



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Rough Sleeping Statistics Autumn 2018, England

This publication provides information on the single night snapshot of rough sleeping for autumn 2018. The snapshot is taken annually in England using street counts, evidence-based estimates, and estimates informed by spotlight street counts.

- The total number of people counted or estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night was 4,677.
- This was down by 74 people or 2% from the 2017 total of 4,751, and was up 2,909 people or 165% from the 2010 total of 1,768.
- The number of people sleeping rough increased by 146 or 13% in London, and decreased by 220 or 6% in the rest of England, since 2017.
- London accounted for 27% of the total number of people sleeping rough in England. This is up from 24% of the England total in 2017.
- 64% were UK nationals, compared to 71% in 2017. 22% were EU nationals from outside the UK, compared to 16% in 2017. 3% were non-EU nationals, compared to 4% in 2017.
- 14% of the people recorded sleeping rough were women, the same as in 2017; and 6% were aged 25 years or under, compared to 8% in 2017.

The street counts, evidence-based estimates, and estimates informed by spotlight street counts aim to get as accurate a representation of the number of people sleeping rough as possible. This provides a way of estimating the number of people sleeping rough across England on a single night and assessing change over time.

Accurately counting or estimating the number of people sleeping rough within a local authority is inherently difficult given the hidden nature of rough sleeping. There are a range of factors that can impact on the number of people seen or thought to be sleeping rough on any given night. This includes the weather, where people choose to sleep, the date and time chosen, and the availability of alternatives such as night shelters.

Housing Statistical Release

31 January 2019

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Introduction

This is the ninth statistical release presenting an annual single night snapshot of the number of people sleeping rough following the introduction of revised guidance in September 2010. The release presents national summary statistics on rough sleeping using information collected by local authorities in England between 1 October and 30 November 2018. Since 2016, the release has included some basic demographic information about those people found sleeping rough, including gender, age and nationality.

Rough sleeping street counts and estimates are single night snapshots of the number of people sleeping rough in local authority areas. Based on what is most appropriate in their area, local authorities decide whether to carry out a street count of visible rough sleeping, an evidence-based estimate, or an estimate informed by a spotlight street count, where a street count is undertaken in particular locations on the chosen night. All of the available methods record only those people seen, or thought to be, sleeping rough on a single 'typical' night. They do not include everyone in an area with a history of sleeping rough, or everyone sleeping rough in areas across the October-November period.

Local authorities use a specific definition to identify people sleeping rough. This includes people sleeping or who are about to bed down in open air locations and other places including tents, cars, and makeshift shelters. See **Definitions** for more information.

In 2018, similar to previous years, the majority of local authorities used an evidence-based estimate or an estimate informed by a spotlight street count to provide their annual single night snapshot figure and demographic information. Local authorities consult with local agencies who are in regular contact with people sleeping rough. This includes outreach teams, the police, health workers, voluntary organisations, and faith groups.

These annual rough sleeping statistics are now established as a consistent time series and provide a way of assessing change over the years. Their robustness is enhanced by the provision of detailed guidance to authorities on how to conduct counts and estimates; the involvement of local partner agencies; and the work of Homeless Link to verify all local counts and validate local estimates and demographic information.

Nevertheless, there are many practical difficulties in counting the number of people sleeping rough within a local authority area. It is not always possible to cover the entire area of a local authority in a single evening, so street counts may be targeted according to local intelligence. People may bed down at different times meaning some may be missed. Some places where people bed down may be difficult or unsafe for those conducting the street count to access. For such reasons, the figures in this release are subject to some uncertainty. In addition to the difficulty of finding everyone who is sleeping rough, various factors can affect the number of people who are sleeping rough on any given night, such as the availability of alternatives such as night shelters, the weather, where people choose to sleep, and the date and time chosen for the snapshot assessment. Further information is given in the **Data Quality** section.

Other statistical releases and data sources provide information on rough sleeping levels and trends, and the characteristics of those sleeping rough. For example, the London CHAIN database contains information on the individuals seen sleeping rough by outreach teams in London. More information on the CHAIN data for October-December 2018 is available in **Related Statistics**. However, this is not directly comparable to the data in this release as it refers to a three month period rather than a single night.

This release does not provide data on the definitive number of people or households affected by homelessness in England. This release excludes households owed a statutory homelessness duty, households in temporary accommodation, the hidden homeless, and those living in overcrowded or inhabitable conditions that have not approached their local authority for assistance. In December 2018, MHCLG published a separate release on households owed a new statutory homelessness duty between April – June 2018, including information on households in temporary accommodation. See **Related Statistics** for more information and links to other sources.

Rough Sleeping

Local authorities' street counts and estimates show that 4,677 people were found sleeping rough in England on a single night in autumn 2018. This is down by 74 (2%) from the autumn 2017 total of 4,751, and up by 2,909 (165%) from the autumn 2010 total of 1,768.

Of this total, 1,283 people were sleeping rough in London in autumn 2018. This is an increase of 13% from 1,137 in autumn 2017. London accounted for 27% of the total figure for England, compared to 24% in 2017, and 23% in 2016.

There were 3,394 people sleeping rough in the rest of England, a decrease of 220 or 6% from 3,614 in autumn 2017 figure. Across the 293 local authorities in the rest of England, 134 or 46% reported an increase, 117 or 40% reported a decrease, and 42 or 14% reported no change, since 2017.

The number of people sleeping rough in England, London and the rest of England are shown in **Table 1** and **Chart 1**.

Table 1: Number of people sleeping rough, England, London, and Rest of England, autumn 2010 to autumn 2018

	England	% change on previous year	London	% change on previous year	Rest of England	% change on previous year
2010	1,768		415		1,353	
2011	2,181	23%	446	7%	1,735	28%
2012	2,309	6%	557	25%	1,752	1%
2013	2,414	5%	543	-3%	1,871	7%
2014	2,744	14%	742	37%	2,002	7%
2015	3,569	30%	940	27%	2,629	31%
2016	4,134	16%	964	3%	3,170	21%
2017	4,751	15%	1,137	18%	3,614	14%
2018	4,677	-2%	1,283	13%	3,394	-6%

Chart 1: Number of people sleeping rough, England, London and Rest of England, autumn 2010 to autumn 2018

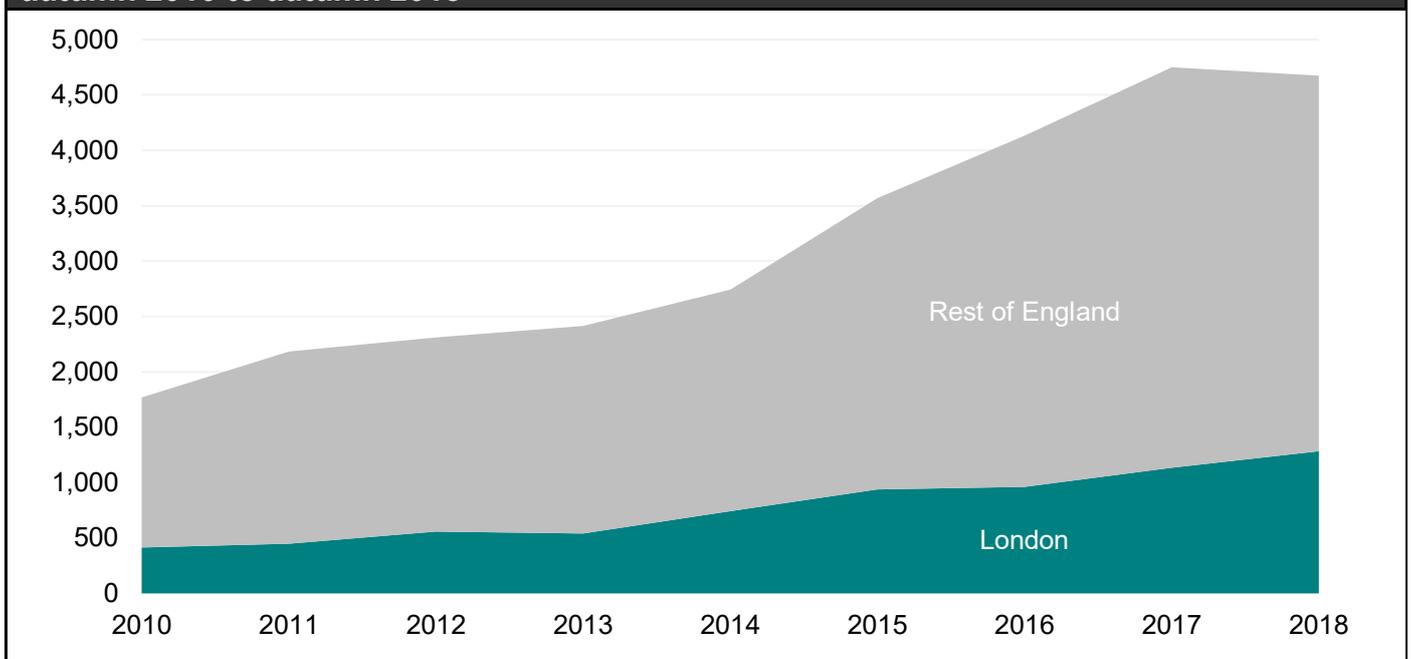


Table 2 shows the ten local authorities with the largest number of people sleeping rough in autumn 2018.

Within London boroughs there were larger changes in the number of people sleeping rough than the increase in London as a whole. People sleeping rough in London are likely to move across borough boundaries. Across the 33 boroughs of London, 19 or 58% of local authorities reported increases, 13 or 39% reported decreases, and 1 or 3% reported no change in the number of people sleeping rough since autumn 2017.

Table 2: Top ten local authorities with the highest number of people sleeping rough England, autumn 2018

Local Authority	Total	Difference since last year	% change since last year	Rate per 10,000 households
Westminster	306	89	41%	26.4
Camden	141	14	11%	13.0
Manchester	123	29	31%	5.7
Birmingham	91	34	60%	2.1
Bristol	82	-4	-5%	4.2
Newham	79	3	4%	7.0
Enfield	78	69	767%	6.0
Hillingdon	70	34	94%	6.4
City of London	67	31	86%	189.6
Brighton & Hove	64	-114	-64%	5.1
England	4,677	-74	-2%	2.0

Table 3 and **Charts 2 and 3** show the ten local authorities with the largest increases, and the ten with the largest decreases, in the number of people sleeping rough since last year. Westminster saw the largest increase, up by 89 people, while Brighton & Hove saw the largest overall decrease, down by 114 people, since the autumn 2017 snapshot.

Across the ten local authorities with the largest increases (see **Table 3**), there was an increase of 378 people, which accounts for 35% of the total increase seen across 153 local authorities. Correspondingly, across the ten authorities with the largest decreases, there was a decrease of 424 people, which accounts for 36% of the total decrease seen across 130 local authorities.

When comparing across years and between local authorities, there are a range of factors that may impact on the number of people sleeping rough including the weather, where people choose to sleep, movement across local authority boundaries particularly in London, the date and time chosen, and the availability of alternatives such as night shelters.

Table 3: Local authorities with the ten largest increases and ten largest decreases in the number of people sleeping rough between autumn 2017 and autumn 2018, England

Local Authority	2018 Total	2017 Total	Difference	% change
Westminster	306	217	89	41%
Enfield	78	9	69	767%
Birmingham	91	57	34	60%
Hillingdon	70	36	34	94%
City of London	67	36	31	86%
Manchester	123	94	29	31%
Rugby	32	6	26	433%
Corby	28	4	24	600%
Swale	32	9	23	256%
Doncaster	27	8	19	238%
Brighton & Hove	64	178	-114	-64%
Southend-on-Sea	11	72	-61	-85%
Luton	47	87	-40	-46%
Redbridge	26	65	-39	-60%
Eastbourne	6	41	-35	-85%
Maidstone	9	41	-32	-78%
Ealing	33	62	-29	-47%
Medway	19	44	-25	-57%
Bedford	51	76	-25	-33%
Worthing	11	35	-24	-69%

Chart 2: Top ten local authorities with the largest increases in the number of people sleeping rough between autumn 2017 and autumn 2018, England

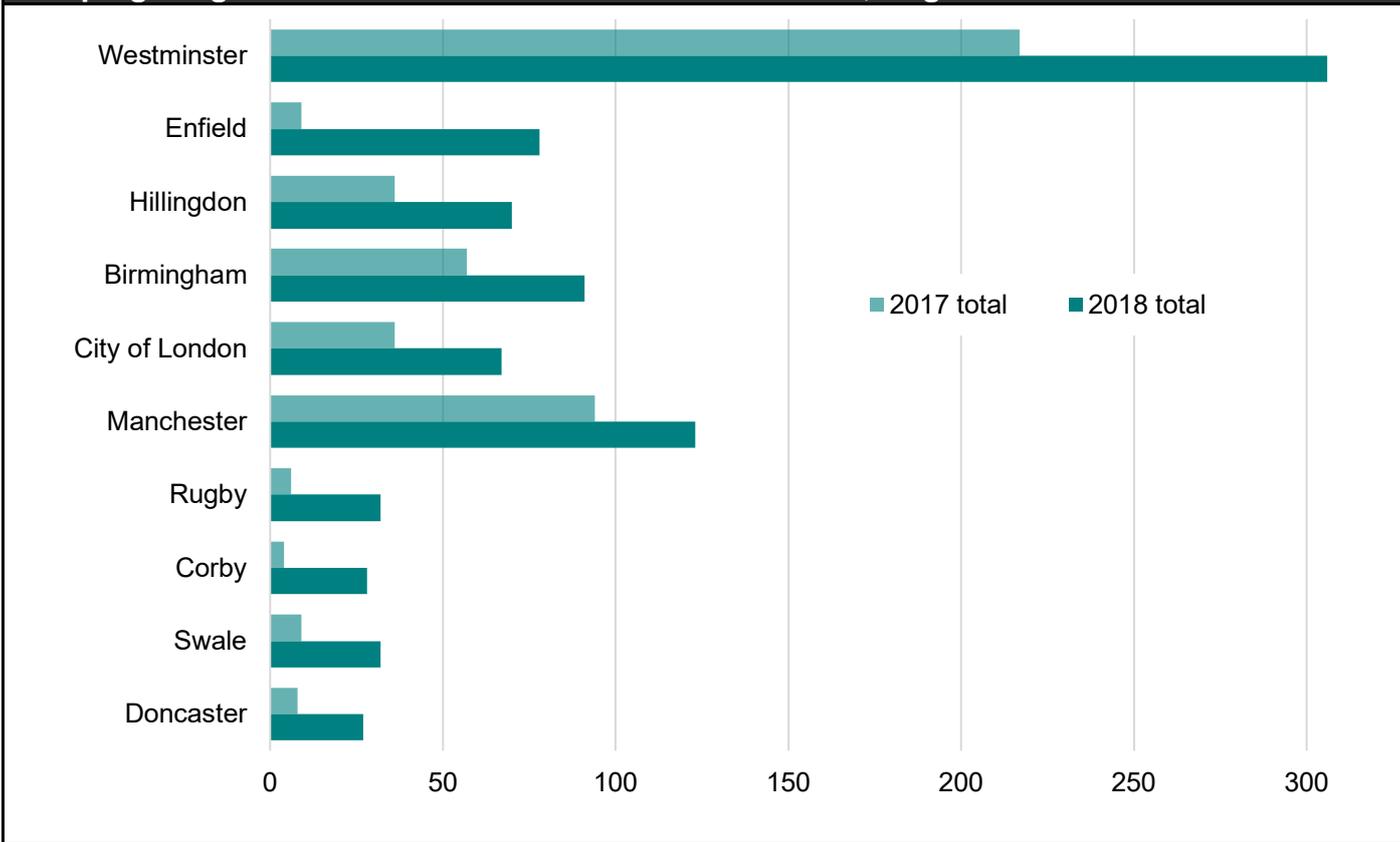


Chart 3: Top ten local authorities with the largest decreases in the number of people sleeping rough between autumn 2017 and autumn 2018, England

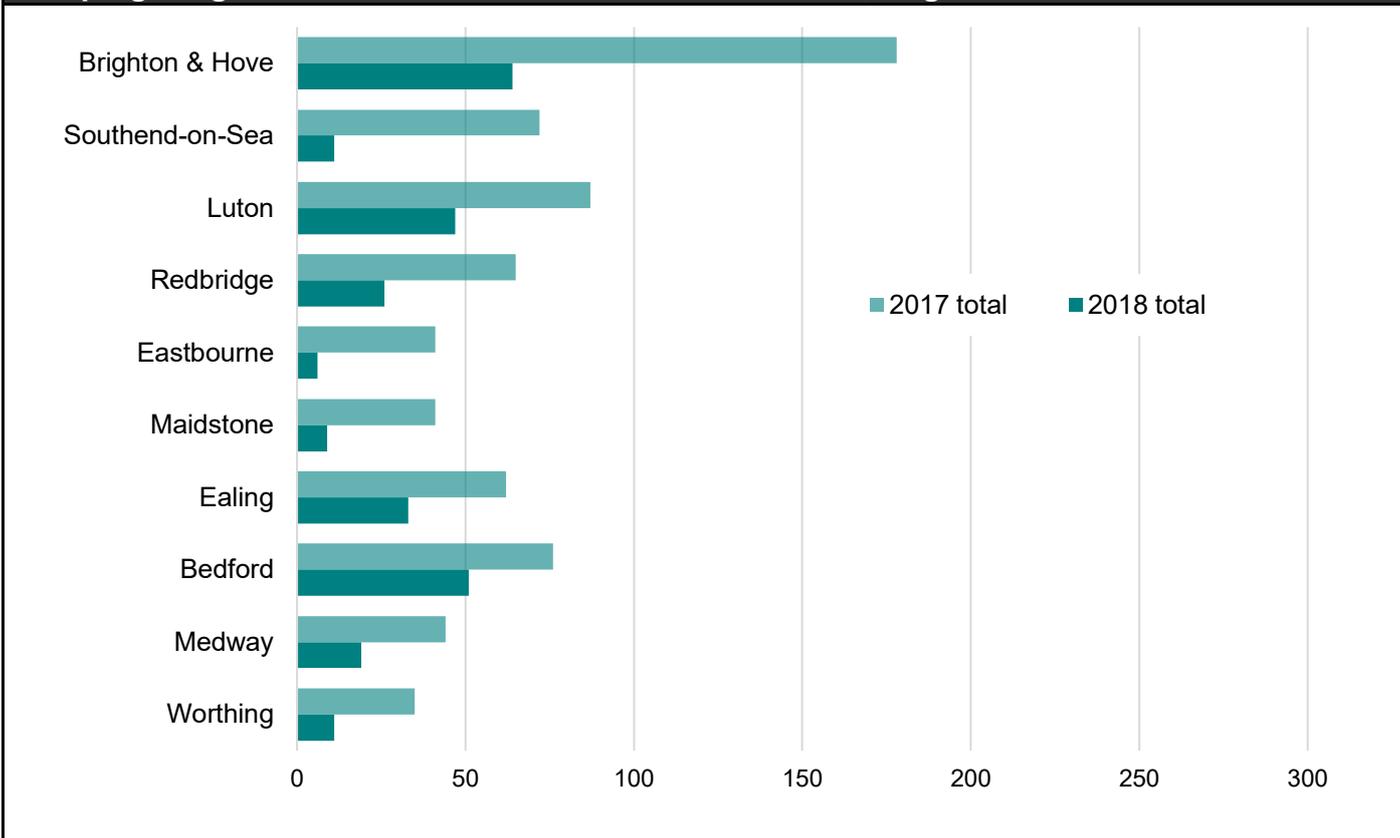
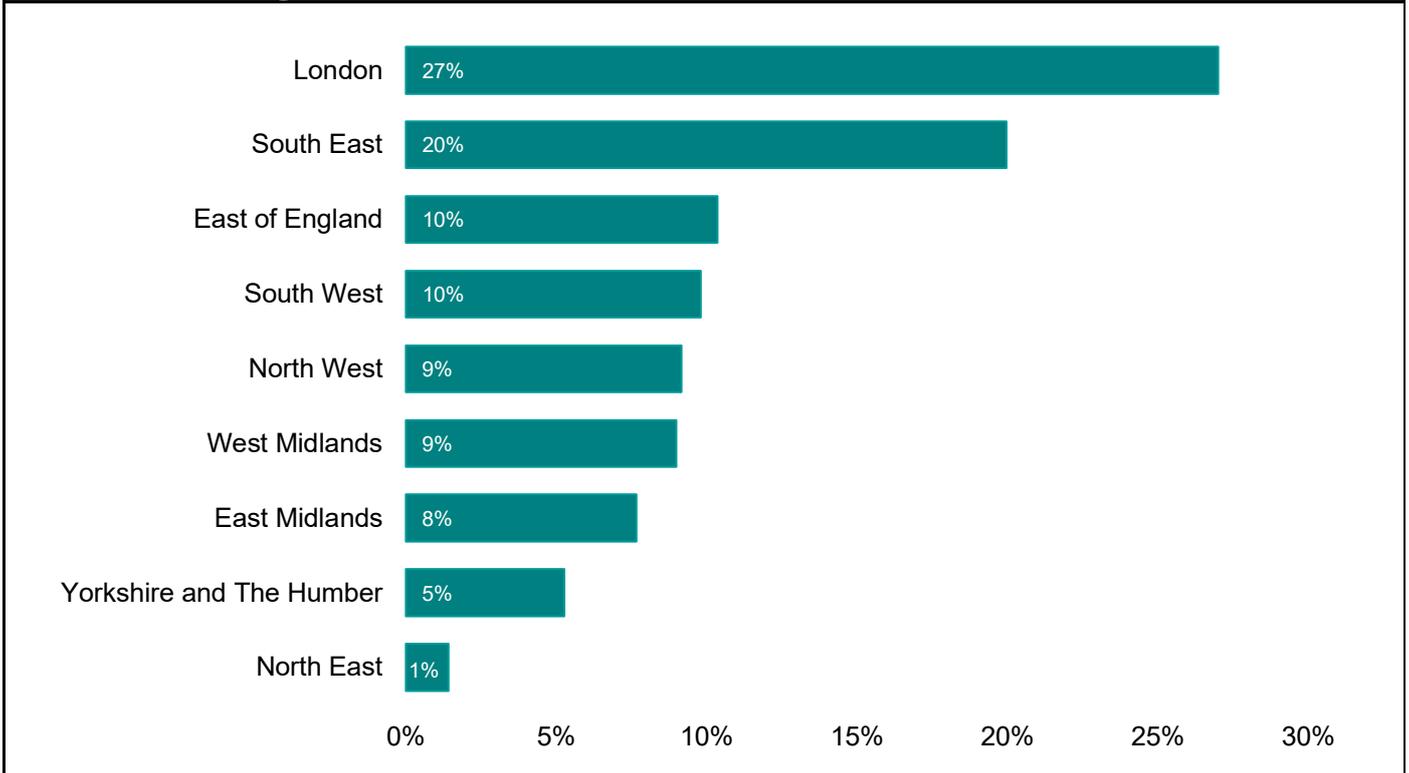


Table 4 and **Chart 4** show the number of people sleeping rough in each region of England. London and the West Midlands were the regions that saw the largest increases in the number of people sleeping rough from 2017. In 2018 there were 1,283 people sleeping rough in London, up 146 (13%) from 2017. In the West Midlands, there were 420 people sleeping rough, up 125 (42%) from 2017. The largest decreases were in the South East and East of England, down by 185 (17%) and 131 (21%) since 2017 respectively. London and the South East accounted for nearly half (2,217, 47%) of all the people recorded sleeping rough in England in the autumn 2018 snapshot.

Table 4: Number of people sleeping rough by region, autumn 2010 to autumn 2018, England

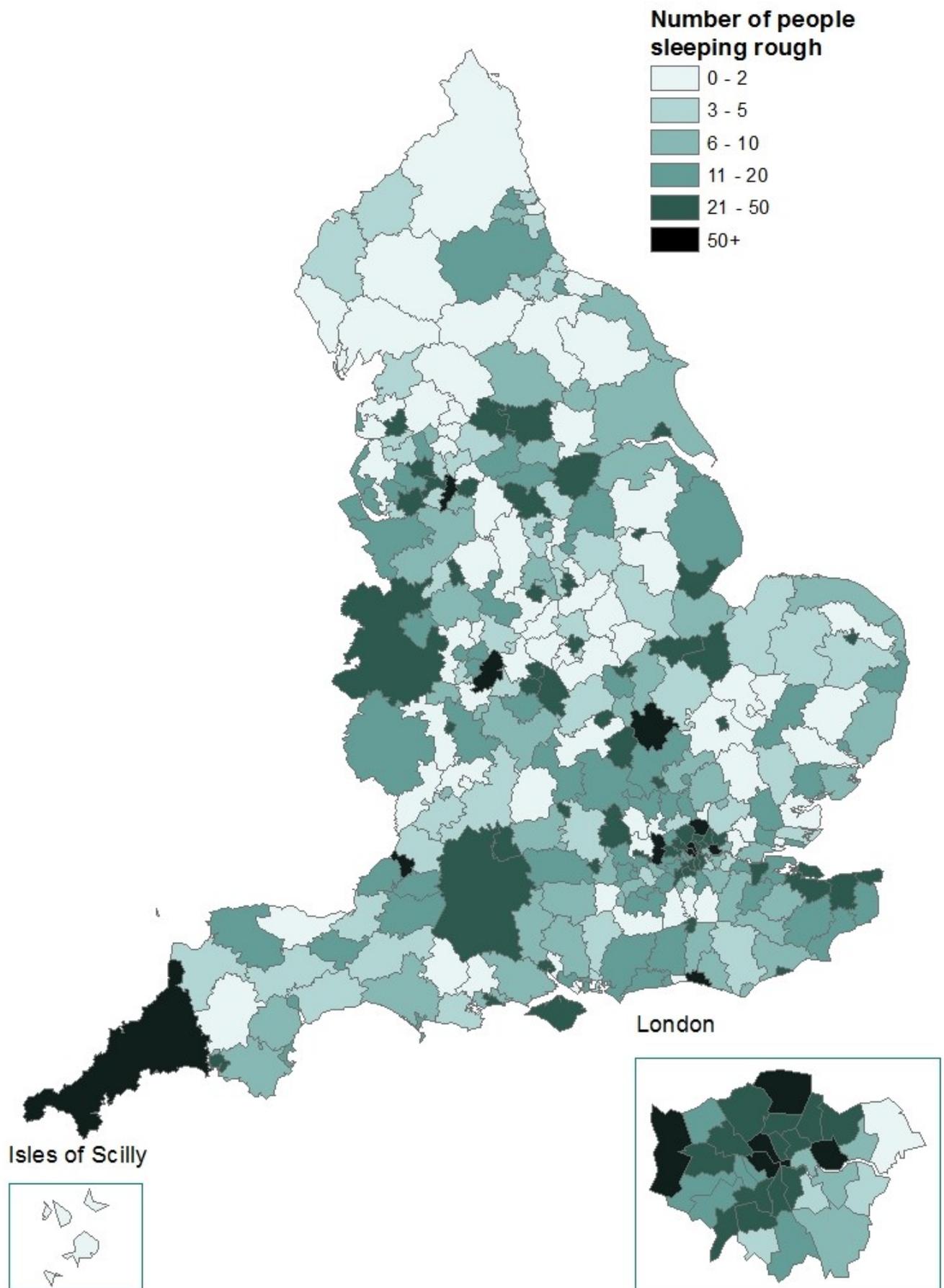
Region	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
North East	49	32	62	25	35	38	45	51	66
% change		-35	94	-60	40	9	18	13	29
% of total	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
North West	100	149	147	152	189	220	313	434	428
% change		49	-1	3	24	16	42	39	-1
% of total	6	7	6	6	7	6	8	9	9
Yorkshire & The Humber	115	150	157	129	126	160	172	207	246
% change		30	5	-18	-2	27	8	20	19
% of total	7	7	7	5	5	4	4	4	5
East Midlands	121	188	137	206	193	208	255	313	358
% change		55	-27	50	-6	8	23	23	14
% of total	7	9	6	9	7	6	6	7	8
West Midlands	182	207	230	223	186	249	289	295	420
% change		14	11	-3	-17	34	16	2	42
% of total	10	9	10	9	7	7	7	6	9
East of England	206	242	276	296	302	418	604	615	484
% change		17	14	7	2	38	44	2	-21
% of total	12	11	12	12	11	12	15	13	10
London	415	446	557	543	742	940	964	1,137	1,283
% change		7	25	-3	37	27	3	18	13
% of total	23	20	24	22	27	26	23	24	27
South East	310	430	442	532	609	827	956	1,119	934
% change		39	3	20	14	26	16	17	-17
% of total	18	20	19	22	22	23	23	24	20
South West	270	337	301	308	362	509	536	580	458
% change		25	-11	2	18	41	5	8	-21
% of total	15	15	13	13	13	14	13	12	10
England	1,768	2,181	2,309	2,414	2,744	3,569	4,134	4,751	4,667
% change		23	6	5	14	30	16	15	-2

Chart 4: Percentage of the total number of people sleeping rough by region, autumn 2018, England



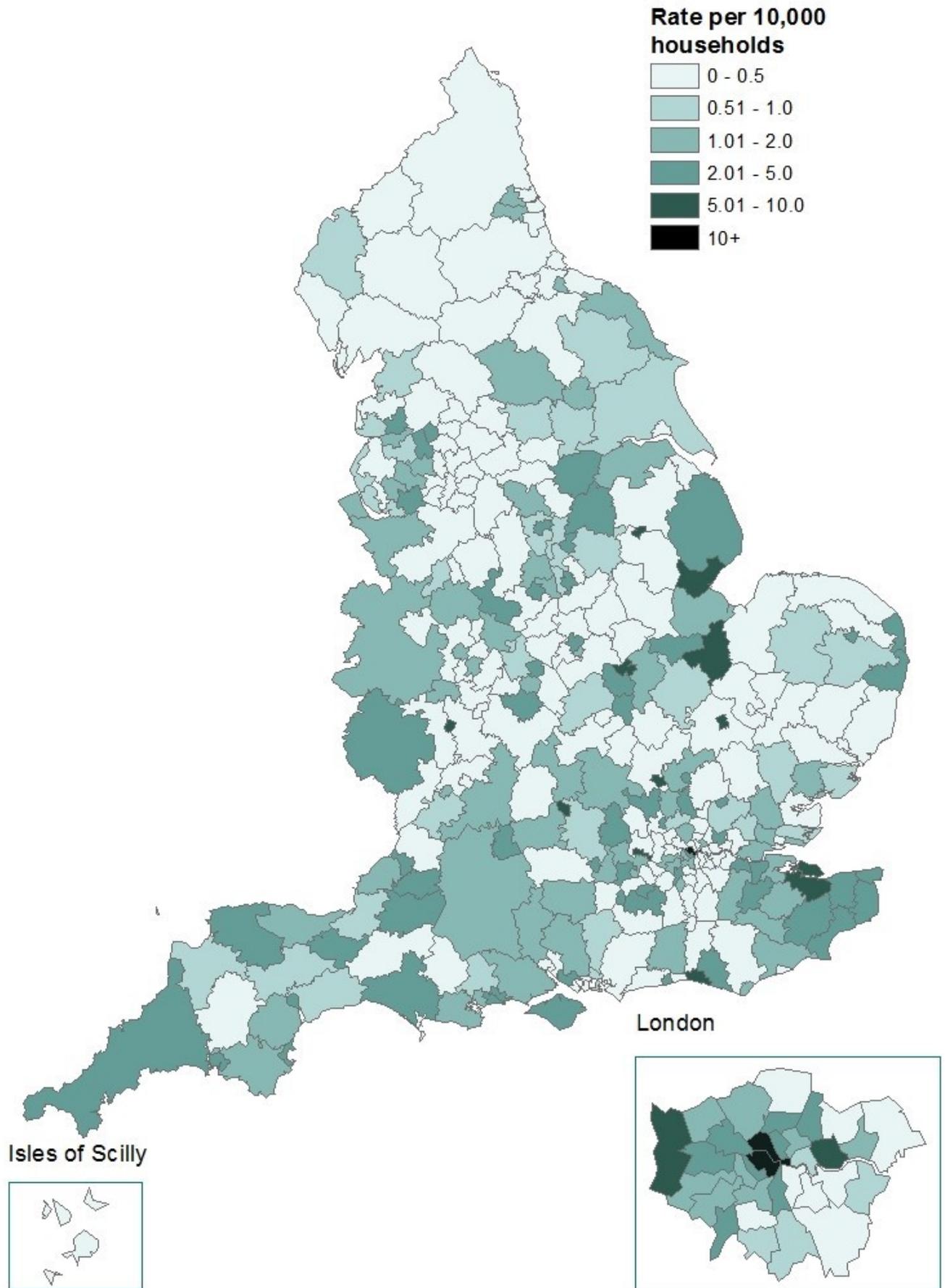
Map 1 shows the number of people sleeping rough in each local authority. **Map 2** presents the rate of people sleeping rough per 10,000 households by local authority in autumn 2018. The rate was 2.0 for England, 3.7 for London and 1.7 for the rest of England. This compares to 2.0 for England, 3.1 for London and 1.8 for the rest of England in 2017. The authorities with the highest rates of people sleeping rough were: City of London (189.6 per 10,000 households); Westminster (26.4 per 10,000 households); Camden (13.0 per 10,000 households); and Hastings (11.2 per 10,000 households).

Map 1: Number of people sleeping rough by local authority, autumn 2018, England



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Map 2: Rate of people sleeping rough per 10,000 households by local authority, autumn 2018, England



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The Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI)

The Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) was launched in March 2018 and is targeted at local authorities with high numbers of people sleeping rough, based on last year's rough sleeping counts and estimates. This initiative is part of the government's ongoing Rough Sleeping Strategy which sets out the vision for halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027.

There were 2,748 people recorded as sleeping rough across the 83 RSI areas in autumn 2018, this is a decrease of 639 or 23% from the 2017 figure of 3,387. Across the 83 RSI areas, 60 or 72% of areas reported a decrease, 19 or 23% reported an increase, and 4 or 5% reported no change in the number of people sleeping rough since 2017. Brighton & Hove showed the largest decrease of 114 people, or 64%, from 178 in 2017 to 64 in 2018. Westminster reported the largest increase of 89 people, or 41% from 217 in 2017 to 306 this year. There were 1,929 people sleeping rough across the other 243 local authorities in England, an increase of 565 or 41% from the 2017 figure of 1,364.

An evaluation of the Rough Sleeping Initiative will be published this year to help understand the impact of the range of activities in these areas on the number of people sleeping rough. There are a range of other factors that may impact on the number of people sleeping rough including the weather, where people choose to sleep, the date and time chosen and the availability of alternatives such as night shelters.

For more information about both the Rough Sleeping Strategy and the Rough Sleeping Initiative see accompanying links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-rough-sleeping-strategy>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/james-brokenshire-announces-30-million-immediate-support-for-rough-sleepers>

Demographics

Gender

Local authorities' autumn 2018 snapshot rough sleeping street counts and evidence-based estimates showed there were 3,937 men (84% of the total) and 642 women (14%) sleeping rough. Gender was unknown for 98 people (2%). This was broadly the same as 2017, where there were 3,965 men (83% of the total) sleeping rough, 653 women (14%) sleeping rough and 133 people where gender was unknown (3%). The gender breakdown of people sleeping rough was similar in London and the rest of England.

Nationality

There were 3,013 UK nationals (64% of the total) sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2018, a decrease of 383 people or 11% from the 2017 figure of 3,396 (71% of the total). The nationality of 463 people sleeping rough (10%) was not known, compared to 402 (8%) in 2017.

The number of EU nationals (non-UK) sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2018 increased from 760 (16% of the total) in 2017 to 1,048 (22% of the total). This was an increase of 288 people or 38%.

The number of people from outside the EU and the UK sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2018 decreased from 2017. There were 153 people sleeping rough (3% of the total) from outside the EU and UK, which was down 40 people or 21% from 2017 when there were 193 people from outside the EU and UK (4% of the total).

In London, the increase in the overall number of people sleeping rough was largely driven by increasing numbers of people sleeping rough who were EU (non-UK) nationals. There was an increase of 284 people (87%), from 326 people (29% of the London total) in 2017 to 610 people (48% of the London total) in 2018. The London increase in EU (non-UK) nationals from 2017 was largely driven by increases in three authorities: Westminster was up 77 EU (non-UK) nationals, from 51 to 128; Enfield was up 68 EU (non-UK) nationals, from 7 to 75; and Camden was up 54 EU (non-UK) nationals, from 59 to 113.

The number of people sleeping rough who were UK nationals in London was down by 39 people or 9% since 2017, from 456 people to 417 people in 2018. Similarly the number of people sleeping rough in London who were from outside the EU and the UK was down by 34 people or 27%, from 127 people in 2017 to 93 people in 2018.

In the four other regions where the overall number of people sleeping rough went up from 2017, the increases were largely driven by increasing numbers of UK nationals. Across the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber, the East Midlands and the West Midlands.

In the Rest of England overall, the number of people sleeping rough who were UK nationals was down by 344 people or 12% since 2017 from 2,940 to 2,596 in 2018. The number of people sleeping rough from outside of the EU and the UK was down by 6 people or 9%, from 66 to 60 in 2018. There was a similar number of people sleeping rough who were EU (non-UK) nationals in 2017 (434 people) and 2018 (438 people).

Age

In autumn 2018, there were 3,744 people (80% of the total) sleeping rough on a single night who were aged 26 years or over and 296 people (6% of the total) who were aged 25 years or under. The age of people sleeping rough was unknown for 637 people, or 14% of the total.

There were 969 people aged 26 years or over in London, which was 76% of the total, compared to 2,775 in the rest of England which was 82% of the total. The number of people sleeping rough in London aged 26 years or over was up by 156 people or 19% compared to 813 people in 2017.

In London, there were 265 people or 21% of the total where their age was unknown, compared to 372 people or 11% of the total in the Rest of England.

Table 5 and **Charts 5, 6 and 7** show the demographics for the number of people sleeping rough in England, London and the Rest of England in the autumn 2018 snapshot.

London and the Rest of England had the same percentage of those who were male, female and gender unknown. However, London had a substantially higher percentage of those who were EU (non-UK) nationals than the Rest of England and a slightly higher percentage of those whose nationality was unknown. In addition, compared to the Rest of England London had a much higher percentage of people sleeping rough where their age was unknown.

Table 5: Demographics of the people sleeping rough, England, London, and the Rest of England, autumn 2018

Demographics	England		London		Rest of England	
	No.	% of total	No.	% of total	No.	% of total
Gender						
Male	3,937	84%	1,081	84%	2,856	84%
Female	642	14%	162	13%	480	14%
Gender unknown	98	2%	40	3%	58	2%
Age						
25 years or under	296	6%	49	4%	247	7%
26 years or over	3,744	80%	969	76%	2,775	82%
Age unknown	637	14%	265	21%	372	11%
Nationality						
UK nationals	3,013	64%	417	33%	2,596	76%
EU, non-UK nationals	1,048	22%	610	48%	438	13%
Non-EU nationals	153	3%	93	7%	60	2%
Nationality unknown	463	10%	163	13%	300	9%
All	4,677		1,283		3,394	

Chart 5: Percentage of people sleeping rough by gender in London and Rest of England, autumn 2017 and autumn 2018



Chart 6: Percentage of people sleeping rough by nationality in London and Rest of England, autumn 2017 and autumn 2018

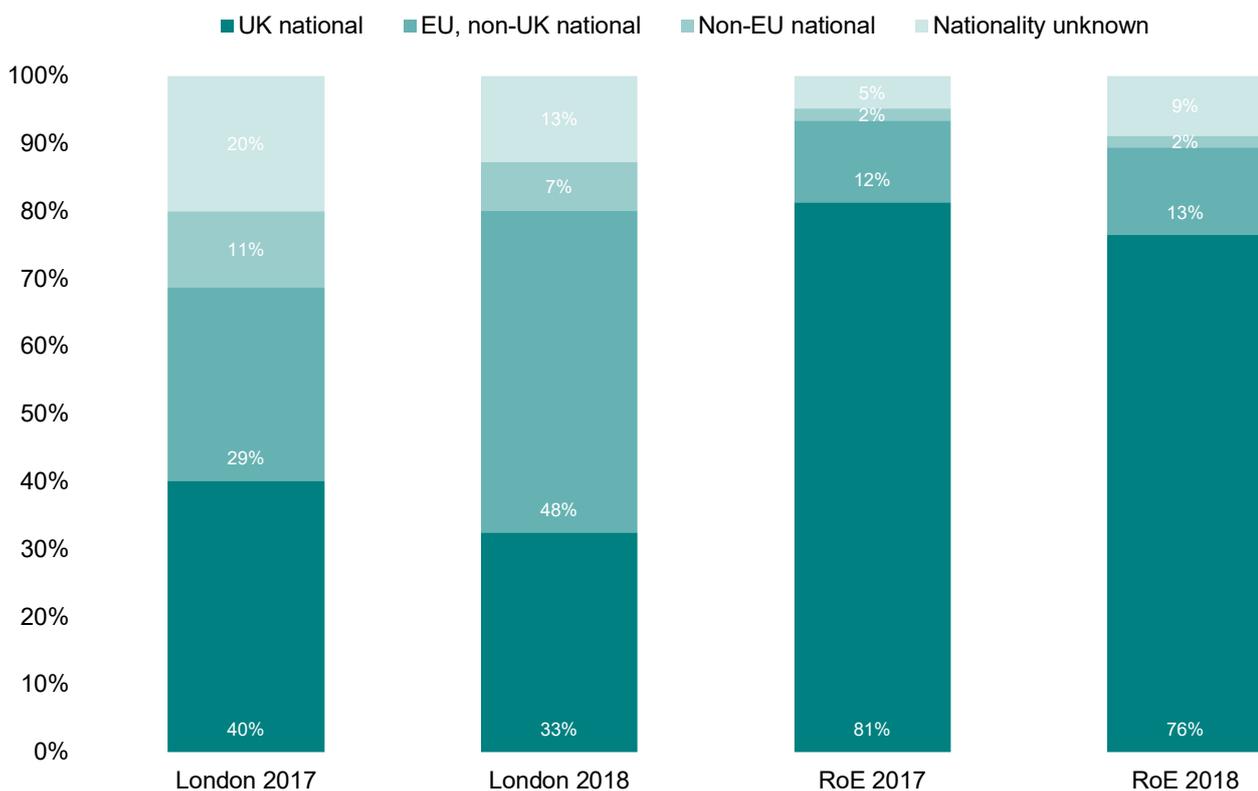
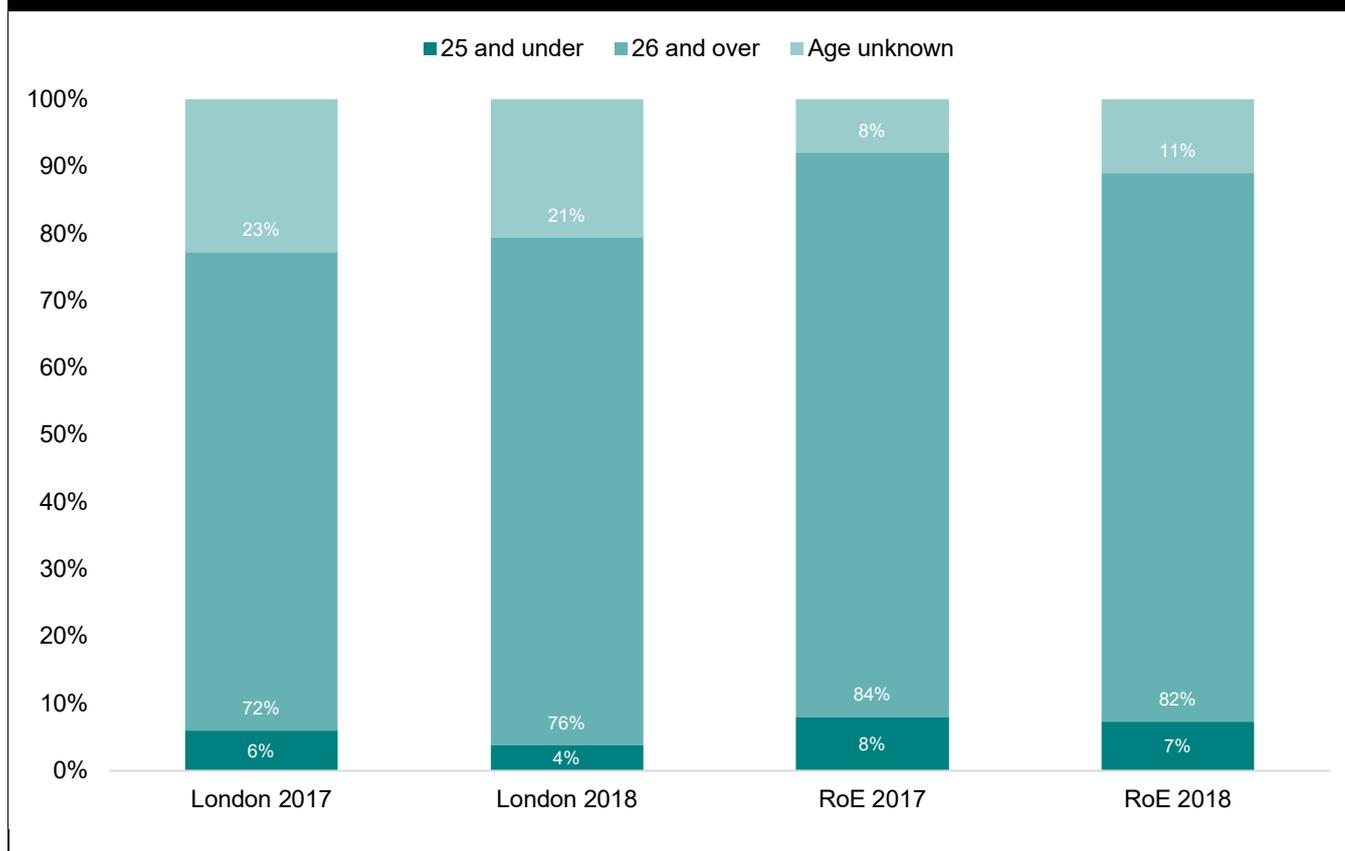


Chart 7: Percentage of people sleeping rough by age in London and Rest of England, autumn 2017 and autumn 2018



Accompanying Tables

Four accompanying tables are available to download alongside this release:

- Table 1** Street counts, evidence-based estimates and estimates informed by a spotlight street count of rough sleeping, by local authority district and region, England autumn 2010 to autumn 2018
- Table 2a** Street counts, evidence-based estimates and estimates informed by a spotlight street count of rough sleeping, by local authority district, region and gender, England autumn 2018
- Table 2b** Street counts, evidence-based estimates and estimates informed by a spotlight street count of rough sleeping, by local authority district, region and nationality, England autumn 2018
- Table 2c** Street counts, evidence-based estimates and estimates informed by a spotlight street count of rough sleeping, by local authority district, region and age, England autumn 2018

These tables can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2018>

2010 to 2017 data, including demographics for 2016 and 2017, can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics#rough-sleeping>

Definitions

People sleeping rough: are defined as follows for the purposes of rough sleeping street counts, evidence-based estimates, and estimates informed by a spotlight street count:

People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or “bashes” which are makeshift shelters, often comprised of cardboard boxes).

The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or travellers.

Bedded down: is taken to mean either lying down or sleeping. **About to bed down** includes those who are sitting in/on or near a sleeping bag or other bedding.

Technical notes

Data collection

Since 1998, the number of people sleeping rough has been measured by street counts in areas with a known or suspected rough sleeping problem. Local authorities had been asked to conduct an annual street count if they estimated there were more than ten people sleeping rough in the area. In June 2010, to supplement the street counts, local authorities that had not conducted a count were asked to provide an estimate of the number of people sleeping rough on a given night. Results of the June 2010 estimates and a time series of rough sleeping counts since 1998 are published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-total-street-count-and-estimates-2010>

The changes that were made to the methodology and the definition of people sleeping rough mean that figures produced in line with the September 2010 guidance are not directly comparable with previous statistics. The impact of these methodological changes cannot be separated from changes in the level of rough sleeping between autumn 2010 and earlier time periods. A technical note setting out and explaining the differences between the autumn 2010 rough sleeping statistics and previously published figures was published alongside the autumn 2010 release on the MHCLG website: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7379/1846366.pdf

Following the publication of these figures, a public consultation on evaluating the extent of rough sleeping was run over the summer 2010, and new guidance for local authorities was published in September 2010 explaining how to carry out rough sleeping counts and estimates. The guidance and form can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluating-the-extent-of-rough-sleeping--2>

This 2018 release is the first in this series to report the number of local authorities who conducted an estimate informed by a spotlight street count. It is also the first to report the comparison of method selected to previous years. See **Tables 6 and 7** for these respective reports. This additional information has been included to enhance transparency on the underpinning methodology for users.

Table 6 shows the number of people sleeping rough in England by the method used by local authorities. In 2018, 326 or 100% of local authorities in England submitted a rough sleeping figure. The response rate has been 100% every year since 2010. In 2018, 74 authorities (23%) conducted a street count and 252 (77%) provided an evidence-based estimate (including those that used a spotlight street count as part of their estimate process). This compares to 53 (16%) and 273 (84%) respectively in 2017, and 47 (14%) and 279 (86%) respectively in 2016. Of those providing an estimate in 2018, 55 (22%) provided an estimate informed by a spotlight street count. The 74 authorities conducting a street count reported 2,146 people sleeping rough (46% of the total) while those compiling an estimate reported 2,531 people sleeping rough (54% of the total).

Local authorities are advised to use the method that will most accurately reflect the number of people sleeping rough in their area. Local authorities may change their method for a number of reasons, including if they believe there has been a significant change in the number of people sleeping rough

since the previous year or if there is disagreement between local agencies. More information about choosing the most appropriate method can be found in the **Data Limitations** section.

Table 6: Number of people sleeping rough by method, England, 2010 to 2018

Method	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Street Count	407	519	498	594	784	823	1,137	1,532	2,146
% of total	23%	24%	22%	25%	29%	23%	28%	32%	46%
Number of LAs	42	53	43	48	49	44	47	53	74
% of LAs	13%	16%	13%	15%	15%	13%	14%	16%	23%
Estimate	1,361	1,662	1,811	1,820	1,960	2,746	2,997	3,219	2,531
% of total	77%	76%	78%	75%	71%	77%	72%	68%	54%
Number of LAs	284	273	283	278	277	282	279	273	252
% of LAs	87%	84%	87%	85%	85%	87%	86%	84%	77%
Total	1,768	2,181	2,309	2,414	2,744	3,569	4,134	4,751	4,677

Table 7 shows the method used to assess the number of people sleeping rough in 2018 compared to 2017 for all local authorities. In 2018, 262 or 80% of local authorities used the same methodology as last year to provide their annual snapshot figure. Of these, 43 local authorities did a street count and 219 provided an estimate (this includes estimates informed by spotlight street counts). There were 64 or 20% of local authorities which changed methodology this year. Of these, 31 (48%) changed to a street count and 33 (52%) to an estimate, of which 20 changed to an estimate informed by a spotlight street count. Of the 31 areas that changed to a street count, 18 (58%) were RSI areas, of which 13 saw a decrease.

Table 7: Comparison of method to assess the number of people sleeping rough, England, 2018 to 2017

Summary	Changed to			Remained as	
	Street count	Estimate	Spotlight	Street count	Estimate
Number of local authorities	31	13	20	43	219
2018 total	628	137	428	1,518	1,966
2017 total	940	88	317	1,462	1,944
Total change since last year	-312	49	111	56	22
% change since last year	-33%	72%	35%	4%	1%
Average % change since last year	-23%	56%	111%	10%	38%
No. of LAs which increased	11	7	11	20	104
No. of LAs which decreased	20	3	7	21	79

Data quality

All rough sleeping returns submitted by local authorities are independently verified or validated by Homeless Link to ensure they are robust. Homeless Link are the national membership charity for organisations working directly with people who become homeless in England:

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/about-us>

Homeless Link are funded by MHCLG to provide verification, validation, and guidance to local authorities for the annual rough sleeping street count and evidence-based estimate process. The guidance they provide includes webinars, training sessions, and workshops for local authority leads, count coordinators, verifiers, and volunteers who are either involved in carrying out a street count or evidence-based estimate, or estimate informed by a spotlight street count. Homeless Link also provide a detailed toolkit which sets out the process that local authorities, and their partners, use to evaluate the extent of people sleeping rough. The toolkit includes guidance around defining rough sleeping, choosing between a street count, an evidence-based estimate, and an estimate informed by a spotlight street count; collecting demographic data, how the verification process works, step-by-step guidance, templates, validation and verification forms, and quick guides for easy reference. This guidance is available at:

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/counts-and-estimates-evaluating-extent-of-rough-sleeping>

In 2018, Homeless Link verified all street counts, liaising with the Count Coordinator to check that the guidance had been followed in the planning of the count. They observed the process during the night of the count, joining one of the count teams and reviewing the count forms from other teams as they were submitted. There was one exception to this, due to a miscommunication about the date of the street count, however this was verified remotely after the count took place. In each case, the verifier discussed the single figure and demographics with the coordinator, and completed a verification form that was sent to Homeless Link for review. Verifiers were trained by Homeless Link and were not employed by the local authority or its commissioned services.

Homeless Link also conducted a detailed verification of 29 (12%) of the rough sleeping estimates. These were Aylesbury, Barnet, Barnsley, Bath and North Somerset, Cotswold, Crawley, Doncaster, East Devon, Eastbourne, Enfield, Forest of Dean, Haringey, Harrow, Kettering, Kingston Upon Hull, Lincoln, Maidstone, Merton, Mid Devon, Milton Keynes, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sevenoaks, Stroud, Teignbridge, Tewksbury, Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Wiltshire. Homeless Link chose these authorities by risk assessing whether they would need direct support with planning or verification of their estimate. High risk authorities could be those with high numbers, issues with local partners disputing figures, concerns about the correct methodology being used in previous years, or requests for additional support. Verifiers attended estimation meetings in person.

The remaining 223 (88%) local authority estimates not selected for detailed verification underwent a validation process by telephone. In each case, the verifier asked the coordinator a series of questions about how they conducted their estimate in order to complete the validation form. This included checking that the guidance had been followed, for example that relevant partners were involved, that a single typical night was used, and that there was an understanding of the rough sleeping definition.

Local authorities submitted their annual figure for the single night snapshot via MHCLG's DELTA online data collection system. DELTA is the online system provided by MHCLG to collect all of the Department's statistical data and grant applications. This system includes rules and validation

checks to ensure the data provided is complete, reliable and of good quality. For example, any large changes compared to last year would trigger an alert to the authority and require a text description to explain the reason for the change in order to submit the information.

All returns submitted by local authorities on DELTA were certified by Homeless Link to check that the final figures submitted were the same as those which had already been verified and validated by Homeless Link. If there were any discrepancies these had to be discussed and agreed with Homeless Link before they were certified.

The Department chased late returns and conducted further validation and sense checks to ensure overall response was as complete and accurate as possible.

In 2018 Homeless Link certified 98% of the returns submitted by local authorities to MHCLG. They were not able to certify 5 (2%) of the returns. These were Halton, Lancaster, Richmond upon Thames, Wealden, and Windsor and Maidenhead. This was due either to information not being submitted on DELTA (3 cases), discrepancies between the verified figures and those submitted (1 case), and no contact with Homeless Link to verify the process (1 case).

Local authorities were asked to provide details of agencies that had been consulted with as part of the count and estimate process. Every authority reported that they had consulted with at least one type of local agency, and 244 (75%) reported they had consulted over 5 groups or more. 314 (96%) local authorities consulted with the Police as part of their count or estimate process, 307 (94%) with voluntary sector, 285 (87%) with Outreach workers, 244 (75%) with Substance misuse agencies, 233 (71%) with Faith groups, 225 (69%) with Mental health agencies, 173 (53%) with Drugs & alcohol treatment teams, and 109 (33%) with Local residents & businesses. Further details about the groups consulted and the number of groups consulted are shown in **Tables 8 and 9**.

Table 8: Agencies consulted by local authorities to assess the number of people sleeping rough, England, autumn 2018

Group consulted	Street Count		Estimate		Spotlight		Total	
	No. of LAs	% of LAs	No. of LAs	% of LAs	No. of LAs	% of LAs	No. of LAs	% of LAs
Police	73	97%	188	96%	53	96%	314	96%
Voluntary sector	69	92%	186	95%	52	95%	307	94%
Outreach workers	71	95%	162	83%	52	95%	285	87%
Substance misuse agencies	59	79%	140	71%	45	82%	244	75%
Faith groups	52	69%	140	71%	41	75%	233	71%
Mental health agencies	45	60%	145	74%	35	64%	225	69%
Drugs & alcohol treatment teams	38	51%	109	56%	26	47%	173	53%
Local residents & businesses	31	41%	59	30%	19	35%	109	33%

Table 9: Number of agencies consulted by local authorities to assess the number of people sleeping rough, England, autumn 2018

Number of groups consulted	Street Count		Estimate		Spotlight		Total	
	No. of LAs	% of LAs	No. of LAs	% of LAs	No. of LAs	% of LAs	No. of LAs	% of LAs
1	1	1%	3	2%	0	0%	4	1%
2	1	1%	6	3%	1	2%	8	2%
3	6	8%	15	8%	3	5%	24	7%
4	9	12%	31	16%	6	11%	46	14%
5	10	13%	24	12%	11	20%	45	14%
6	17	23%	39	20%	15	27%	71	22%
7	11	15%	41	21%	9	16%	61	19%
8	19	25%	38	19%	10	18%	67	21%

Comparability of demographic data between 2016 and subsequent releases is limited due to methodology changes. In 2016 demographic information was collected for the first time. The totals included 'not knows' but not all local authorities were able to provide exact numbers of these 'not knows'.

Rates per 10,000 households have been calculated using the 2016-based household projections for mid-2018 produced by the Office for National Statistics. These are consistent with the projections published on 3 December 2018 at the following link:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/householdprojectionsforengland

The Department's statistical quality guidelines are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-dclg-quality-guidelines>

The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) published an assessment report covering the Department's homelessness and rough sleeping statistics in December 2015. This report, and related correspondence between the Department's Statistics Head of Profession and the Authority's Director General for Regulation, are available at:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/statistics-on-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-in-england-department-for-communities-and-local-government/>

Assessment of data quality

In 2015, the UKSA published a regulatory standard for the quality assurance of administrative data. To assess the quality of the data provided for this release the Department has followed that standard – see **Table 10**.

The standard is supported with an Administrative Data Quality Assurance Toolkit which provides useful guidance on the practices that can be adopted to assure the quality of the data they utilise.

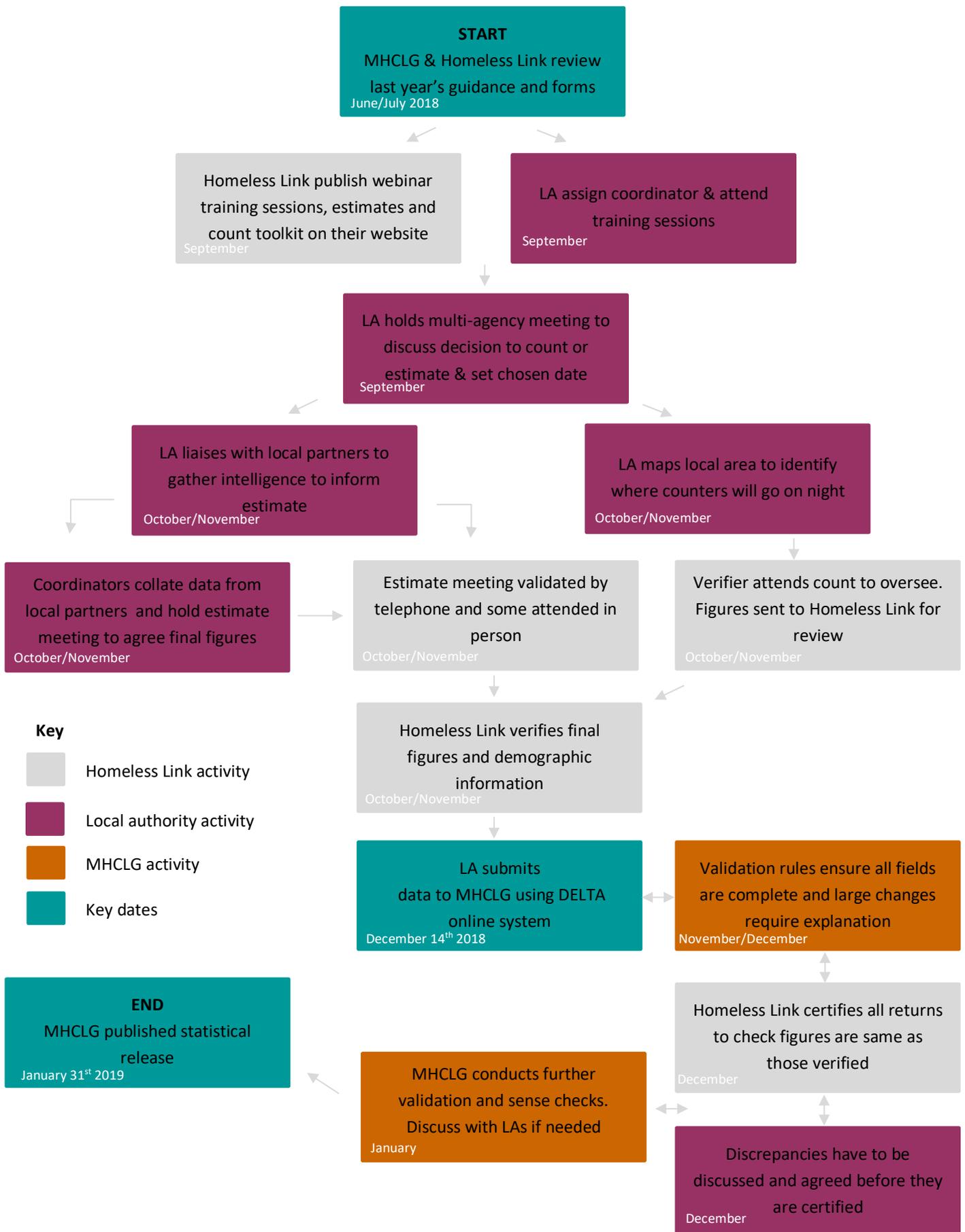
Table 10: Assessment of the level of risk based on the Quality Assurance Toolkit

Risk/Profile Matrix Statistical Series	Administrative Source	Data quality concern	Public interest	Matrix classification
Rough Sleeping Statistics	Local authority Rough Sleeping counts and estimates	Low	Medium	Low Risk (A1/A2)

The publication of MHCLG’s Rough Sleeping statistics can be considered as medium profile, as there is mainstream media interest, with moderate economic and/or political sensitivity.

Overall, the Rough Sleeping statistics have been assessed as A1/A2: Low Risk. A full outline of the statistical production process and quality assurance carried out is provided in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Rough Sleeping Quality Assurance Process Flowchart



Data limitations

The counts and estimates single night snapshots provide a way of indicating the number of people sleeping rough across local authorities and assessing change over time. There is currently no national mechanism for recording every person who sleeps rough in England across the year. The single night snapshot methodology aims to get as accurate a representation of the number of people sleeping rough as possible, while acknowledging that each process has its limitations. The method is chosen to meet the local context: street counts are based on visible rough sleeping, and evidence-based estimates on a range of sources for rough sleeping, and in some case also include a spotlight count.

The single night snapshot counts and estimates cannot record everyone in an area with a history of rough sleeping. They are also unable to tell the difference between those people who are sleeping rough for the first time, intermittently, or who have been sleeping rough for a period of time. Many people who sleep rough do so intermittently, moving from hostels or sofa surfing to sleeping rough and back. Many people sleeping rough bed down in places out of sight to avoid the risk of being detected, which means accurately capturing the number of people sleeping rough across an area on a single night is inherently difficult. A number of different factors can influence the accuracy of the information provided:

Type of local authority area

It is more difficult to carry out a count of people sleeping rough in large rural and coastal areas than in urban areas. The geographic area to cover in a single night is often much larger and there a wide range of possible places people may sleep rough, including woods or on private property in barns or on farm land, which are difficult or unsafe to access. In urban areas although it may be easier to carry out a street count, there may still be issues with including everyone, as people could be sleeping in sites which are difficult and unsafe to access, such as derelict buildings and building sites. People sleeping rough may move across local authority boundaries regularly which may explain some of the differences year on year.

Weather

The weather of the chosen night for the count or estimate may have a large impact on the number of people sleeping rough. Severe weather conditions will force many people who normally sleep rough to use a night shelter or hostel, to 'sofa surf', or sleep in locations which are more hidden. These people would be excluded from the count or estimate which may alter the detected level of rough sleeping. In some areas this year we know the weather was more severe compared to last year and in others it was milder which may also have impacted on the overall number.

Time and day of count or estimate

The guidance provided by Homeless Link makes clear that the night chosen for the count or estimate should take care to avoid any unusual local factors which may distort the number, such as events, club nights, football matches, festivals, charity sleep-outs, higher levels of police activity, or changes to service opening times. Local authorities are also advised to identify an appropriate day of the week, as choosing a weekend may mean that people bed down later or are less visible. People sleeping rough in busy urban areas may bed down later. Local authorities are advised start times

should be tailored to meet local circumstances. The earliest permitted start is midnight. In cities and towns with a busy night time economy, start time of 2am or even later is more appropriate so that people sleeping rough who bed down after pubs and clubs close are still counted. Counts should be completed by 5am, but in rural areas, where the majority of people are sleeping rough away from built-up and well-lit areas, counts may be conducted in the hours after dawn. Areas should take care to follow as closely as possible the same time period used each year.

Selecting the method to assess the extent of rough sleeping

Local authorities can decide whether to count or estimate in order to determine their single figure. They should use the method that will most accurately reflect the number of people sleeping rough in their area. An estimate may be appropriate if any of these factors apply:

- Sleep sites are inaccessible e.g. in woods or dispersed across rural areas;
- Sleep sites are unsafe to access or are hidden from sight;
- The local authority cannot arrange safe access to known rough sleeping sites (e.g. parks, tower blocks) during a count;
- There is regular intelligence gathering in place by a number of agencies (e.g. by an outreach team, day centre, park wardens);
- Numbers of people sleeping rough are consistently low and they are already in touch with services, and partner agencies agree this is the case;
- The local authority can gather sufficient intelligence on people sleeping rough via partner agencies;
- Partner agencies agree to collect information for an agreed night and to share this with the local authority for the purpose of the estimate.

An estimate informed by a spotlight count may be appropriate if:

- There are a mix of visible/accessible and hidden/inaccessible locations in the local authority area;
- The individuals sleeping rough or overall number of people sleeping rough in visible/accessible sites change frequently;
- There are conflicting views from partners about which method is right for the area;
- Additional robust intelligence comes to light on the night of the count about hidden rough sleeping.

A street count may be appropriate if any of the following factors apply:

- A significant change in the number, population or location of people sleeping rough where sites are visible;
- High numbers of people sleeping rough in the area with no ongoing data collection (e.g. no/limited outreach);
- An increase or fluctuations in numbers of people sleeping rough where sleep sites are accessible/visible;
- Difficulties forming an estimate on the basis of the information available;
- Significant disagreement about the number between agencies.

Related statistics

Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN)

The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) is a multi-agency database recording information about people seen rough sleeping by outreach teams in London. CHAIN is managed by St Mungo's, a London-based homeless charity, and is used by organisations working with people sleeping rough in London. Information is recorded onto the CHAIN database by people who work directly with people sleeping rough in London (e.g. workers in outreach teams, day centres, hostels and resettlement teams). CHAIN does not cover 'hidden homeless' groups, such as those who are squatting or staying in inaccessible locations to outreach workers.

The latest CHAIN quarterly report (October-December 2018), published 31 January 2019, shows that a total of 3,289 people were seen sleeping rough by outreach workers in London in the period October – December 2018.

The CHAIN data is not comparable to the single night snapshot counts and estimates presented in this release. The CHAIN data provides a **total** count across the October to December 2018 quarter of all individuals seen sleeping rough by outreach teams in London on at least one night during this period, whereas the MHCLG single night snapshot for autumn 2018 shows the number of people seen or thought to be sleeping rough on a single night between October 1st and November 30th 2018.

The CHAIN database records identifying and demographic information about people sleeping rough. The October – December 2018 quarterly report shows that outreach teams recorded:

Total rough sleepers

- There were 3,289 individuals recorded sleeping rough in the capital between October and December 2018. This was a 25% increase on the total figure for the same period last year.
- Of this total, 47% were new rough sleepers, 40% were intermittent rough sleepers, and 13% were recorded as living on the streets.

New rough sleepers

- 1,551 people recorded sleeping rough in London for the first time.
- Of these 1,280 (83%) spent just one night sleeping rough; 244 (16%) slept rough for more than one night but did not go on to live on the streets; and 27 (2%) were deemed to be living on the streets.
- The number of new rough sleepers recorded during this period was 38% higher than the same period last year.

Living on the streets

- 435 people recorded who were deemed to be living on the streets.
- The number of rough sleepers deemed to be living on the streets is 13% higher than the same period last year, and 28% higher than the immediately preceding period (July-September 2018).

Intermittent rough sleepers

- There were 1,330 people recorded sleeping rough during October - December 2018 who were not new, and did not have enough contacts to be deemed as living on the streets.
- The number of intermittent rough sleepers is 15% higher than the same period last year, but 5% lower than the immediately preceding period.

The proportion of all people recorded as sleeping rough who were female was 17%, while 8% were aged 25 years or under, and 12% were aged over 55 years. Of the people sleeping rough for whom nationality information was available, 49% were recorded as having United Kingdom as their nationality, while 32% were from Central and Eastern European – 16% who were from Romania, 8% from Poland, and 3% from Lithuania. 5% were from Africa, 4% from Asia and 1% from Americas.

Of the 1,943 people (59% of the total) whose institutional history was recorded, 7% had experience of the Armed forces, 12% had been in Care, 38% had been in Prison and 48% had been in all three. No institutional history was recorded for 41% of people seen sleeping rough. Of UK nationals seen sleeping rough, 2% had been in the Armed forces.

Of the 2,039 people (62% of total) sleeping rough who had a support needs assessment recorded, 41% had alcohol support needs, 43% drug support needs, and 50% mental health support needs, with 18% having all three needs, and 18% having none of these three needs. No support needs assessment was recorded for 38% of people seen sleeping rough.

More information about the CHAIN data collection is available at:

<http://www.mungos.org.uk/chain>

Source for the statistics in this section: CHAIN Quarterly Report, October 2018 – December 2018

MHCLG Related Statistics

The data in this release provides information on the number of people sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2018, as well as some demographic information (gender, age, nationality). The rough sleeping statistics do not provide a definitive number of people or households affected by homelessness in England. The term “homelessness” is much broader than people sleeping rough and has a number of interpretations.

It is difficult to provide an accurate estimate of all homelessness across England. Data used to compile any estimate is collated from different datasets, which sample different subsets of the population over different time frames. Any estimate of homelessness in England will collate datasets that are not discrete from one another, which means some individuals may have been included more than once in the estimated total.

MHCLG produce other statistics releases that can help build up the wider homelessness picture. The English Housing Survey published data on the number of concealed households in England. These are additional adults in a household who wanted to rent or buy but could not afford to do so:

- In 2015/16, there were approximately 1.5 million households including at least one additional

adult who wanted to rent or buy but could not afford to do so. This equates to 7% of all households, and 1.9 million adults living in these circumstances across these 1.5 million households.

The EHS 2015-16 report can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/627151/Future_home_owners_full_report.pdf

MHCLG also collect and publish quarterly statistics on the broad characteristics and circumstances of households owed a statutory homelessness duty. The latest statutory homelessness statistics showed:

- 58,660 households were owed a new statutory homeless duty between 3 April and 30 June 2018.
- Of these, 33,330 households were owed a new prevention duty and 25,330 households were owed a new relief duty.
- Local authorities accepted 6,670 households as being owed a main homelessness duty over the same period.
- 82,310 households were in temporary accommodation on 30 June 2018.
- 1,480 households reported that they were sleeping rough at the time of their application to the local authority, 340 of which were in London and 1,130 in the Rest of England.
- 6,350 households were classed as 'no fixed abode' at the time of their application to the local authority, 620 of which were in London, and 5,910 in the Rest of England.

Further information on statutory homelessness can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-april-to-june-2018>

The CORE social housing lettings collection publishes data on those moving from homelessness into Local Authority/ Private Registered Providers accommodation. The latest CORE statistics showed:

- Around 7,000 households were sleeping rough immediately prior to their new social housing letting (2% of all lettings in 2017/18), with another 33,000 in temporary accommodation (11%) and 66,000 living with friends and family (21%).
- Overall, 15% of new lettings in 2017/18 were to households deemed to be "statutorily homeless" and owed a main homelessness duty to be allocated a settled home, with another 3% deemed "statutorily homeless" but not owed a duty.

Further information on CORE social lettings can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rents-lettings-and-tenancies>

In addition, ONS recently published the first Experimental Statistics of the number of deaths of homeless people in England and Wales. This reported that:

- There were an estimated 597 deaths of homeless people in England and Wales in 2017.

Further information on ONS's experimental statistics on the deaths of homeless people can be found at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsofhomelesspeopleinenglandandwales/2013to2017>

Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for statistics and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Revisions Policy (found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-dclg-revisions-policy>). There are two types of revisions that the policy covers:

Non-Scheduled Revisions

Where a substantial error has occurred as a result of the compilation, imputation or dissemination process, the statistical release, live tables and other accompanying releases will be updated with a correction notice as soon as is practical.

If a local authority notifies MHCLG of an error in the information they have submitted after publication of the release, a decision on whether to revise will be made based upon the impact of any change and the effect it has on the interpretation of the data.

Scheduled Revisions

There are no scheduled revisions for this release.

Uses of the data

Central and Local Government

The data in this statistical release provide evidence on the prevalence of and trends in rough sleeping in England. They are used by ministers and officials in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in the formulation and monitoring of policy, the allocation of resources, performance monitoring and to support bids for funding from the Treasury. The data are also used to ensure democratic accountability in answers to Parliamentary Questions, ministerial correspondence, Freedom of Information Act cases and queries from the public. They are also used to allocate resources, monitor performance and to support bids for funding from the Treasury. For example the 2017 data was used to allocate £30m of funding towards areas with the highest number of people sleeping rough, as part of the Rough Sleeping Initiative.

Local housing authorities are both providers and users of the statistics and will use the data to track progress, benchmark against other authorities and plan and commission services to prevent and tackle rough sleeping.

Other government departments also use the statistics. For example, Department for Health and Social Care use the data as part of their Public Health Outcomes Framework.

Charities and Academics

The voluntary sector and academics also use the statistics to monitor and evaluate housing policy and for campaigning and fundraising purposes.

International

FEANTSA is the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. Since 2015, FEANTSA have released a yearly Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe. These annual reports look at the latest Eurostat data (EU-SILC) and assess EU countries' capacity to adequately house their populations. The latest and previous releases are available at:

<https://www.feantsa.org/en/report/2018/03/21/the-second-overview-of-housing-exclusion-in-europe-2017>

User engagement

Users are encouraged to provide feedback on how these statistics are used and how well they meet user needs. Comments on any issues relating to this statistical release are welcomed and encouraged. Responses should be addressed to the "Public enquiries" contact given in the "Enquiries" section below.

The Department's engagement strategy to meet the needs of statistics users is published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/engagement-strategy-to-meet-the-needs-of-statistics-users>

Notes

For both rough sleeping and statutory homelessness releases, all decisions and judgements regarding what data to collect, how and when it should be published, and the content and presentation of published statistics, are taken by the lead analyst reporting to the MHCLG Head of Profession for statistics. For both releases, one policy colleague is involved in producing and quality assuring the statistics, and they have a full understanding of the requirements of the National Statistics Code of Practice as regards pre-release access to statistics. We are also grateful for colleagues at the GLA for sharing their October to December 2018 quarterly statistics ahead of publication and quality assuring our statistics.

Details of officials who receive pre-release access to the Department's rough sleeping statistical release up to 24 hours before release can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics>

It is expected that autumn 2019 Rough Sleeping Statistics will be published in early 2020. The date will be pre-announced on the UK Statistics Authority publication release calendar:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements>

Devolved administration statistics

The devolved administrations publish their own statistics on homelessness. Details of their releases which contain information on rough sleeping are provided below.

The Scottish Government publishes figures on the number of households applying to the local authority for assistance under homelessness legislation who say they have slept rough the previous night or have reported their housing situation as 'long term roofless'. The 2017/18 annual figures are available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2017-18/>

The Welsh Government publish a national annual rough sleeping monitoring exercise, which includes a two week information gathering exercise followed by a one night snapshot count. This is carried out by Local Authorities, in partnership with other local agencies to gauge the extent of rough sleeping across Wales. The latest and previous releases are available at: <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/national-rough-sleeping-count/?lang=en>

The governing legislation for homelessness in Northern Ireland is the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 (as amended). Unlike the other three UK nations, housing is allocated by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), which covers the whole of Northern Ireland, rather than by local authorities. In Northern Ireland statistics on homelessness are obtained from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).

The NIHE carry out an annual street count in Belfast, in partnership with other statutory agencies and homeless organisations. Information about the most recent annual count is available at: <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/news/belfast-homeless-street-count-completed.htm>

Comparing between UK countries

The figures are not directly comparable between countries as they have a different methodology, coverage and are carried out at different time periods.

Enquiries

Media enquiries:

0303 444 1209

Email: newsdesk@communities.gov.uk

Public enquiries and Responsible Analysts:

Jon White & Eva Maguire

Email: roughsleepingstatistics@communities.gov.uk

Information on Official Statistics is available via the UK Statistics Authority website:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>

Information about Statistics at MHCLG is available at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics

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