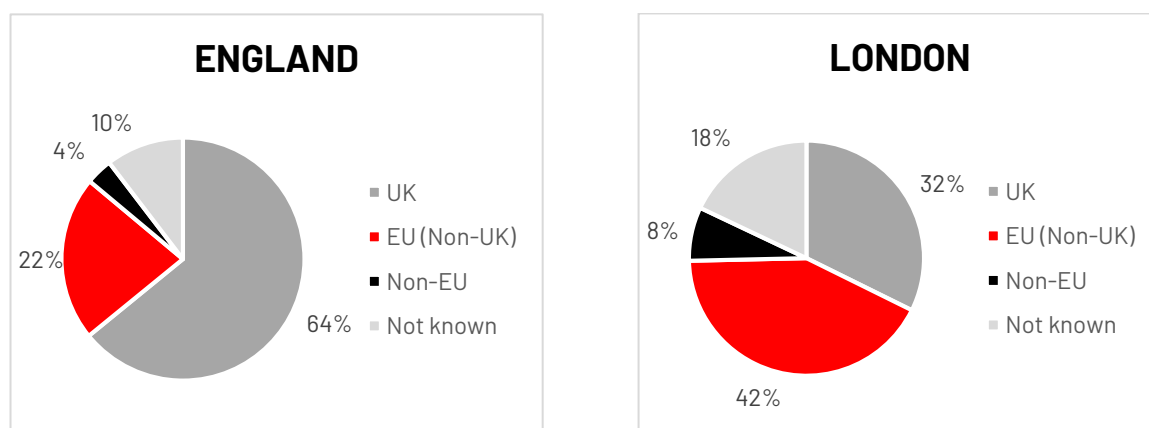


Figure 2 Nationality of people sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2019, Source: MHCLG¹⁰

ETHNICITY

While the regular MHCLG statistics don't provide data on ethnicity, an MHCLG survey (December 2020)¹¹ of people who had slept rough within the last year found that:

- 84% of respondents were White,
- 5% were Black,
- 4% were Mixed, and
- 2% were Asian.

Regular data is published on ethnicity for London. CHAIN data¹² shows that, of the 10,726 people seen sleeping rough throughout 2019/20:

- 59% were White,
- 14% were Black (including 8% Black African and 3% Black Caribbean),
- 7% were Asian (including 3% Indian, 1% Bangladeshi and 0.5% Pakistani), and
- 6% were Gypsy/Romany/Irish Travellers.

¹⁰ MHCLG, [Official Statistics: Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2019](#), Table 2b

¹¹ MHCLG, [Rough sleeping questionnaire: initial findings](#), December 2020

¹² Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN), [Annual Report Greater London April 2019 - March 2020](#)

However, these numbers do not reflect the full extent to which rough sleeping impacts lives across the country. Many people may be missed by street counts and estimates, sleeping in concealed locations or trying to avoid bedding down at night at all, instead riding public transport or walking the streets to feel safer. Like women, people of colour may be missed because they may not bed down, or sleep in obvious places, because of the risk of racially-motivated attacks.

Many more people are affected by rough sleeping over a longer period. CHAIN data for London recorded 3,692 individuals sleeping rough in the capital between January and March 2020.¹³ This is more than five times higher than the number recorded as street homeless on a single night in 2019.

HOW DID THE GOVERNMENT INITIALLY RESPOND TO PROTECT PEOPLE ON THE STREETS?

With coronavirus rapidly spreading in England, on 17 March 2020 Secretary of State for Housing, Robert Jenrick, quickly announced¹⁴ an initial **£3.2 million** dedicated emergency funding for local authorities to help people sleeping rough, or in communal night-shelters, to self-isolate.¹⁵

This followed guidance from Public Health England for providers of hostels and day centres on how to handle suspected cases.¹⁶

The following week (23 March) the Prime Minister announced¹⁷ the first national lockdown in England, with people instructed to **stay at home**.

But staying at home was not possible for the thousands of men and women already living on the streets – or those who were to become street homeless during lockdown.

A few days later, the Government took an **unprecedented** step.

¹³ CHAIN, [Quarterly Report - Greater London: January - March 2020](#), June 2020

¹⁴ MHCLG, [£3.2 million emergency support for rough sleepers during coronavirus outbreak](#), 17 March 2020

¹⁵ Councils also received £4.6 billion in un-ringfenced grants to help them to manage the impacts of COVID-19, including their work to get people off the streets, though it's unclear how much was used for this.

¹⁶ Public Health England and MHCLG, [COVID-19: guidance for hostel services for people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping](#), 17 March 2020

¹⁷ 10 Downing Street, [Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus \(COVID-19\): 23 March 2020](#),

On 26 March, Homelessness Minister Luke Hall wrote to local authorities in England¹⁸, asking them to urgently procure accommodation for people *‘who are, or are at risk of, sleeping rough, and those who are in accommodation where it is difficult to self-isolate, such as shelters and assessment centres’*.

He added it was *‘now imperative that rough sleepers and other vulnerable homeless are supported into appropriate accommodation **by the end of the week’***.

The letter informed councils that Dame Louise Casey, who had been appointed in February 2020 to conduct a review of rough sleeping, was *‘spearheading all of our efforts to get **everyone in.**’*

This approach showed that, with political will and adequate funding, it is possible to very quickly offer accommodation to everyone on the streets.

DID THE INITIAL ‘EVERYONE IN’ APPROACH SAVE LIVES?

National and local governments’ unprecedented response to protect people sleeping rough, and in communal night-shelters, undoubtedly saved lives.

Swift action by the Government and local authorities reduced the number of people on the streets – which was vital because people experiencing homelessness were at higher risk of contracting COVID-19.

Research by University College London (UCL), estimated that **4%** of the homeless population had acquired SARS-CoV-2 by 31st May 2020.¹⁹ This compares to a much lower 0.27% of the community population estimated by the Infection Survey for England to have contracted COVID-19 by May 2020²⁰, illustrating that homeless people were at much higher risk of infection.

UCL estimated 24 deaths occurred among homeless people in the first wave of coronavirus in England. This was supported by data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS), which confirmed **16 homeless people died** in England as a result of COVID-19

¹⁸ MHCLG, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): letter from Minister Hall to local authorities on plans to protect rough sleepers](#), 27 March 2020

¹⁹ UCL, [COVID-19: Emergency homeless accommodation saved hundreds of lives](#), 25 September 2020

²⁰ ONS, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey pilot: England, 14 May 2020](#), 14 May 2020. Provisional results from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey for England. Delivered in partnership with the University of Oxford, the University of Manchester, Public Health England and Wellcome Trust

during the first national lockdown (26 March – 26 June 2020). Six of the 16 people who died were in London and most were men, with an average age of 58 years.²¹

The ONS has not yet published official data on deaths of homeless people throughout 2020, including how many died COVID-positive.

But the UCL research estimated that the preventative measures imposed might have avoided over 266 deaths, 338 ICU admissions, 1,164 hospital admissions and 21,000 infections among the homeless population during the first wave.

Further lives were likely to have been saved because people were not only protected from coronavirus, but also from other risks on the street.

Of the estimated **745 homeless people who died in England in 2019** (both street homeless and in night-shelters), the biggest causes of death were drug/alcohol poisoning (37%) and suicide (14%). But people also died of accidents, influenza and pneumonia. The average age of death was 46 years for men and 43 years for women.²²

Although there are not yet any official figures for the number of homeless people who died during 2020, the Museum of Homelessness calculates **693 homeless people died in England and Wales in 2020**.²³ The majority died in some form of temporary accommodation, with sharp rises at the start of the first and second lockdowns. Drug and alcohol-related causes and suicide were the most common causes of death, and **3% (10) of the total UK deaths were due to COVID-19**.

This suggests that it's not simply accommodation that is needed to save lives. Once accommodated, its vital people are offered support to cope with the trauma and health problems caused, or aggravated, by their time on the street.

In summary, the Government's swift and highly commendable action to provide funding for emergency accommodation, and instruction to councils to get everyone in off the streets, undoubtedly saved lives. This received overwhelming public support.

²¹ ONS, [Coronavirus and deaths of homeless people, England and Wales: deaths registered up to 26 June 2020](#), 10 July 2020

²² These figures relate to England and Wales. ONS, [Deaths of homeless people in England and Wales: 2019 registrations](#), 14 December 2020

²³ These figures are calculated by collating information from a range of sources, including FOI requests to public bodies, homelessness sector workers, voluntary organisations and members of the public, so differ significantly from ONS figures which use official death registrations. Museum of Homelessness, [Dying Homeless Project Report](#), February 2021.

The 'Everyone In' initiative showed the Government's commitment to its election promise to end rough sleeping by 2024. It is now vital to build on this important step and continue to prevent people being left on the streets.

Nobody should die homeless, which is why it's vital we continue to provide emergency accommodation and support to anyone at risk of the streets, ideally to prevent them ever experiencing street homelessness or having to bed down.

BOX 1: TIMELINE OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO ROUGH SLEEPING

A full timeline of emergency provision during the on-going pandemic can be found in the accompanying document: [Timeline of the Pandemic](#).

- **18 March 2020** – Eviction ban and extended notice periods announced.
- **26 March 2020** – **First national lockdown**. 'Everyone In' launched and MHCLG tells councils to house rough sleepers **by the end of the week**, providing £3.2m funding.
- **March – June 2020** – every week, people refused accommodation contacted Shelter for help. Despite eviction ban, some people ended up on the streets due to illegal evictions, fleeing domestic abuse or being unable to sofa-surf. Life on the streets was much harder than usual: daycentres, business and public toilets closed.
- **May 2020** – National lockdown eased. 'Everyone In' rolled back as Homelessness Minister writes to councils about the 'next phase', saying councils should rely on own 'judgement' and restating pre-pandemic policy on those with NRPF.
- **29 June 2020** – Government updated official statutory homelessness guidance, confirming only people 'extremely clinically vulnerable' to COVID-19 should have a legal 'priority need' for accommodation. For all others, help appeared discretionary.
- **Autumn 2020** – new data showed 2,688 people sleeping rough in England. Though down 37% on the previous year, not everyone is in. Cases of Kent variant spread rapidly.
- **Early November 2020** – as England entered a **second national lockdown**, the Government announced¹ a new **£15m Protect Programme**, to help areas¹ with many rough sleepers, asking councils to ensure **every rough sleeper** is offered accommodation.
- **January 2021** – as England entered the **third national lockdown**, Government made a further **£10m in 'Protect Plus'** funding available to more councils, but still unclear who they should accommodate, including people **not eligible** for homelessness assistance (e.g. NRPF).
- **March 2021** – High Court rules **councils have legal powers** to accommodate due to public health emergency (***Ncube v Brighton & Hove City Council***). MHCLG does not update statutory guidance or write to councils about this case.
- **July 2021** – 'Third Wave'. Delta variant rapidly spread and street homeless people were less likely to be vaccinated. Unclear whether people on the street should be offered emergency accommodation.
- **Autumn/winter 2021** – without access to emergency accommodation, how will street homeless people safely escape autumn/winter weather during a potential surge of both COVID-19 and flu when fewer night-shelters may open?

LOCAL RESPONSE: DID PEOPLE FALL THROUGH THE NET AND WHY?

The Government's initial 'Everyone In' instruction was boldly swift and appeared unequivocal.²⁴

Local housing authorities, as well as city regions, made a huge effort to honour this instruction, by procuring accommodation and, in some cases, contracting support services.

Budget hotels, which couldn't let rooms to the public, were used as emergency accommodation.²⁵ In some cases, housing authorities and city regions blocked-booked hotels, which were operated as de facto homeless hostels, with support staff regularly visiting.

In Greater London, at the height of the first wave of the virus, the GLA made available 14 hotels at any one time for over 1,400 people, who received meals, medical care and support.²⁶

In Greater Manchester, the 'A Bed Every Night' scheme was expanded by an additional 180 bed-spaces (total capacity of 453 bed-spaces) from 1 July 2020. 60 beds and specialist support were made available for people with No Recourse to Public Funds, funded by the Greater Manchester Mayor's Charity.²⁷

This 'remarkable feat' from local government was commendable, especially given the many ways in which they needed to support local residents and organisations through the pandemic, not least in social care and education. The Local Government Association report it required 'great energy on the part of councils, and in many cases an unprecedented level of joint working with partners in health services, the voluntary sector and housing associations.'²⁸

²⁴ MHCLG, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): letter from Minister Hall to local authorities on plans to protect rough sleepers](#), 27 March 2020

²⁵ MHCLG, Coronavirus (COVID-19): [Letter from Minister Hall to hotels on providing accommodation to support key workers and vulnerable people](#), 24 March 2020

²⁶ Greater London Authority, [COVID-19 response for people sleeping rough](#), [no date]

²⁷ GMCA, [Greater Manchester Housing Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny](#), 9 July 2020

²⁸ Local Government Association, [Lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), November 2020

TURNED AWAY IN A PANDEMIC

“The hotels – it’s like a lottery, if you win, you win. I’ve given them my details twice.” – Lalji Kanbi ²⁹

Despite the clear ambition of ‘Everyone In’ and the huge effort made, there was confusion within local housing authorities about who they should accommodate, which led to people being turned away.

During the first national lockdown (March – June 2020), people from all over the country contacted Shelter saying that they were being turned away when they needed help. We helped numerous people who were street homeless (or facing the street) but were denied emergency accommodation.

Some were already street homeless (including sofa surfing) when lockdown began.

Others became street homeless during lockdown, despite the eviction ban, because:

- fears of the virus resulted in a loss of sofa-surfing opportunities,
- they lost accommodation tied to work which ended due to lockdown,
- they were lodgers and were legally asked to leave by the resident landlord
- they were illegally evicted
- they had to flee domestic abuse or neighbourhood violence
- their relationships broke down.

People were left without accommodation for a variety of reasons including:

- lack of access to phones and/or internet for online application
- requirements to be ‘verified’ as sleeping rough (i.e. bedded down)
- lack of, or delays to, a homelessness assessment
- told they weren’t eligible for homelessness assistance due to immigration status
- told they weren’t in ‘priority need’ for accommodation
- told they didn’t have a local connection to the area

Others were offered unsuitable accommodation (such as in locations they couldn’t legally enter) or asked to leave accommodation (often because of unmet support needs).

Annex A sets out in further detail examples of the type of cases Shelter advisers have supported on over the last year. Whilst we know that many people were supported, every

²⁹ Gentleman, A, [London is so strange and sad: the sacked hospitality workers sleeping rough](#) 2020, The Guardian

single case is a person in crisis being refused help and being sent out onto the streets in a deadly pandemic.

Our experience was also echoed in media reports of people left without accommodation, including those made homeless when they lost work because of lockdown, such as a report by Amelia Gentleman in The Guardian published one month into the first national lockdown.³⁰

LIFE ON THE STREETS DURING LOCKDOWN

Being on the streets during a hard lockdown was much more challenging than usual:

- night-shelters were closed
- homeless day centres (where people can escape the elements, get support, use bathrooms, eat and charge phones) were closed
- public toilets were closed and publicly accessible buildings (where people can shelter from the elements, use toilets and access Wi-Fi) were closed.

Consequently, people were unable to observe basic public health guidance, such as regular hand-washing, and unable to isolate to avoid transmitting or contracting the virus. Physical health was affected. And the anxiety of being on the streets during lockdown inevitably affected people's mental health.

CONFUSION ABOUT PEOPLE INELIGIBLE FOR HOMELESSNESS ASSISTANCE

There appeared to be particular confusion about what councils should offer to people who are not normally entitled to accommodation. Under homelessness legislation, it's unlawful for local authorities to accommodate people not eligible for assistance because of their immigration status, such as people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Following a High Court judgment (*Ncube v Brighton and Hove Council*) we now know they have powers to accommodate under other legislation.

NEED FOR VERIFICATION

People were also left without accommodation because they hadn't been verified by Streetlink as a bedded-down rough-sleeper. Women, people of colour and young people in particular can feel more vulnerable to attack or harassment if bedded down, so will often sit on public transport or walk the streets at night, which is why they can be missed by counts. People new to the street are unlikely to have bedding.

³⁰ A. Gentleman, ['London is so strange and sad': the sacked hospitality workers sleeping rough](#), 27 April 2020, The Guardian

LESSONS FROM THE PANDEMIC: CLARITY IS ESSENTIAL

Despite the success of Everyone In it is clear many people fell through the gaps and Government did not make it clear enough the legal basis on which they should accommodate everyone.

It became apparent that clearer guidance for local authorities was needed on what they were being expected to provide.

So, the clearest lesson for the current pandemic, and preparation for any future pandemic that Government guidance to councils must be unequivocal that absolutely **everyone** at risk of the street should be accommodated **throughout the pandemic**. As the first national lockdown started to ease, Government issued a new letter to councils with instructions for 'Everyone In' as it began to roll back. This letter sent mixed messages about whether they should accommodate people who weren't eligible for homelessness assistance, in particular those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).³¹ The letter stated that '*As the risk reduces and we look towards easing the lockdown restrictions, we begin to enter the next phase of this endeavour*' and firmly restated the government position on NRPF, advising councils that the law '*remains in place*'. However, the letter then asked councils to use their '*judgement in assessing what support they may lawfully give to each person on an individual basis*'. This resulted in people being refused accommodation and it became a postcode lottery based on how individual councils interpreted the letter.

When Government finally updated the official statutory guidance to councils on 29 June 2020, this did not strengthen or clarify that everyone at risk of the street should be accommodated. Instead it further watered down the policy.

This guidance on people in 'priority need' was amended to extend to those deemed by a GP to be '**clinically extremely vulnerable**'. It also noted that those that were 'clinically vulnerable' in the context of COVID-19 might be considered in priority need.³² However, councils were advised that in cases where people reported medical conditions that would leave them vulnerable to COVID-19, but didn't have confirmation from a health professional had to 'seek a clinical opinion in order to confirm their health needs'. Similarly, the guidance asked councils to consider whether those 'with a history of rough sleeping should be considered vulnerable' but failed to publicly define what constituted a 'history of rough sleeping'.

³¹ MHCLG, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): letter from Homelessness Minister Hall to councils about accommodating rough sleepers](#), 28 May 2020.

³² MHCLG, [Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities: Updates](#), 29 June 2020

This meant councils could refuse emergency accommodation to people on the street, or at risk, who couldn't prove they were clinically vulnerable, unless they had a history of rough sleeping, while the virus continued in general circulation. The Government's commitment to accommodating everyone during the pandemic thus remained unclear. Even now, despite an important High Court ruling that councils have the legal power to accommodate people sleeping rough with No Recourse to Public Funds in the pandemic (see Appendix 2), it remains unclear whether the Government wants councils to accommodate everyone.

As we weather the third wave of coronavirus in England, and look towards the autumn and winter, clarity is of the utmost importance.

And the undeniable lesson of the pandemic is that the Government should issue clear and unequivocal guidance to councils that everyone really means everyone.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

With MHCLG reporting that 11,000 people remain in emergency accommodation, a significant proportion of whom are likely to have NRPF, it remains unclear where councils are expected to move them on to.

People with NRPF are usually on the street in the first place because of the many barriers they face in accessing a settled home. Most barriers are caused by exclusionary policies, which deny access to rentals. For instance, they're ineligible for social housing, and can also be excluded from private rentals as a result of Right to Rent legislation. Even if they have a right to rent and are in work, landlords can be reluctant to let to them because they aren't entitled to housing benefit, so there is a much greater risk they'll fall into arrears if they can't earn enough to cover the rent. This results in very few options to move on from emergency accommodation, even with local authority help.

The Local Government Association reports that, in areas where there are a significant number of foreign national rough sleepers unable to claim benefits or housing assistance, this is one of the biggest issues facing local authorities.

The Government is yet to clearly set out whether people at risk of the street should continue to be accommodated during the on-going pandemic, and – particularly – what should happen to people (e.g. with NRPF) who aren't eligible for homelessness assistance to avoid a return to the streets.

2021: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

EVERYONE IN: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



2021:
WHERE ARE
THEY NOW?

MOVING ON FROM 'EVERYONE IN' EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

For people who were offered emergency accommodation under Everyone In, or the subsequent Protect Programme in autumn/winter 2020/21, we fully support the Government's aim to learn from what's worked during the pandemic so far and to build on this to ensure people move on to a settled home.

We stand in support of their manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping by 2024.

The Government reports (June 2021) that its Everyone In approach has '*so far supported over 37,000 individuals, with more than 26,000 already moved on to longer-term accommodation*'.³³ However, this does not mean people are in secure and safe accommodation that will ensure they do not return to the streets.

A first step must be to establish where people are now, and what more will be needed to help them into settled accommodation.

WHAT HELP WAS AVAILABLE TO MOVE ON?

As England started to move out of the first national lockdown in May 2020, the Government quite rightly turned its attention to moving people in emergency accommodation, such as budget hotels, into settled homes.

In May 2020, Robert Jenrick promised £160m in funding for 2020/21 to make 3,300 homes available within 12 months for former rough sleepers to move on to. This later became known as the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP), described by the Secretary of State as '*unprecedented and most ambitious of its kind*'.³⁴

These were to be let on two-year maximum tenancies, so wouldn't be permanent homes let at social rents. However, there would be potential to offer a permanent tenancy at the end of a fixed term, particularly '*where a former rough sleeper is settled and engaged with local services*.'

While most (£150m) of the funding was allocated in October, MHCLG recently reported schemes were delayed or withdrawn.³⁵ It remains unclear how many of the 3,300 homes have been delivered.

³³ MHCLG, [Government continues drive to end rough sleeping, building on success of Everyone In](#), 22 June 2021

³⁴ MHCLG, [6,000 new supported homes as part of landmark commitment to end rough sleeping](#), 24 May 2020

³⁵ MHCLG, [Long-term accommodation and support allocations](#)

BOX 2: ROUGH SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME

A full explanation of the government's move-on provision can be found in the accompanying document: *Timeline of Pandemic Accommodation Provision March 2020-July 2021*.

- **May 2020** – Promise of £160m move-on funding in 2020/21 to deliver 3,300 'long-term housing assets' (e.g. 30 year lifespan) by March 2021 to be let on maximum 2 year tenancies.
- **May 2020** – 37% increase in revenue funding for specialist support staff (mental health/substance abuse)
- **October 2020** – MHCLG confirms that £150m of the £160m had been allocated, subject to due diligence, to 276 schemes across England, to deliver up to 3,334 homes with support (904 in London and 2,430 outside)
- **Summer 2020** – MHCLG confirms that most of the funding went to councils, with 11 registered providers of social housing (e.g. housing associations) receiving £28.9m (19%).
- **Summer 2020** – MHCLG confirm completion of homes has moved beyond 31st March as a result of unforeseen or unavoidable delays, or withdrawal (where delays or challenging market conditions make them undeliverable). This suggests that not only will there be delays, but the target number may not be reached.

We strongly support the funding of settled homes, provided these are let at rents which can be covered by housing benefit and with support where needed, to help people move on from emergency and temporary accommodation into their own tenancy.

However, a two-year fixed term is still insecure. It would be much better to offer people helped off the street into a permanent home they can afford if relying on housing benefit. A permanent home allows people to feel truly settled and can start to rebuild their life.

In conjunction with the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme, MHCLG also provided £85m in Next Steps Accommodation Programme funding for councils to provide interim support to those accommodated under 'Everyone In'³⁶.

While the aim of the programme was to help people move on into a settled home, it could be used to pay for further emergency accommodation or to ask people to leave hotels to stay with friends, family or leave the country.

³⁶ MHCLG, [Government continues drive to end rough sleeping, building on success of Everyone In](#), 22 June 2021

BOX 3: NEXT STEPS ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME

A full explanation of the government's move-on provision can be found in the accompanying document: *Timeline of Pandemic Accommodation Provision March 2020-July 2021*.

- **June 2020** – MHCLG announce additional **£105m funding** from the Treasury 'to provide interim support for 15,000 vulnerable people accommodated under Everyone In', although only **£85m was actually new funding** from HM Treasury because £20m was from 'refocusing existing homelessness and rough sleeping budgets'
- Government intend this funding to be used to help people into their own tenancies or for councils to secure alternatives to hotel rooms (e.g. empty student accommodation)
- However, it could be used to continue to pay for emergency accommodation or to ask people to leave hotels to stay with friends, family or leave the country.
- **September 2020** – MHCLG announce that £91.5m of the £105m Next Steps funding had been allocated to 274 English councils. Almost half (47%) went to the 33 London boroughs and a further 15% went to 59 councils in the South East.

OUR FINDINGS

In February 2021, when our FOI was conducted, the Government reported that its Everyone In approach 'has so far supported 37,000 into secure accommodation, with more than 26,000 already moved on to longer-term accommodation'.³⁷

MHCLG has provided a little more detail on these figures (as at January 2021)³⁸:

- 11,263 people remained in emergency accommodation including B&Bs, hotels and hostels and
- 26,167 people had been moved on into 'settled accommodation' or 'supported housing'.

This latter figure groups all those moved into tenancies of 6 or more months in private or social housing with those moved to any kind of supported housing scheme. The figure is also likely to include people who have re-connected with friends or family and those who are no longer being accommodated.

³⁷ MHCLG, [Huge progress made as rough sleeping figures at 6 year low](#), 24 February 2021 – At the time of publication, MHCLG continue to cite these figures.

³⁸ MHCLG, Ad hoc statistical publications, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) emergency accommodation survey data: January 2021](#), 25 February 2021

To date, MHCLG have not published more detailed outcome figures for those helped, such as data on those who have left emergency accommodation without move-on accommodation or separate data for those moved on to settled accommodation, supported housing or other outcomes, such as re-connecting with family and friends.

Freshfields LLP supported Shelter to analyse a Freedom of Information (FOI) request sent to all English local authorities (February 2021).

259 (81%) local authorities responded, 234 (74% of total) of which were substantive and included in the analysis. A note on methodology can be found in Appendix 3.

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE MOVED ON TO A SETTLED HOME?

Fewer than **1 in 4 (23%)** people had moved into settled accommodation of at least six months.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE STILL WITHOUT SETTLED ACCOMMODATION?

77%

of people had not moved into settled accommodation

This means that more than three-quarters (77%) of those initially accommodated had not moved into settled accommodation, equating to an estimated 29,000 people.³⁹

These included:

- **Almost 1 in 5 (18%)** people moved into 'supported accommodation'.⁴⁰ This equates to an estimated 6,600 people. This can include settled self-contained accommodation like Housing First.⁴¹ However, Housing First schemes are not yet widespread so it is

³⁹ This combines those who were still in emergency accommodation, those who have moved into supported accommodation (which can be short-term), those who have re-connected with friends or family, those who are no longer being accommodated and those whose outcome is not known. We have assumed that all those with unknown outcomes are not in settled accommodation. We calculated the estimated number of people by applying the percentages to the total number of people helped by Everyone In as at January 2021. MHCLG, Ad hoc analyses and statistics, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) emergency accommodation survey data: January 2021](#) See Appendix 3 for the full breakdown of research findings, including the estimated numbers of people.

⁴⁰ According to MHCLG, 'Supported housing is any housing scheme where housing, support and sometimes care services are provided in one package depending on the individual needs of the person.' These can be either long- or short-term, including hostels and other homeless accommodation. MHCLG, Ad hoc statistical publications, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) emergency accommodation survey data: January 2021](#), Table 2 (footnote 2)

⁴¹ Settled accommodation is defined under homelessness legislation as a tenancy of at least 6 months.

likely to mean many have an insecure licence to occupy a room in a supported hostel (effectively temporary accommodation with no right to move on).

- **1 in 20 (5%) re-connected with friends or family.** This usually means they're sofa surfing, with no right to stay or move on. Staying with friends and family isn't always a sustainable option and we know that no longer being able to stay with friends and family has been the leading trigger of homelessness throughout the pandemic. Between March 2020 and March 2021, a third (32%) of households lost their last settled home due to not being able to stay with friends or family.⁴²

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE NO LONGER ACCOMMODATED?

Almost **1 in 4 (23%)** of the total – and 1 in 3 (30%) of those not moved into settled accommodation – were **no longer accommodated**, either having left accommodation without move on accommodation or with no destination recorded. This equates to an estimated 8,800 people.

30%

of those not in settled accommodation were no longer accommodated

Some of these people are likely to have returned to the streets.

Indeed, although there was a substantial decrease in the number of people recorded as sleeping rough in the official statistics, there were still 2,688 people sleeping rough on a given night in Autumn 2020.⁴³

In London, CHAIN data indicates that numbers sleeping rough across the year were actually 3% higher in 2020/21 than 2019/20.⁴⁴ In July to September 2020, the number of people classed as living on the streets in London (412) was higher than before the pandemic.⁴⁵

HOW MANY PEOPLE REMAIN IN EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION?

22%

A remaining 1 in 5 people (22% of people accommodated under 'Everyone In'/Protect) were still in emergency accommodation, including hotels, hostels and B&Bs. This means that more than

of people were still in emergency accommodation

⁴² MHCLG, Live tables on homelessness, [Statutory homelessness live tables](#), Table A2

⁴³ MHCLG, Live tables on homelessness, [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2020](#), Table 1

⁴⁴ CHAIN, [Greater London Annual Report 2020-21](#), 30th June 2021

⁴⁵ New Policy Institute, [Rough sleeping in London: Back to the old normal, not building back better](#), 4th February 2021,

a fifth of people accommodated by 'Everyone In' had not been moved on. This equates to an estimated 8,300 people.⁴⁶

OUTCOMES OF 'EVERYONE IN'

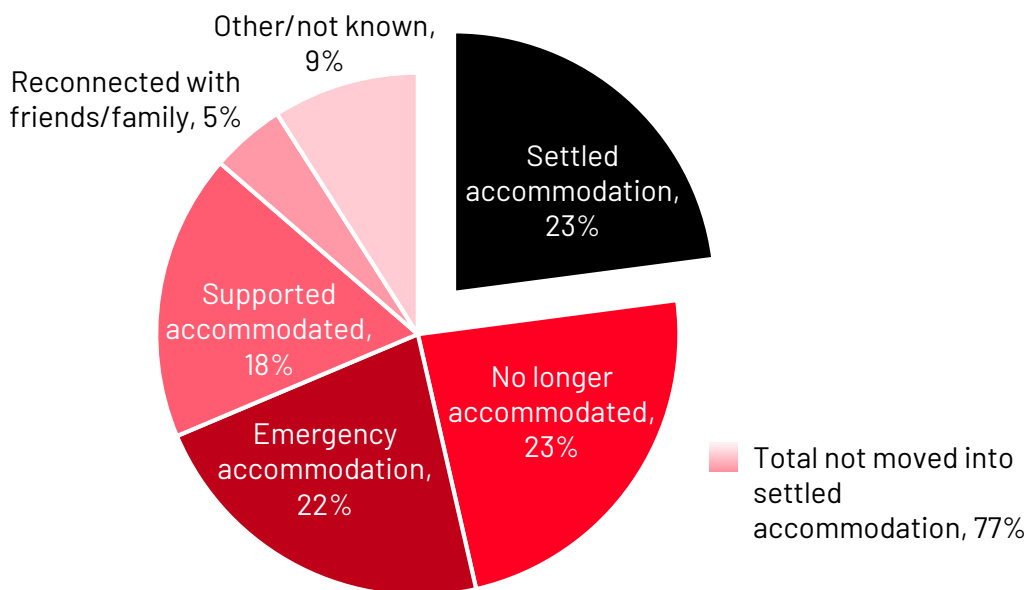


Figure 3: The outcomes of Everyone In, Protect and Protect Plus, Source: Shelter analysis of FOI results, Base: 234 (74%) local authorities who provided a substantive response to this question in our February 2021 FOI

HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE ALREADY ENTITLED TO HELP TO SECURE SETTLED ACCOMMODATION?

This analysis found that three-quarters (75%) of people accommodated under Everyone In/Protect **already had legal rights**⁴⁷ to be helped into accommodation by councils.⁴⁸

This means that the local housing authority had a duty to 'take reasonable steps' to help the majority of people who were initially accommodated under Everyone In to secure accommodation of at least six months.

In theory, the HRA and the funding councils receive to implement it should have been enough to help homeless people (especially those sleeping rough) into accommodation.

⁴⁶ We calculated the estimated number of people by applying the percentages to the total number of people helped by Everyone In as at January 2021. MHCLG, Ad hoc analyses and statistics, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) emergency accommodation survey data: January 2021](#)

⁴⁷ Local housing authorities have a duty (under the [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#)) to relieve homelessness (the 'relief duty') where people are already homeless and eligible for assistance.

⁴⁸ This is based on FOI responses from 205 (65%) local authorities who provided a substantive response to the question on how many people were owed a homelessness duty. We excluded local authorities who suggested that more people had been owed a homelessness duty than were supported by Everyone In.

But in practice councils have historically struggled to relieve homelessness under the Act. And helping those in emergency accommodation into more permanent accommodation remains a challenge despite additional funding during the pandemic.

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO MOVING ON?

NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS (NRPF) – MAJOR BARRIERS TO ACCESSING TENANCIES

It's well known that the No Recourse to Public Funds conditions causes destitution and drives up street homelessness.⁴⁹ People with this condition are more likely to be Black, Asian or other people of colour.

By September 2020 nearly 50% of those still in emergency accommodation in London had this condition, which bars them from accessing long term support like social housing. And it can be challenging for them to find a private rental thanks to the Right to Rent.⁵⁰

Of those who do have a right to rent, some people are entitled to work, but this means they must earn enough to cover the entire rent and could fall into arrears if they're unable to work (e.g. because of lockdown or self-isolation). For many others, it's unlawful to work, so they usually have no means to pay rent. This means landlords are very unlikely to grant tenancies.

23%

of people in emergency accommodation had NRPF

Our February 2021 FOI found that almost 1 in 4 (23%) of those still in emergency accommodation in England were ineligible for homelessness assistance (e.g. NRPF).

This compares to 10% of all people accommodated since March 2020, suggesting that people who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF) are disproportionately more likely to still be in emergency accommodation as a result of facing additional barriers to move on.⁵¹

⁴⁹ C. Sagoe, [Government must support people who have no recourse to public funds](#), 10 June 2020, Shelter Blog

⁵⁰ C. Sagoe, [New 'Right to Rent' rules for EU citizens: A disaster waiting to happen](#), 28 June 2021, Shelter Blog

⁵¹ This is based on FOI responses from 222 (70%) councils who provided a substantive response to the question on whether they had accommodated people who were ineligible for homelessness assistance since March 2020, and 223 (70%) councils who provided a substantive response to the question on whether they were currently accommodating people who were ineligible for homelessness assistance.

So, it's unsurprising that our FOI found very few councils had any move on plans for people who have NRPF,⁵² as there very few move-on options other than charitable provision, successfully applying to have the NRPF condition removed or (if entitled to work) earning enough to pay the rent, which can be very difficult in London.

The lack of move on options for people who are ineligible for homelessness and other assistance risks people in this situation returning to, or being left on, the streets, where they'll be at risk of:

- COVID-19, or other health & safety risks
- removal from the country under last year's immigration rule change⁵³ and
- criminalisation under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.⁵⁴

In order to avoid the streets, there's a risk that homeless people with NRPF can be lured into exploitative housing situations (such as modern slavery) to avoid these risks.

The High Court's *Ncube* judgment has since clarified that councils do have powers to provide accommodation during the pandemic, but this means they must pay all accommodation and support costs – and are likely to need central government funding to do so.

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING AFFORDABLE RENTALS – HOUSING BENEFIT RESTRICTIONS

Even if people are eligible for statutory homelessness assistance and housing benefit, there are substantial barriers to councils helping them to secure a tenancy they can afford.⁵⁵

LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels, which determine how much people can claim towards their rent, are intended to cover the cheapest 30% of rents in a local area. However, we know that 45% of all private renters are now claiming LHA, so it's impossible for everyone to find an affordable home. LHA is also frozen at March 2020 levels and, with rents rising, shortfalls are opening up between the allowance levels and rents. LHA now fails to cover the cost of a modest 1-bedroom home in 67% of England.⁵⁶

⁵² This is based on analysis of 56 local authorities' 'move on' plans, of whom 6 stated their plans for future support of those accommodated with NRPF.

⁵³ House of Commons Library, [Rough sleeping immigration rule: Who does it affect and how?](#), 22 December 2020

⁵⁴ Shelter briefing, [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021](#), June 2021

⁵⁵ H. Spurr, [Shut Out: the barriers low-income households face in private renting](#), 2017, Shelter

⁵⁶ Shelter, [Universal Credit Alert Briefing](#), May 2021

SHARED ACCOMMODATION RATE

There are even greater access barriers for people under 35. Those under 35, single and without children are only entitled to LHA to cover the cost of a room in a shared house (Shared Accommodation Rate or SAR), rather than a self-contained studio or one-bedroom home.⁵⁷ This can make it difficult for people to access self-contained accommodation. Furthermore, the Shared Accommodation Rate fails to cover the cost of a modest room in 57% of England, leaving people with shortfalls. For people under 25, covering shortfalls can be even harder because they're only entitled to a lower rate of Universal Credit for living costs.

HOUSEHOLD BENEFIT CAP

These affordability barriers can be compounded by the household benefit cap, which restricts single people without children to a maximum £13,400 per year outside London, or £15,410 inside London.⁵⁸ The benefit cap has a disproportionate impact in areas with high housing costs, like London and the South East, which tend to have higher numbers of people sleeping rough – quite possibly as a result of the cap. For example, in London 38% of benefit capped household are single households – up from 24% at the start of the pandemic. In England, 33,508 single people with no children now have their benefits capped, which is more than a five-fold increase (up 489%) since the start of the pandemic. Single households lose an average of £36 a week under the cap.⁵⁹

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING ADEQUATE HOUSING SUPPORT – TO SUSTAIN TENANCIES

Another barrier to accessing and keeping a tenancy is lack of support. Some former street homeless people will need intensive support because they have multiple and complex needs, while others will need support when they hit a bump in the road.⁶⁰ The Supporting People programme is designed to help vulnerable people live independently and remain in their own homes. But spending on the Supporting People programme fell by 59% in real terms from 2010/11 to 2016/17 (from £1.44bn to £588m). This resulted in an 18% reduction bed spaces (from 43,655 to 35,727) for single homeless people between 2010 and 2016.⁶¹

⁵⁷ People can be exempt from SAR and eligible for the one-bedroom LHA rate if they've spent a total of 3 months in homeless hostels or refuges since aged 16, or if they're under 25 and were in care when they were 16 or 17.

⁵⁸ A person is benefit capped if they are on Universal Credit and do not earn over £617 per month after tax and NI contributions, or on the old legacy style benefits and do not work more than 16 hours per week

⁵⁹ DWP, Benefit cap statistics, Statexplore, accessed 22nd June 2021

⁶⁰ Smith, M., Albanese, F. and Truder, J., [A Roof Over My Head: the final report of the Sustain project, a longitudinal study of housing outcomes and wellbeing in private rented accommodation](#), 2014, Shelter and Crisis

⁶¹ National Audit Office, [Homelessness](#), 2017

ROADMAP OUT OF HOMELESSNESS

EVERYONE IN: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



2021: ROADMAP OUT OF HOMELESSNESS

ROADMAP OUT OF HOMELESSNESS: OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government's 'Everyone In' approach proved that, with political will, adequate funding for accommodation and support, and local leadership in mobilising the sector, everyone at risk of the streets can quickly be offered the accommodation and support.

'Everyone In' proved it can be done. To protect lives, both during the on-going pandemic and beyond, MHCLG's strategy must learn lessons from 'Everyone In', including a thorough review of outcomes for those helped, and set out a roadmap to end rough sleeping. We hope the research contained in this report will be useful evidence for this endeavour.

A roadmap to end rough sleeping must address the following elements:

EVALUATE: To learn lessons from 'Everyone In', MHCLG must properly assess its impact on those it was designed to protect and move on

Recommendation 1: MHCLG should collate, publish and analyse more robust and detailed statistics on the outcomes of those helped under 'Everyone In' so that the effectiveness of the emergency funding can be properly assessed

PROTECT: An offer of emergency accommodation and adequate support to everyone at risk of the streets for at least the duration of the on-going pandemic

Recommendation 2: Following the *Ncube* judgment, MHCLG must urgently issue robust guidance to local authorities that they should offer emergency accommodation and adequate support to everyone at risk of the streets for the duration of the pandemic.

Recommendation 3: MHCLG guidance to councils must make clear that people should not have to be 'verified' as bedded-down in order to access emergency accommodation. Some people are too frightened to do so⁶².

Recommendation 4: MHCLG must provide local authorities with adequate, dedicated funding to continue to procure emergency accommodation and adequate support for people at risk of the streets for the duration of the pandemic.

⁶² Kleyhans, S., ['We need urgent action to keep people safe through the second lockdown'](#), Shelter, November 2020.

PREVENT - stop people becoming street homeless

Recommendation 5: People at risk of eviction due to COVID-arrears, including people with no recourse to public funds, must be offered payments to help clear or reduce them. As part of the economic recovery from the pandemic, MHCLG must make a dedicated COVID-arrears fund available to prevent homelessness.

Recommendation 6: DWP must end the freeze to Local Housing Allowance (LHA). DWP should also urgently review LHA rates in light of the significant rise in claimants.

Recommendation 7: DWP should abolish the household benefit cap, as it prevents former rough sleepers from moving on to a settled home.

Recommendation 8: People under 35 who need to move on from homeless accommodation, must more easily be able to apply for their right to an exemption from the Shared Accommodation Rate of LHA, so they can access and afford self-contained accommodation.

BUILD - invest in suitable, settled homes for street homeless people

Recommendation 9: MHCLG should continue to fund Housing First pilots, with a view to the roll-out of capital funding for new-build Housing First schemes. The 1990s Conservative Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative delivered 4,000 new homes in London for former rough sleepers. In Finland, Housing First is successful because it's built more than 1,500 permanent homes.

Recommendation 10: The Government should invest in a new generation of social housing aimed at preventing homelessness. Many street homeless people don't have high or long-term support needs, but still need a secure home as a foundation to recovering from the trauma of street homelessness and rebuilding their lives. So, they need rapid access to suitable, permanent general needs social housing.

SUPPORT - invest in homelessness support services

Recommendation 11: MHCLG must invest in long-term homelessness support services, which offer on-site or floating support to people in homeless accommodation, as well as private and social tenants.

INVOLVE - value and listen to experts by experience

Recommendation 12: MHCLG-funded homelessness support services should be encouraged to train and employ people with personal experience of street homelessness as peer support workers.

Recommendation 13: MHCLG and local housing authorities should seek the advice of people with personal experience of street homelessness in developing strategies to end rough sleeping. This should include people who received help under 'Everyone In', even if they returned to homelessness. They are in the best position to advise on what worked for them – and what didn't.

APPENDICES

EVERYONE IN: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



APPENDICES

Left without accommodation in lockdown (March–June 2020)

The following cases were reported by our advisors during the first national lockdown (March – June 2020) when the ‘Everyone In’ approach applied and provide a snapshot rather than a comprehensive account of what the reality was like for some of the most vulnerable people facing homelessness during the pandemic.

NOT ACCOMMODATED UNDER ‘EVERYONE IN’

Access to phones and internet

- **London:** A young pregnant woman was homeless after being asked to leave her shared accommodation when she lost her job. She had no idea what to do, so ended up sleeping in a tent and begging for around a month from late February. Someone told her to contact the council, but each time she was told to apply online, despite her phone being broken. She was only accommodated after we made an online application on her behalf.
- **London:** A man with a history of depression was homeless after fleeing domestic violence, which got worse during lockdown. Having been told about Shelter by a fellow rough sleeper, we helped him to apply to the council. But he remained on the street for a further week because they claimed they couldn’t contact him on his mobile. He was only accommodated after our legal team intervened.

Refused accommodation

- **Thames Valley:** A man was homeless after being asked to leave by his resident landlady. He was a kitchen porter in a care home, so she was worried he may infect her. He applied to the council, but no accommodation was offered. When we contacted them on his behalf, we were assured he’d be accommodated the following morning. However, next day we were told he wouldn’t be accommodated because he’d refused permission for the council to contact his employer (for fear he’d be sacked for being homeless). He became street homeless on the Thursday evening before a bank holiday and slept in a local park while continuing to work in the care home.
- **North East:** A young man, wheelchair-bound following an accident, spent around five weeks without accommodation, including the first three weeks of lockdown. He originally applied for help in the first week of March, but the council refused to assess him because he appeared intoxicated. Social services then referred him back to the housing department, which agreed to provide accommodation, but he was unable to get

to the appointment on time, and – as he'd been sleeping rough – had no means to charge his phone to let them know he'd be late. He was finally accommodated in mid-April after we initiated legal action.

- **South West:** A man was street homeless having been asked to leave where he'd been sofa-surfing because he had COVID-19 symptoms. The council refused accommodation on the basis they were not satisfied he was actually homeless (they couldn't establish whether previous accommodation he'd been sharing with a partner was still available). He spent the day wandering the streets with COVID-19 symptoms, before he contacted Shelter. After our intervention, he was offered accommodation.
- **South West:** A vulnerable man with memory problems was sleeping in a car. We helped him apply for accommodation, but the council didn't reply to any of our emails. Over the weekend, an organisation delivering food parcels noticed he was unwell. He was admitted to hospital with pneumonia and blood clots on his lungs, and only provided with accommodation following discharge from hospital.
- **South West:** A man was sleeping in his car following a relationship breakdown. He applied to the council for accommodation on Wednesday but was told he wouldn't be assessed until Monday, and no interim accommodation was offered. Instead, he was advised to return to his previous accommodation, despite his wife informing the council she could no longer cope with his mental health problems. When we requested interim accommodation over the weekend, this was refused and he was advised to stay with family. Accommodation was finally provided on the Monday after he said he would kill himself.
- **South West:** A vulnerable disabled man was sleeping in his car after he was asked to leave by his partner's mother. He applied for accommodation on a Thursday but was told he wouldn't be assessed until the following Monday. As no interim accommodation was offered, he slept in his car for four nights. Following our representations, accommodation was provided on the Monday.
- **North East:** A woman with depression was homeless after being ordered to stay away from her partner's property following an altercation. She applied for help to two councils where she had a local connection. Both told her they had no accommodation available and she was not assessed by either council. One told her to apply to the other but didn't refer her as legally required. She was finally offered accommodation after we sent a letter.

- **London:** A couple homeless after fleeing an unprovoked attack by neighbours contacted the council several times, but no one got back to them. When we contacted the council on their behalf, we were told it was too late in the day for them to be accommodated. Accommodation was only provided after we sent an urgent letter on their behalf.
- **North East:** A woman, who cares for her parents in their home, was homeless following a relationship breakdown and applied to the council for help. The council's out-of-hours homelessness service said they couldn't help her as they had no suitable accommodation: the only accommodation available was supported accommodation, which would be too expensive for her. She had to pay for a B&B that night with a view to being offered accommodation the following day.
- **Greater Manchester:** A man with severe back pain approached the council for accommodation. A homeless application was taken but no accommodation offered. After a week sofa-surfing, he contacted the council again. He was told to walk into the town centre and wait to be picked up by the outreach team so he could be verified as a rough sleeper. He was unable to do this because the long walk into the town centre was impossible with his back pain. He spent the night in a van before contacting Shelter. He was finally provided with accommodation after we contacted the council on his behalf.

Told they weren't eligible due to immigration status (e.g. no recourse to public funds)

- **London:** A group of three men, who'd been long-term street homeless, applied for accommodation because they were afraid of contracting COVID-19. They were refused on the basis they were foreign nationals with no recourse to public funds, even when we contacted the council on their behalf. They were only accommodated after we'd sent several letters threatening legal action.
- **London:** NACCOM helped a man, who grew up in the UK but had no leave to remain, was unable to work or access public funds. He'd spent the previous three years sofa-surfing or sleeping in Heathrow Airport. When lockdown began, he contacted Streetlink, the council (including councillors), the police, and a number of other agencies. But he couldn't be 'verified' as a rough sleeper by outreach teams as he wasn't bedded down. After two weeks sleeping on night buses and walking the streets, he was only accommodated after the threat of legal action. He was then left without food from Friday to Wednesday.

Our FOI carried out in February 2021 found that more than two-thirds (69%) of councils accommodated people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) during the pandemic. However, for every eight people with NRPF accommodated under 'Everyone In', one has

been turned away.⁶³ This means that an estimated 493 people have been turned down from housing support since March 2020 because they were judged to be ineligible for homelessness assistance.⁶⁴

Told they had no 'priority need' for accommodation

- **London:** A man, who'd been sleeping rough for three months, approached the council at the start of lockdown. He was told nothing could be done to help him as he was not in priority need. He was only offered accommodation after we threatened legal action.
- **South West:** A woman applied for accommodation after been asked to leave her friend's house due to lockdown. She has mental health problems, had previously fled domestic violence and had been through rehab before staying on her friend's sofa. The council refused accommodation on the basis she had no priority need, despite letters from her GP and mental health worker. She spent three nights on the street before sleeping on another friend's sofa. After we intervened, the council eventually agreed to provide accommodation.
- Crisis helped a young man (early 20s), who had slept rough for one night after a violent argument with his family. Crisis paid for a budget hotel for the night, but when he applied for accommodation from the council he was refused on the basis he was not in priority need. When Crisis questioned this, they were advised that the Rough Sleeper Coordinator had been told by MHCLG that all entrenched rough sleepers had been accommodated, so there was no further accommodation for people who weren't in priority need.

Told they had no local connection to the council area

- **Eastern Counties:** A teenager (18 years) was refused accommodation on the basis he had no local connection because his family lived elsewhere. But he'd not lived with them for a number of years after being taken into care. Finally, he was referred to the council area where he had been living in care, which offered accommodation. In the meantime, he spent a week on the floor of another homeless person's emergency hotel room.
- **North East:** A woman with a serious mental health condition and a toddler daughter, who was homeless following a relationship breakdown, applied to the council but was told

⁶³ These figures are based on the responses of 222 councils (70%) who provided a substantive response to the question on the number of people they accommodated who were ineligible for homelessness assistance, 11 of whom reported turning people who were ineligible away.

⁶⁴ We calculated the estimated number of people by applying the percentages to the total number of people helped by Everyone In as at January 2021. MHCLG, Ad hoc analyses and statistics, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) emergency accommodation survey data: January 2021](#)

they couldn't help as she had no local connection. This obviously left her very distressed, fearing they would be spending the night on the streets. She contacted Shelter and we approached the council on her behalf. They agreed to make a local connection referral. Mother and daughter were accommodated that night by another council, which also arranged viewings of private rentals.

- **Greater Manchester:** A young woman fleeing domestic violence applied for help in early May. She was told the council couldn't accommodate because she had no local connection, she wasn't even assessed. She then approached Shelter, and we referred her back to the council. This time, she was told there were no spaces for women. She had been street homeless for around 10 days. Following our further intervention, a homelessness application was taken and accommodation provided.

Offered unsuitable accommodation

- **London:** Crisis helped a man who had previously been in prison, who was told he could only be offered accommodation in central London. He was unable to accept this because he is barred from the area under the criminal justice system. He was told that no alternative accommodation could be offered, so was forced to sleep rough.
- **Yorkshire:** A woman, who needed to escape the area due to harassment and domestic violence, tried to make a homeless application to another council. She was wrongly advised to apply for social housing but told she couldn't register as she didn't have a local connection to the area. By the time we helped her to apply for homeless accommodation she'd already spent several days feeling unsafe where she was living.

Asked to leave accommodation during 'Everyone In'

We also helped people who were initially offered accommodation but were subsequently asked to leave, even though this meant they had to return to the streets during the pandemic. Some people were asked to leave because of their nationality:

- **South West:** A man who had been provided with emergency accommodation after sleeping rough received a letter from the council on 1 May stating he had to leave. The reason given was that he had not provided them with information about previous addresses. English is his second language and so he had difficulty in understanding what was required. The letter stated that if he confirmed he would be returning to his country of birth (he is an EU national) once the travel restrictions were lifted, the council would continue to accommodate. If he didn't, they would end the accommodation immediately. We helped him to challenge this decision.

But most people had been asked to leave because they had inadequate support with mental health problems while in the accommodation. Many local authorities booked commercial hotel rooms which were vacant due to the pandemic.

In some regions, such as Greater London and Greater Manchester, a number of hotels were block-booked and support workers commissioned from organisations like St Mungo's, turning them into de facto homeless hostels. But in other areas, the only regular support available was from skeleton hotel staff, inexperienced in dealing with people with complex needs. Like most of us, people became anxious during lockdown, which triggered past trauma and exacerbated health problems and substance misuse.

- **Eastern counties:** A woman was told to leave her hotel accommodation because it had been reported to the council she'd breached lockdown rules. It transpired her breach was sharing a car so she could visit her doctor to obtain a prescription, as there was no public transport available. She was made street homeless by the decision and spent around a week in a tent provided to her by the police. After we intervened the council provided further accommodation.
- **North East:** A man recently released from prison and accommodated in an emergency hotel was asked to leave following a single incident where he was arrested for being drunk and disorderly. He was not warned and not asked to provide his version of events to the council. The council then claimed he was too high risk to accommodate back in the hotel or in any supported hostel accommodation, so he resorted to sofa surfing despite lockdown restrictions.
- **North East:** A man, who suffers from depression, anxiety and memory problems from a head injury, and had recently been released from prison, was provided with hotel accommodation. Needing support with his mental health, he travelled to his ex-partner's home, but missed the last bus back, so had to stay the night. The following day, the council informed his probation officer that they would end his accommodation for breach of COVID rules. After we contacted them, they provided accommodation in another hotel. But then informed us that, because he had allegedly been drunk and wet the bed, he would have to leave within 24 hours.
- **Greater Manchester:** A young woman with complex needs was repeatedly asked to leave a number of emergency hotels during lockdown because of her disruptive behaviour. She has an alcohol problem and a terrible history of trauma as a result of childhood abuse. One hotel wasn't in her hometown, so she was isolated from her support network and health services. Her Shelter engagement worker helped her access a guest house and worked with the council and a mental health worker to support her while staying there so that she could avoid the risks of the streets.

- **Greater Manchester:** A woman with complex needs, including mental health problems and drug-alcohol dependency, was asked to leave interim accommodation on 27 March for not abiding by social distancing rules. Shelter then had to pay for an hotel for a couple of nights before she was offered a council-funded hotel room.
- **London:** Crisis helped a young man (early 20s) with complex needs (substance misuse and mental health issues), who was sleeping rough after his care placement broke down. The council initially accommodated him in an hotel, but this also broke down due to lack of support, and the council said they couldn't accommodate him elsewhere as his needs were too high. He then slept rough.

Sometimes, people were asked to leave due to administration errors:

- **Yorkshire:** A man who was fleeing domestic violence was told to leave the accommodation after three days because his booking hadn't been updated. He was then street homeless and approached us for help. After we contacted the council, his accommodation was rebooked, and he was afterwards provided with a short term let. However, no assessment was undertaken at any stage by the council.

Of course, these cases were exceptional. In thousands of cases, councils worked hard to procure and offer suitable accommodation. In a letter to local authorities in mid-April, the Secretary of State confirmed: *'more than 5,400 rough sleepers have been offered safe accommodation'*, representing *'over 90% of those on the streets and in communal night shelters at the beginning of the crisis and known to local authorities.'*

But each of the cases above was a person in crisis, who had nowhere to go while most of us were locked down in our homes. No one should have been left on the streets during a pandemic, least of all people vulnerable due to poor mental and physical health. It also meant they might transmit the virus.

High Court judgment: *Ncube v Brighton & Hove City Council* clarifies that councils can legally accommodate people during the pandemic (March 2021)

On 10 March 2021, the High Court cleared up the confusion as to whether councils could legally accommodate people ineligible for statutory homelessness assistance because of their immigration status, e.g. NRPF.

The court was ruling in the case of *Timon Ncube and Brighton & Hove City Council*.⁶⁵

Timon Ncube is a 61-year old man, who fled Zimbabwe to seek asylum in the UK. However, his asylum claim was refused and he was left without accommodation. Since September 2020, he had spent most nights sleeping outside Brighton and Hove Railway Station.

Mr Ncube has a number of health problems, including visual impairment as a result of diabetes, depression and anxiety, though he had no formal diagnoses as he was unable to access a GP.

Mr Ncube asked the council for help with accommodation at the start of September but was told he wasn't eligible for statutory homelessness assistance. In early October, his adviser requested he was accommodated under the Everyone In scheme, but the council again refused. Following a court application, Mr Ncube was provided with Everyone In accommodation by the council via St Mungo's, before eventually being accommodated by the Home Office.⁶⁶

Shelter intervened in this important case to ask the court to consider whether the council had unlawfully refused to find accommodation for Mr Ncube because they'd failed to consider the whole range of legal powers available to them. We told the court we had seen first-hand the devastating impact on men, women and children left without help during a health crisis of such magnitude.

⁶⁵ England and Wales High Court (Administrative Court) Decisions, [R\(on the application of Timon Ncube\) v Brighton & Hove City Council](#), 11 March 2021, BAILII

⁶⁶ Under Section 4(2) [Immigration and Asylum Act 1999](#), which allows the Home Office to provide accommodation to people whose applications for asylum in the UK have been refused

The High Court ruled that *'as regards the provision of temporary accommodation pursuant to the "Everyone In" scheme or a successor initiative to street homeless persons in order to save lives alleviating the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic'*, councils have:

- powers under the Local Government Act 1972 (s.138) in an emergency or disaster involving danger to life to incur such expenditure as they consider necessary for them to avert, alleviate or eradicate the effects or potential effects of the event;
- a duty under National Health Service Act 2006 (s.2B), which permits councils to take such steps as they consider appropriate for improving the health of the people in their area. That power can be used to accommodate people who are not eligible for homelessness assistance under s.185 Housing Act 1996, where the accommodation is provided in order to minimise any risk to health.

Notwithstanding that some of the recipients may be persons who are ineligible for homelessness assistance (e.g. because of NRPF), these provisions may be used to provide accommodation to rough sleepers during the pandemic provided they are not used to circumvent the restrictions of Housing Act 1996 (s.185) or Nationality and Immigration Act 2002 (Schedule 3).

Following this judgment, Shelter urged the Government to carefully consider its implications. We again called for MHCLG to issue explicit guidance to councils confirming they could and should be using their powers under the above legislation to help everyone off the streets for the duration of the pandemic.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Brown, R., [High Court rules councils can lawfully accommodate street homeless people with 'No Recourse to Public Funds' – will the government now provide proper guidance?](#), Shelter Blog, 10 March 2021

Note on the methodology

This report includes findings from a Freedom of Information (FOI) request that our partners at Freshfields LLP sent to all local authorities in England at the end of February 2021.⁶⁸

Aim of the FOI

The aim of the FOI was to find out more detailed information about the people accommodated in emergency accommodation as part of Everyone In with a focus on where people are now. It sought to respond to the gaps in MHCLG's statistics,⁶⁹ including:

- The number of people who have been 'moved on' from emergency accommodation combines those who have moved into settled accommodation of at least six months and those who have moved into 'supported accommodation', which is often short-term. The figure is also likely to include people who have re-connected with friends or family and those who are no longer being accommodated
- There is no data on the number of people who have been accommodated who were ineligible for statutory homelessness assistance (i.e. those who had no recourse to public funds)
- There is no data on how many people were owed a statutory homelessness duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Our FOI asked questions on all three of these areas. We also requested local authorities' most recent 'move on' plans. This is the plan that was requested to be updated by the end of 2020 by the Secretary of State for Housing and Communities in his announcement of 5 November 2020.⁷⁰

Responses

We received responses from 259 (81%) local authorities, 234 (74% of total) of which were substantive.⁷¹ We excluded local authorities who provided an incomplete or inaccurate response to individual questions to avoid skewing the results. For example, 222 (70%) councils provided a substantive response the question on the number of

⁶⁸ We included the Greater London Authority in our analysis as they also provided emergency accommodation to people as part of Everyone In.

⁶⁹ MHCLG, Ad hoc analyses and statistics, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) emergency accommodation survey data: January 2021](#)

⁷⁰ MHCLG, [Jenrick launches 'Protect Programme': the next step in winter rough sleeping plan](#), 5 November 2020

⁷¹ A response is substantive if the local authority provided most or all of the data requested.

people accommodated who were ineligible for homelessness assistance since March 2020 and 205 (65%) local authorities provided a substantive response to the question on how many people were owed a homelessness duty.

We received a response from the majority of local authorities in all regions, suggesting that we can be confident in the representativeness of the results.⁷² However, due to the lack of government guidance we know the response from councils has been variable. This means that the findings should be viewed as estimates of the picture across all local authorities in England and all people who have been supported by Everyone In, rather than fully accurate measures.

Analysis

The government claims that as of January 2021, 37,430 people had been supported by Everyone In, Protect and Protect Plus.⁷³ We calculated the estimated number of people by applying the FOI findings to the total number of people helped by Everyone In. This allows us to estimate the number of people who have achieved different outcomes as a result of the initiatives, including the number of people who have not moved into settled accommodation of at least six months.

Outcomes of Everyone In	Percentage of people	Estimated number of people
No longer accommodated ⁷⁴	23%	8,795
Settled accommodation	23%	8,579
Emergency accommodation	22%	8,316
Supported accommodated	18%	6,634
Re-connected with friends/family	5%	1,719
Other/not known	9%	3,387
Total not moved into settled accommodation⁷⁵	77%	28,851

Table 1 The outcomes of Everyone In, Protect and Protect Plus, Source: Shelter analysis of FOI results and MHCLG data, Base: 234 (74%) local authorities who provided a substantive response to this question in our February 2021 FOI

⁷² We received substantive responses from between 65% and 86% of councils in different regions.

⁷³ MHCLG, Ad hoc analyses and statistics, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) emergency accommodation survey data: January 2021](#)

⁷⁴ This includes people who were no longer accommodated due to having left accommodation without move on accommodation or with no destination recorded.

⁷⁵ This combines those who were still in emergency accommodation, those who have moved into supported accommodation (which can be short-term), those who have re-connected with friends or family, those who are no longer being accommodated and those whose outcome is not known. We have assumed that all those with unknown outcomes are not in settled accommodation.

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