

Research report

Beyond the numbers:

The scale of youth homelessness in the UK



Glossary

Young person – the young people referenced in this report are aged 16 to 24 years old. This includes young people who are single, in a couple, and those with dependent children.

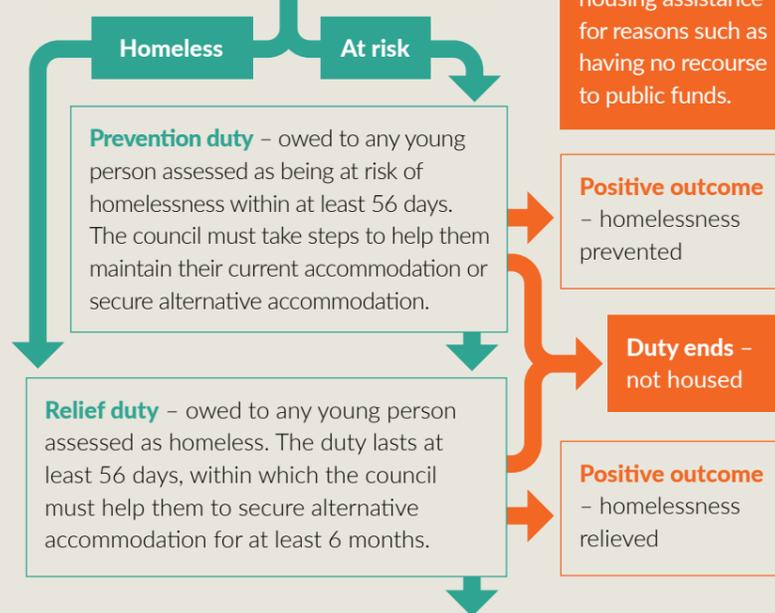
Personal housing plan – if a young person is assessed as homeless or at risk of homelessness a personal housing plan is generated based on their needs, outlining the steps to be taken to prevent or relieve homelessness.

Intentionally homeless – young people may be deemed intentionally homeless if the council asserts they could have prevented their homelessness.

Presentations – a young person who has presented to their local authority as they were homeless or at risk of homelessness. They may also be referred to as young people approaching or seeking help from their council.

Initial assessment – an initial assessment under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 to determine if the young person is owed a prevention or relief duty.

Ineligible – a minority of young people are ineligible for housing assistance for reasons such as having no recourse to public funds.



Duty ends - not housed

Not priority need

Main duty assessment – a young person has been given a main duty assessment if, after the end of a relief duty they were assessed under the Housing Act 1996 to determine if they are owed a main duty.

Main housing duty – any young person in receipt of a main duty is owed suitable temporary or permanent accommodation. This is an ongoing duty for as long as the young person is eligible.

Priority need – priority need varies across the nations. Broadly, this includes all 16 and 17 year olds, pregnant women and households with dependent children. It also includes other groups if the local authority is satisfied they are vulnerable, such as care leavers or those with a health problem. Priority need has been abolished in Scotland.

Statutorily homeless – a young person in England is considered to be statutorily homeless and owed a housing duty if they are eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

Positive outcome - housed

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Thank you to all the local authorities in England who provided data in response to Centrepoin's Freedom of Information Request on youth homelessness and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Scottish Housing and Social Justice Directorate, especially so in the light of COVID-19. Thanks to those Centrepoin Helpline staff who were interviewed as part of this research.

Authors: Elliot Williams-Fletcher & Stacy Wairumbi

Centrepoin, 2020

Introduction

The Centrepoint Youth Homelessness Databank is the only publicly accessible resource that provides information across the entire youth homelessness pathway. By collecting data on the number of young people at every stage of their application at district and council level we are able to build a more informed national picture. Without this knowledge we cannot know how best to tackle youth homelessness, nor ensure sufficient funding is allocated so that young people and the services that help them receive the support they need.

The Centrepoint Youth Homelessness Databank significantly increases the information that is publicly accessible on youth homelessness by collecting district and council level data to build a more informed national picture. This report presents an analysis of data collected by local authorities in 2019/20, and looks into how implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) has developed in the second year since its introduction.

Local authorities provided data on the number of 16 to 24 year olds approaching them because they were homeless or at risk of homelessness, and then their subsequent journey through local authority support. This report also updates the previous year's findings, including Centrepoint's estimate of the national scale of youth homelessness. The report is mainly focused on available data collected by councils in England; however, data from the devolved nations is included whenever possible.

Centrepoint's estimate is only able to take into consideration those young people who have sought help from their local authority. It is not currently possible to accurately gauge the scale of rough sleeping and hidden homelessness amongst young people who have not approached their council for support, although previous estimates, commissioned by Centrepoint, suggest that a considerable number of young people that experience homelessness never approach their local authority¹.

It is important to stress that the factors that affect youth homelessness go beyond the homelessness support provided by councils. They also include limited and inappropriate housing stock, scarce and insecure employment opportunities, welfare entitlements which do not meet living costs and many other social and personal factors. If we are to succeed in ending youth homelessness, the proactive, preventative approach enshrined in the HRA must be extended to other services working with those at risk of homelessness.

Visit www.yhdatabank.org to explore the data discussed in this report. The databank includes data from individual local authorities, as well as regional and national data, providing the only single point of access to the most complete source of information on youth homelessness in the UK.

Methodology

Due to differing legislation in the devolved nations, the data collected and published varies significantly between each nation. Data for Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales was obtained from their respective central government departments. English data was obtained through Freedom of Information requests, which 94 per cent of English local authorities responded to and 76 per cent were able to provide statistics on their

local experiences of youth homelessness. The good response rate from English local authorities, alongside data from the other three nations allows us to provide a comprehensive picture of youth homelessness in the UK in terms of the number of young people presenting to their local authority because they were homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The FOI request sent to English local authority requested the number of young people who¹:

- presented to their council as they are homeless or at risk
- were assessed for a prevention or relief duty under the HRA
- received an initial assessment of being owed a prevention duty
- received an initial assessment of being owed a relief duty
- had a successful prevention duty outcome
- had a prevention duty end leading to a relief duty
- had a prevention duty end for any other reason
- had a relief duty end successfully
- had a relief duty end and lead to main duty assessment
- had a relief duty end for any other reason
- assessed under the Housing Act 1996
- accepted as statutorily homeless and owed a housing duty by their council

This data provides a more extensive picture of youth homelessness than central government data sources which only provide an age group break down for those who are owed either a prevention or relief duty combined. Whilst that is an improvement in available government data on youth homelessness, it does little to demystify the journey that young people take through the homelessness system.

The responses to Centrepoint's Freedom of Information request show an increase in the number of responses where the council did not provide the requested data. In 2018/19, 5 per cent of local authorities were unable to provide any of the requested data, this rose to 24 per cent in 2019/20. Many of the councils that were unable to provide data cited the increased demand on councils placed on them by COVID-19 specifically as the reason for this.

In this report comparisons are made between 2018/19 and 2019/20 using information from the 62 per cent of councils in England have provided data for both of the past two years.

We also interviewed members of Centrepoint's Helpline team about their experiences of supporting young people who are seeking homelessness advice, in order to provide greater context to the figures from the FOI.

1 The response rate for each data point can be found in the technical appendix



Policy framework

The responsibility for tackling homelessness is devolved and each nation has different duties to those who approach them for help.

England

On 3rd April 2018, the HRA came into effect and changed the homelessness support model provided by local authorities in England. As part of the Act, prevention and relief support was added as an additional tier of statutory duties regardless of intentionality or applicant's priority need status. If the prevention and relief work is unsuccessful the applicant is then assessed to determine if they are owed a full housing duty.

These changes to legislation mean that single homeless young people who would have previously received inconsistent support should now all receive prevention and/or relief support according to their needs. This is particularly significant for those young people who are at risk, but not necessarily at the point of crisis. Previously they may not have received support, as young single people are less likely to be priority need. Now everyone threatened with homelessness must be given up to 56 days of support to help secure accommodation.

The HRA aims to give applicants increased influence over their homelessness application through a more collaborative process. The personal housing plan was brought in as part of the Act to be created in partnership with the applicant. Following the assessment, the personal housing plan puts in place the necessary actions to prevent or relieve homelessness. Applicants also now have the right to request internal reviews of any and all homelessness decisions at any stage of their process, as well as the right to present at any local authority for support.

The HRA also brought in additional support for local authorities, including three years of additional burdens funding with the expectation that funding would not be required beyond this period. This was motivated by the idea that the HRA would bring a reduction in the number of main duties required, which would in turn cover the cost of the earlier support duties. A new data reporting system known as H-CLIC was also introduced as well as the duty to refer, which places a duty on certain agencies to refer consenting service users who may be homeless or at risk to local authority housing teams.

Wales

The Wales (Housing) Act 2014 was the first legislation in the UK to shift the emphasis towards prevention and relief work before the full housing duty. Under the Wales (Housing) Act,

all young people in Wales who present to their council should be assessed and provided with prevention and/or relief support, based on their circumstances. A full housing duty is then only owed to those in priority need in the event that this support is not successful. Wales is most similar to the HRA landscape in England and provided a framework for its development.

The data collected by the Welsh Government focuses on the number of outcomes and allows for a breakdown by age group and local authority. The data, available via the online toolⁱ, includes information at every stage of the application process. These totals include prevention and relief duties (sections 66 and 73 of the Act) and their outcomes (successful, unsuccessful leading to the next stage of support, and duty ended), as well as the different main duty outcomes (eligible and homeless but not in priority need, eligible homeless and in a priority need but intentionally so, and eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need (Section 75)).

Northern Ireland

Currently, Northern Ireland operates much like England did prior to the HRA. Young people who are eligible, unintentionally homeless, and in priority need are owed a duty to help them secure accommodation. Unlike in England, however, this responsibility lies with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), as opposed to individual local authorities. In addition, eligibility criteria are more complex in Northern Ireland than elsewhere in the UK as prior behaviour is also considered. For anyone who is not owed a housing duty, the NIHE only has a duty to provide advice, though often additional prevention and relief work is carried out.

The data provided by the NIHE includes main duty presentations and main duty acceptances and is broken down by age range, gender and local authorities.

Scotland

Scottish homelessness policy operates on a significantly different model to the other nations. With the abolition of priority need on 31st December 2012 Scotland's policy has been aimed towards providing a full housing duty meaning that all eligible and unintentionally homeless young people are owed a housing duty from their council.

In Scotland all those who present are assessed. This means that the data provided by the Scottish Governmentⁱⁱⁱ focuses on the totals for each of the four potential decisions following presentation which are broken down by local authority. These are homeless and potentially homeless which are then broken down into intentional and unintentional.

The scale of youth homelessness

Centrepoint estimates that in 2019/20, 121,000 young people in the UK approached their council for help as they were homeless or at risk.

102,000 of these young people were in England alone.

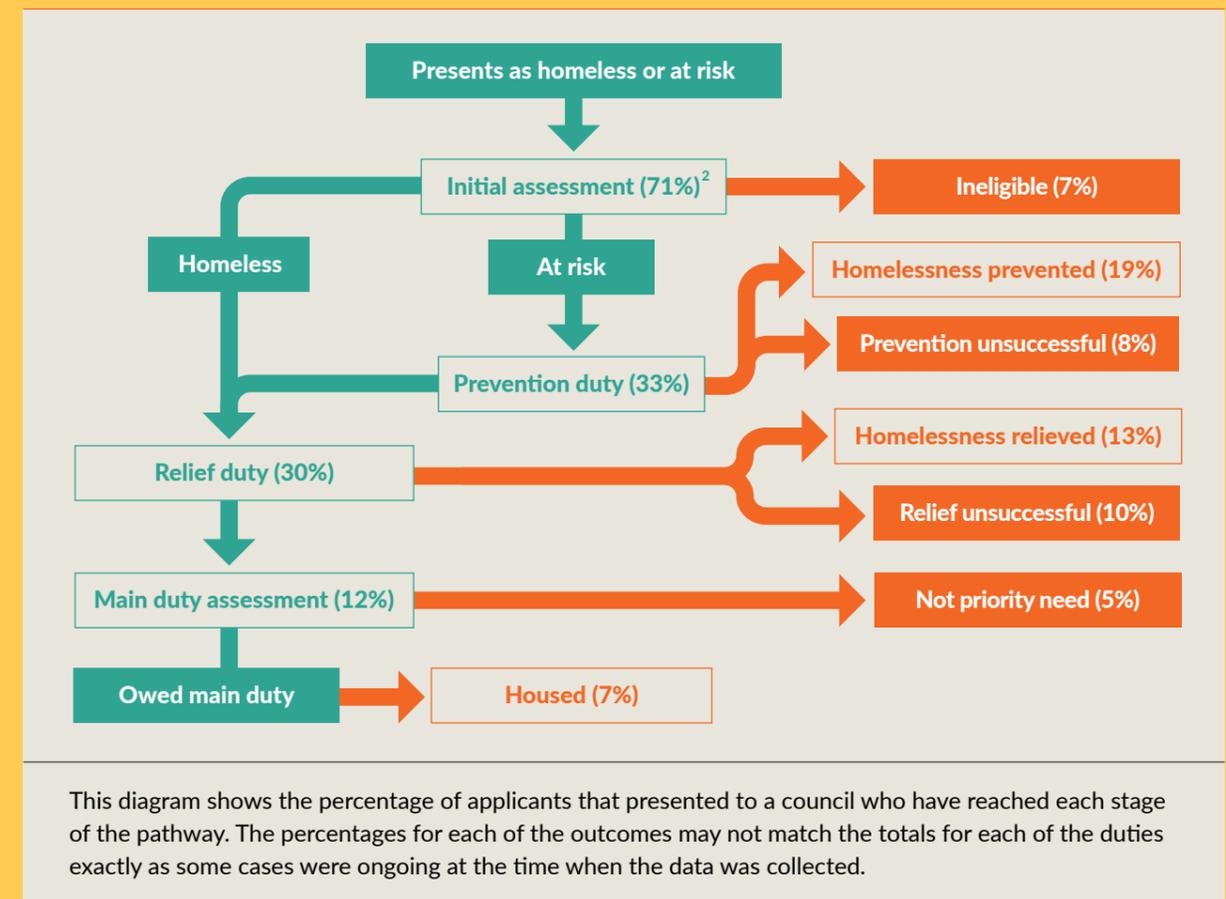
Only 72 per cent of young people who presented received the initial assessment they are entitled to. This figure has dropped since last year (when 79% were assessed) suggesting a concerning back step in the delivery of the ethos of the HRA.

64 per cent of young people that presented to their local authority received a duty to help prevent or relieve homelessness.

For those young people who were assessed as owed a duty the overall picture has improved. We found that the rate of positive outcomes amongst young people represents 40 per cent of approaches. Unfortunately, however, young people are still underrepresented in positive outcomes.

For a second year, almost six in ten presentations ended without the young person's homelessness having been prevented, relieved or been in receipt of a main duty. In both this year and last, the biggest driver of this is young people who present to their local authority as homeless or as risk of homelessness not receiving an assessment that they are entitled to. There continues to be no publicly available information about what happens to those who fall out of the process.

This shows that, whilst the support that has been made available by the HRA has been invaluable, more still needs to be done to ensure that young people's homelessness is resolved successfully.



² This chart is based on local authorities who gave data on all stages of the process, and excludes the small number who provided partial data. The figure for initial assessments cited in the main text (72%) is calculated using all presentation and assessment data received.

Increasing young people presenting to local authorities

“If you look at the aims of HRA in theory it should have put the helpline completely out of business. If they had got it right and people were getting advice and support then why would anyone need to call a helpline after going to the council.”

- Centrepoint Helpline Team Leader

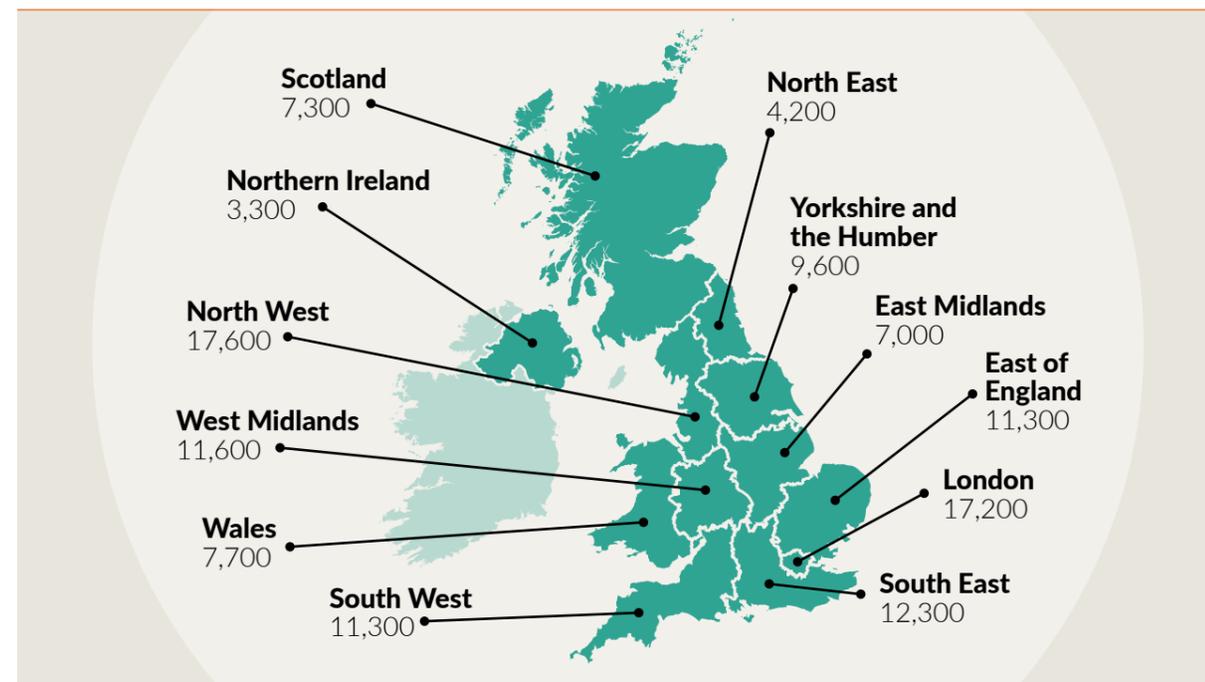
For councils where data was available from both 2018/19 and 2019/20 there was an average increase of **17 per cent in the number of young people presenting to local authorities in England** as homeless or at risk. This is particularly concerning as these figures cover the period up to the end of March 2020, showing that youth homelessness was already rising before the pandemic hit.

This increase was seen across a number of regions in England. The North West saw the largest regional increase in presentations followed by the East of England and South West (30 per cent, 20 per cent and 19 per cent respectively). This report represents the first year in which a region other than London reported the highest number of approaches.

Centrepoint's estimate reflects high youth homelessness figures across all parts of England. In both rural and urban local authorities, the scale of youth homelessness can represent an alarmingly high percentage of the youth population as a whole. For example, in North Devon, Ipswich, Halton, and Cornwall

the number of young people presenting to their council represented over 4 per cent of the total population of 16 to 24 year olds, the highest proportion of young people in need in the country. On average the number of young people presenting to their local authority for help represents **1.5 per cent of the total youth population**^{iv}.

This overall increase in the number of young people presenting as homeless between 2018/19 and 2019/20 is driven by an average increase of 21 per cent in rural or predominantly rural local authorities^v. This is concentrated in a few key areas where homelessness presentations have notably increased from 2019/20. For example, 10 rural authorities saw the number of approaches more than double. This highlights the **growing problem of rural homelessness** as a specific concern. With the majority of homelessness services concentrated in urban areas, it may be that some of the more rural local authorities have not been able to access the same resources to mirror the processes that have yielded results in some of the more densely populated areas.



Many young people not getting initial assessments

Under the HRA everyone who approaches their local authority should receive an initial assessment in order to determine whether they were owed a prevention or relief duty. However, our data shows that, for a second year, a significant proportion of young people are not getting the assessments that they are owed. In 2019/20 **only 72 per cent of those young people that presented actually received an initial assessment**. This is lower than 2018/19 when 79 per cent of young people received an assessment.

The rise in the percentage of young people who present but do not receive the initial assessment they are entitled to shows a concerning back step in the delivery of the ethos of the HRA. When MHCLG recently undertook an evaluation of the implementation of the HRA^{vi} it was found that 49 per cent of councils still had changes planned as part of the implementation of the Act. This emphasises the important work that is still to be done by local authorities to ensure that the HRA to functions as intended.

“There are a lot of young people whose only issue is that they don't have accommodation. So councils will say you don't have any other support needs. So we're not going to help you because we think you're independent enough to sort this out yourself but they still don't have the deposits or references.”

- Centrepoint Helpline Team Leader

Young people failed by duties

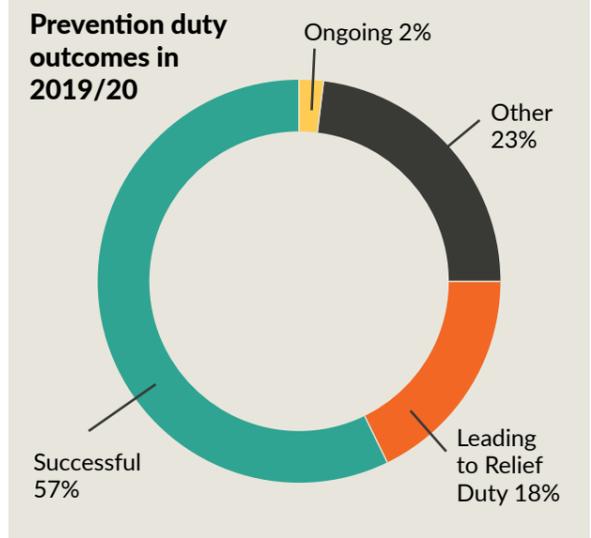
Under the HRA any young person at risk of homelessness in the next 56 days should receive support under the prevention duty. Those that are assessed to be homeless are provided with a relief duty for 56 days. Cases where a prevention duty has been unsuccessful also lead into the relief duty. At this stage councils are not required to source or provide accommodation, but they must only facilitate the applicant securing accommodation for at least six months.

“When councils do offer supported accommodation to young people it's usually one option in the area and the young person could be gang affiliated or they could be fleeing domestic violence and they will be like that's the one hostel in the area that I can't go to and yet it's the only one that they are willing to offer me. Which I have seen happen quite a few times.”

- Centrepoint Helpline Team Leader

Our data reveals that, following their initial assessment:

- 52 per cent of young people received support under the prevention duty
- 48 per cent of young people received support under the relief duty



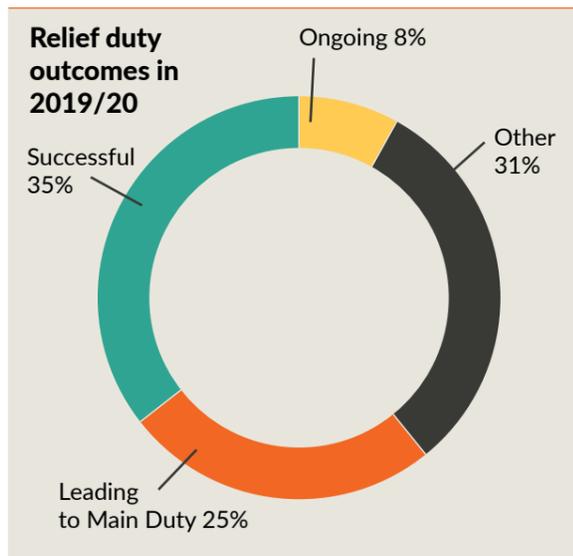
This split matches that of 2018/19 and when taken together, prevention and relief activities remained stable at 64 per cent of approaches in both 2018/19 and 2019/20.

The support offered under a prevention duty is decided at local authority level and so varies significantly. Government guidance suggests that councils should first aim to keep the applicant in their current accommodation, which for young people is often their family home. Local authorities commonly use mediation as a preventative tool, however the effectiveness of this specific intervention is unclear. The purpose of mediation is to rebuild relationships. This can be at odds with the local authority's aim of keeping young people within the family home where rebuilding these relationships may be best served by the parties not cohabiting.

“It’s still people being placed incorrectly in prevention when they were already homeless and should have been put in relief. Like young people who are sofa surfing being told well you’re in prevention but if you’re sofa surfing then you’re definitely already homeless.”

- Centrepoint Helpline Team Leader

For those young people who were assessed and owed a duty the overall picture has improved somewhat. We found that the **rate of positive outcomes amongst young people rose from 34 per cent of approaches in 2018/19 to 40 per cent in 2019/20**. Unfortunately however, young people are still underrepresented in positive outcomes. For the general population 58 per cent of those owed a prevention duty and 43 per cent of those owed a relief duty secure accommodation compared to 57 per cent and 36 per cent for young people^{vi}.



“For the young people that contacts us, who inevitably will be the ones that didn’t get a very good relief duty, it is pretty poor. Personal housing plans tend to just be ‘look at private sector listings’. The end. There’s not really that much substantial advice and help. There doesn’t seem to be much in terms of the council will do X, Y, Z. So I’m not hugely surprised that it’s not had good outcomes.”

- Centrepoint Helpline Senior Manager

Delayed support for young people in crisis

A main duty assessment is owed where relief ends unsuccessfully and a young person remains homeless after 56 days. The main housing duty is owed to those assessed as statutory homeless as they are found to be unintentionally homeless, eligible, and in priority need. In 2019/20, **7 per cent of main duty assessments ended with a main duty acceptance**, compared to 5 per cent in 2018/19. The overall number of both main duty assessments and subsequent duties owed has also reduced significantly with the introduction of prevention and relief duties. This suggests that the HRA continues to be successful in supporting applicants upstream through prevention and relief.

However, there continues to be problems for those young people who are eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need. Prior to the HRA, young people in priority need would have received a main duty assessment straight away. They would have approached their local authority, received a main duty assessment and then been housed under the main duty. Now they must first undergo the relief duty process, where they are required to lead their own housing search for 56 days. Only after this has elapsed will they receive the main duty assessment, if they are still homeless. This creates added difficulty and delay for these young people in crisis, most of whom are extremely vulnerable such as those fleeing domestic abuse, experiencing mental health problems or nearing full-term pregnancy.

“They would go around priority need by assessing people under the HRA and saying ‘We think you need prevention duty’ or ‘We think you’re relief duty’ and focus on doing the HRA outcomes rather than just actually saying ‘This young person is priority need they should be put in accommodation in the meantime and offered interim accommodation’. We saw this happening frequently and didn’t understand why the councils were so focused on whether they are relief or prevent right now when they should be in temp accommodation.”

- Centrepoint Helpline Team Leader



The drivers of youth homelessness

Not all local authorities were able to provide all the data requested on the scale of youth homelessness in their area. This was often due to IT and data issues arising from the HRA. In these cases, we have estimated the number of young people that presented to their local authority by making use of known predictors and drivers of youth homelessness.

Much of the existing evidence on the predictors of homelessness examine both individual level factors and structural factors. Individual level factors may include mental and physical health, family breakdown, or substance misuse, whilst structural factors look at macro causes such as the housing market, job market and welfare. The causes of homelessness are widely agreed to be a complex combination of both.

To develop our national estimate of youth homelessness, we tested a range of characteristics to determine which had a statistically significant relationship with the scale of youth homelessness. The variables selected were chosen following a review of background literature vii on homelessness.

Four variables were used to model the scale of youth homelessness, providing insight into the link between homelessness and wider factors. The factors reflect wider evidence on the drivers of youth homelessness:



1. Youth Population: the number of young people (16-24 years old) recorded as part of the mid-2019 population estimates^{iv}.



2. House prices: the ratio of median house price to median gross annual residence-based earnings was a proxy measure for the impact of the lack of affordable housing^{viii}. A 1 per cent increase in housing affordability corresponded with a 0.2 per cent increase in the presenting figure for young people.



3. Social housing stock: the number of social rented units owned by the local authority was used to account for the decline in social housing^{ix}. A 1 per cent increase in the number of social units corresponded with a 0.1 per cent increase in the presenting figure for young people.



4. Welfare: the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek and be available for work was used to account for the unfavourable nature of the labour market^x. An increase of 1 per cent in the number of claimants aged 16-24 corresponded with 0.5 per cent increase in the presenting figure for young people.

This means that for an 'average' area that had the average youth population (19,826), the average ratio of median house price to median gross annual residence (8.64), the average number of people aged 16 to 24 claiming UC or JSA (7,053) and the average number of social rented units (16,504) would have an estimated 328 young people presenting to their council.

An expanded break down of the methods used on this modelling can be found in the Technical Appendix.



Recommendations

1. Greater oversight of local delivery of the HRA is required to ensure the intentions of the Act are made a reality across the country. Where local authorities are not fully carrying out their statutory duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government should work closely with them to provide funding and support to improve systems where required.

2. To assist councils in carrying out their duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act, central government should reach a multiple-year financial settlement through the Homelessness Reduction Grant. This should be calculated in line with demand in each local authority area. A longer-term Homelessness Reduction Grant funding settlement would allow councils to take a more strategic approach to the commissioning of local homelessness provision.

3. The Government should launch a national online information hub, providing young people with details on how to present to each local authority if homeless or at risk. Information should include the address of where to present to in each local authority, an up to date phone number and email address, as well as providing general advice for applicants.

4. The Government should allow local councils to fast-track applicants who are priority need upon initial assessment straight to the main housing duty assessment, enabling the most vulnerable to get the main housing duty much quicker.

5. The H-CLIC system should be updated, including by adding presentations to the list of data points collected by local authorities as the number of initial assessments is not a true representation of the scale of people seeking help. MHCLG should also publish H-CLIC data via an online interactive tool to enable greater analysis of homelessness trends, including demographic breakdowns, and more informed use of resources.



Technical Appendix

Homelessness policy in the UK is devolved in the four individual nations, each having independent policy that inform their different data collection policies. At present the English government does not publish data broken down by age with the exception of a combined prevention and/or relief duty owed, which does not allow for an understanding of the scale of youth homelessness. Therefore Centrepont sends a Freedom of Information request to every local authority in England in order to collect a more complete dataset. This data is combined with publicly available data from Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales in order to build a complete picture for the UK.

However, the response rate this year was notably lower than in previous years due to the ongoing effect that COVID-19 is having on the workload of councils. In addition, a significant number of those who did respond were unable to provide data due to our request exceeding the 18 hours allocated for Freedom of Information requests often because issues with IT systems had meant the request would have to have been carried out manually.

The table below shows the response rates across each question in the Freedom of Information request in England. In total there are 317 local authorities in England.

% of local authorities	Data provided
71%	presented to their council as they are homeless or at risk (224)
69%	were assessed for a prevention or relief duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (219)
69%	received an initial assessment of being owed a prevention duty (219)
69%	received an initial assessment of being owed a relief duty (218)
68%	had a successful prevention duty outcome (217)
67%	had a prevention duty end leading to a relief duty (213)
68%	had a prevention duty end for any other reason (214)
68%	had a relief duty end successfully (217)
67%	had a relief duty end for any other reason (212)
68%	assessed under the Housing Act 1996 (217)
68%	accepted as statutorily homeless and owed a housing duty by their council (214)
60%	responded to all parts of the Freedom of Information request (191)

Estimating the scale of youth homelessness

Centrepont's annual estimate of the scale of youth homelessness in the UK is based on responses to the Freedom of Information request query about the number of young people presenting to each local authority in England as they were homeless or at risk, in addition to the same measure across the devolved nations. The calculation uses data from the 71 per cent of councils in England who provided this data and uses this as the basis of an estimate of the number of young people presenting in the local authorities which did not respond.

A data quality audit was carried out on each local authority that provided data. Councils where figures at one stage exceeded the numbers upstream were contacted to explain the discrepancy. Data received as part of the Freedom of Information request was compared to the only publicly available MHCLG data with age breakdowns, prevention and relief duties owed (currently considered an experimental dataset). Where there was a discrepancy this was queried with the local authority. The responses Centrepont received frequently emphasised the lack of clarity and confidence around the central government data returns. Due to the myriad changes in brought in as a result of the HRA it has not been possible to rely on figures from previous years to inform the data quality audit.

A selection of variables related to the structural factors understood to affect the rates of homelessness, including house affordability and access, benefit uptake, and poverty indicators, were used based on a MHCLG and DWP commissioned feasibility study around the measurement and prediction of homelessness to create a prediction model for the councils with known and verified presenting figures. These variables were all sourced from government data publications and needed to be available at a local authority level so that they could be appended to the presenting data.

Multiple linear regression model was used, meaning that the natural logarithm was taken of all variables before modelling the relationships. This had multiple benefits, primarily it ensured that the data met all the assumptions of linear regression and, secondly, it improved the linearity of the relationships between the presenting data and the significant predictor variables.

(Intercept)	-4.60
Log(House Affordability)	0.23
Log(Youth Population)	0.42*
Log(Claimants Aged 16-24)	0.52***
Log(Social Units)	0.10
R²	0.5
Num. obs.	219

*** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05

House affordability^{viii}: This measure, compiled annually by the Office for National Statistics, compares median income in the local authority to the median house price.

Youth population^{iv}: The number of young people (16-24) recorded as part of the mid-2019 estimates.

Claimants aged 16-24^x: The number of people (16-24) claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work and be available for work. Published by the Office of National Statistics.

Social units^{ix}: The total social rented units owned by each local authority in England, compiled by the regulator of Social housing.

It was not possible to obtain robust local authority level data on personal factors that contributed to homelessness nor was it possible to get sufficient data on the fragmentation of families.

It should be noted that although they inform the estimate, it is not possible from this alone to infer any causation from this report, in either direction. For example, we cannot conclusively say that an increase in these factors would cause an increase in the number of young people approaching their council or vice versa. We would however support any further research into how these could affect the scale of youth homelessness in the UK.

The final model was then run on those local authorities who had not provided a (valid) presenting figure in response to Centrepont's Freedom of Information request. This process output a prediction for the presenting figure for all local authorities. Where the estimate was lower than other downstream data points that were provided these were substituted in. The final estimate of the scale of youth homelessness in England was calculated by summing the known presenting figures in local authorities that responded to the request with usable data, and the estimated presenting figure for those local authorities that did not. This produced the estimate of 102,000 young people who presented to their council as they were homeless or at risk.

Equivalent data collected in previous years (the Databank holds data dating back to 2012/13) allows for a comparison over time to understand any changes in the scale of youth homelessness at a local and national level. These calculations consider those local authorities that have provided comparable data for multiple years. Due to a number of councils changing the definitions of what data is returned, or their internal processes, only data from 2018/19 and 2019/20 is included in this analysis. This ensures that the comparisons made are valid and reflect only actual change in the scale of youth homelessness. In total, data from 62 councils was used in assessing change over time.

For the UK wide estimate of youth homelessness, the England figure was added to the total number of young people presenting in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This data was obtained from central sources in each of the nations. All nations here reported that all young people who were presented were also assessed and therefore this data is reflective of assessments. In Northern Ireland, a slightly different reporting structure means that the data represents all young people aged 16-25 years old, as opposed to the age band of 16-24 years old used throughout the rest of this research. At the time of publishing this report StatsWales had not provided a total. Due to the stability in the number of young people supported since introduction of the Wales (Housing) Act 2014 an average value for the last three years was taken.

End notes

- i. The Prevalence of Rough Sleeping and Sofa Surfing Amongst Young People in the UK <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/77415475.pdf>
- ii. Statutory homeless data for Wales is published here: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Housing/Homelessness/Statutory-Homelessness-Prevention-and-Relief>
- iii. Youth homelessness data for Scotland is published here: <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables/adhoc-analysis>
- iv. Population estimates by age according to ONS calculations by age for mid-2019 can be found at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland>
- v. The 2011 Rural-Urban classification of local authorities was used to classify each into one of the following: Largely Rural, Mainly Rural, Urban with City and Town, Urban with Major Conurbation, Urban with Minor Conurbation, Urban with Significant Rural. The full classification can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2011-rural-urban-classification-of-local-authority-and-other-higher-level-geographies-for-statistical-purposes>
- vi. Evaluation of the Implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act: Final Report submitted by ICF Consulting Services Limited in association with Kantar Public and Heriot-Watt University (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/919748/Evaluation_of_the_Implementation_of_the_Homelessness_Reduction_Act_Final_Report.pdf)
- vii. MHCLG and DWP 2019 (Three reports published in March 2019 by Alma Economics and commissioned by MHCLG & DWP to review the evidence on the causes of homelessness and to provide options for modelling to appraise policy) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/causes-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-feasibility-study>
- viii. House Affordability statistics can be found at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoresidencebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>
- ix. Statistics on social rented units owned by local authorities can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-data-return-2018-to-2019>
- x. Data on young people claiming benefits can be found via the nomis official labour market statistics tool at <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/customererrors/nodataset.asp>



Centrepoint Head Office, Central House,
25 Camperdown Street, London E1 8DZ
Tel 0800 23 23 20
Fax 0845 466 3500
www.centrepoint.org.uk

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