



Support for
single homeless people
in England
Annual Review 2017

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Produced by

The Policy and Research Team, March 2018

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Executive summary

For the past ten years, Homeless Link has produced an annual review of the support that is available to single homeless people. These reports provide crucial evidence on the homelessness sector and the people it supports and are the only data source of their kind available on homelessness services in England. This report outlines findings from five key data sources, including survey data provided by accommodation providers and day centres across England. The findings provide a detailed overview of the nature and availability of key services for single homeless people.

Trends in single homelessness

- Approximately 200,000 single people experience homelessness in England each year.¹
- An average of 77,000 single people are estimated to experience some form of homelessness on any one night.²
- Between April 2016 and March 2017, 19,460 people who made a homelessness application in England were found to not be in priority need by their Local Authority and the majority of them were likely to be single homeless people. This represents 17% of the total number of households making a homelessness application.
- In 2017, a total of 4,751 people were estimated to be sleeping rough in England on any given night, which represents an increase of 15% since 2016.

Availability of homelessness services

- There are currently 1,121 accommodation projects for single homeless people in England.
- A total of 196 day centres currently operate throughout England.
- Homeless England data identifies a reduction in both the number of accommodation projects (-5%) and the number of day centres (-8%) in the past year.
- The number of bed spaces has decreased by 3% in the past year, and now stands at 34,497 in total.
- 39% of the responding accommodation providers reported a decrease in funding, with 38% reporting no change in funding over the past 12 months. 15% reported an increase in funding.

Delivery of services

- Accommodation providers and day centres provide a wide variety of services to address individuals' needs, and respondents rarely reported that services are completely unavailable.
- People who are homeless face difficulties in accessing mental health services.
- Services provided in-house on an organisation's premises are less likely to have barriers to access than services provided via formal referral to external services.

Outcomes, move on and service development

- Among accommodation projects, the level of resident engagement is highest for money management activities and for meaningful activities such as sports or art groups.
- Accommodation providers were most likely to report homelessness prevention as their main outcome.
- 74% of accommodation providers continue to support individuals after they move on from their services.
- People accessing accommodation services face significant structural barriers to moving on. Lack of affordable accommodation is the main barrier.

¹ Crisis (2017), *Moving On: Improving access to housing for single homeless people*, Available at: https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237833/moving_on_2017.pdf

² Ibid

Chapter 1: Introduction

This report presents an analysis of the support that is provided for single homeless people by the homelessness support sector. This tenth edition of the report examines both the capacity of the sector and the available support and services for single people experiencing homelessness. The report aims to help service providers, commissioners and policy-makers understand and respond to the needs of those experiencing homelessness and gain an understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the homelessness sector.

Methodology

The findings featured in this report are drawn from the following five key data sources:

1. Self-completed online survey from 272 accommodation projects (response rate: 26%)

An online survey was sent to 1,038 accommodation providers throughout England to request information on the following key topics: bed spaces and voids, client characteristics, outcomes and move-on, funding, challenges faced, and nature of/changes in service provision. Data was analysed by means of Excel and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and open text comments were thematically analysed and used as supporting evidence. Questions with a base rate response below 100 were not included in this report. Responses cover the period April 2016 – March 2017.

2. Self-completed online survey from 74 day centres (response rate: 43%)

An online survey was sent to 174 daycentres throughout England to request information on the following key topics: client characteristics, outcomes, funding, and service provision. Data was analysed by means of Excel. Questions with a base rate response below 25 were not included in this report. Responses cover the period April 2016 – March 2017.

3. Existing data on homelessness trends

Existing data sources on statutory homelessness (P1E data) and rough sleeping figures as published by Department of Communities and Local Government were analysed by means of Excel.

4. Homeless England database

This database is managed by Homeless Link and holds information on approximately 1,400 accommodation projects and day centres. Although the data is not live, it is updated regularly, and the database is considered to be the most accurate data source on homelessness services in England. Data on services and bed spaces was extracted from the Homeless England database on 30 November 2017, allowing a comparative year-on-year analysis of previous publications of the Annual Review.

5. Case studies

Four case studies were compiled to further evidence the key topics addressed in the research and to provide in-depth examples of the various types of service provision in England. The case studies were selected and compiled by Homeless Link and are based on local information about good practice among our members.

Data accuracy

Previous studies compiled information for the time period October–September, which then allowed year-by-year comparisons. This year's respondents were asked to provide data for the period April 2016–March 2017 in order to simplify the process of providing statistical information since services often collect data by the financial year. Year-by-year comparisons will therefore not be included within this report.

Certain questions ask for 'snapshots' of data relating to client records of 'last night' or 'yesterday.' Within the different homelessness services, amounts and methods of data collection tend to vary however, and some survey questions may therefore be based on informed estimates rather than exact figures (Table 1).

Table 1: Data accuracy, Annual Review Survey 2017

	Accommodation providers	Day centres
All exact figures	4%	0%
Mainly exact figures, but some best estimates	50%	34%
A mix of exact figures and best estimates	24%	31%
Mainly best estimates, but some exact figures	10%	17%
All best estimates	11%	17%

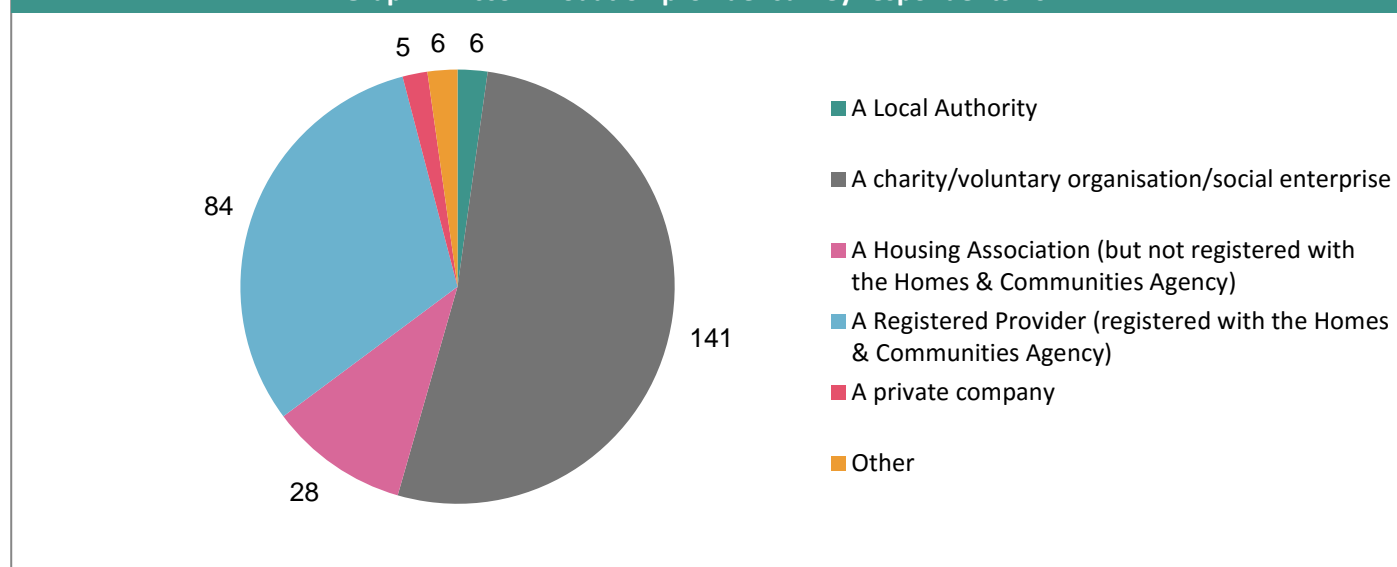
Accommodation survey (N:123) Day centre survey (N:29)

Respondents from accommodation projects and day centres generally reported that their responses were for the most part based on exact figures, with some best estimates. When compared to accommodation-based services, day centres often face issues that can impact their ability to collect systematic data on those accessing their services, e.g., the absence of formal key-working processes, inadequate IT facilities, limited time, and a reliance on volunteers. As part of our National Day Centres Project, Homeless Link is currently working with day centres across England to help them improve their data collection and outcome monitoring processes.³

Accommodation providers respondents

Graph 1 shows the types of accommodation providers that responded to our survey. The majority of participants were charity/voluntary organisations (141), or organisations registered with the Homes and Communities Agency (84).

Graph 1: Accommodation provider survey respondents 2017



N: 270

³ <http://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/national-projects/day-centres-project/resources-for-day-centres>

Report structure

Chapter 2 is based on a secondary analysis of existing national homelessness data. It explores different categories of homelessness and trends around single homelessness in England.

Chapter 3 explores the availability and use of homelessness services in England. Drawing on data from the Homeless England database and the online survey, this chapter looks at how service availability has changed over the past year and at the resources that are available to accommodation providers and day centres.

Chapter 4 uses survey data to outline the key characteristics of those accessing homelessness services in England and the specific services which are delivered by organisations to meet people's needs. This Chapter also looks at the barriers that single homeless people face in accessing support.

Chapter 5 looks at the outcomes monitoring processes adopted by service providers, and explores the various options available to people when they leave homelessness accommodation services. This Chapter also looks at changes and development within the sector, as well as how services aim to improve outcomes and practices.

Chapter 2: Single homelessness in England

This Chapter provides an outline of the different categories of homelessness, and explores recent evidence on trends in the numbers and geographical distribution of single people experiencing homelessness in England. The findings are based on an analysis of statutory homelessness and rough sleeper data as published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Key headlines

- In April 2016 – March 2017, 115,580 people made a homelessness application in England. A total of 19,460 individuals were found not to be in priority need by their local authority, and the majority of them were likely to be single homeless people. This represents 17% of the total number of households making a homelessness application during this time.
- Between July-September 2017, 4,900 people who made a homelessness application in England were found to not be in priority need by their Local Authority, representing 17% of the total number of applications during this time.
- In 2017, a total of 4,751 people were estimated to be sleeping rough in England, which represents an increase of 15% since 2016.
- The largest increases in rough sleeping were found in London, the South East and the North West of England.

Types of homelessness

The term 'homelessness' has a broad meaning and does not only cover those sleeping rough or those housed by their Local Authority in temporary accommodation. People experiencing homelessness face a wide array of circumstances that are captured within certain defined categories and are measured in a number of ways. The Housing Act 1996 provides a legal definition of homelessness, stating a person to be homeless if they do not have a home in the UK or anywhere else in the world. Local authorities will use this definition, alongside other key criteria (see below), to determine statutory entitlements and to allocate housing to people and families who are experiencing homelessness. The main categories of homelessness can be summed up as follows:

Statutory homelessness: This term covers Local Authority assessments of households (i.e. families or individuals) who seek help with housing due to loss of accommodation. People will be considered eligible for accommodation (also referred to as 'the main homelessness duty') by their local council when meeting the criteria of the Homelessness Act 2002: i) eligible for assistance; ii) homeless; iii) in priority need; and iv) not intentionally homeless.⁴

The Housing Act 1996 (Part VII) defines four main groups as being in priority need: households with dependent children; pregnant women; those who are threatened to become homeless because of an emergency (such as a flood); and those who are vulnerable.⁵ The category of 'vulnerable' is particularly significant for single homeless people (i.e., those without dependent children), as it is the primary way they can be found to be in priority need. Single homeless people are rarely considered to be in priority need, and therefore often have to rely on homelessness charities for accommodation and other forms of support.

⁴ For further information on each of these criteria see Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S., and Watts, B. (2017) *The homelessness monitor: England 2017*. London: Crisis.

⁵ The Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002, extended the definition of 'vulnerable' to include: mental health problems; physical or learning disabilities; old age; leaving prison or the Armed Forces; care leavers; being at risk of violence (or threats of violence); other special reasons.

Single homelessness: This term covers individuals or couples without dependent children who are homeless but are unlikely to meet the priority need criteria of homelessness legislation, and therefore do not qualify for temporary or permanent accommodation from their Local Authority. Many single homeless people will stay in accommodation (hostels, shelters and temporary supported accommodation) provided by the voluntary homelessness sector, while others will sleep rough or remain hidden.

Hidden homelessness: Many single homeless people are out of sight in squats, sleeping on someone's floor, sofa-surfing with friends or sleeping rough in concealed locations. These individuals usually have no statutory entitlement to housing and are not captured in official statistics.

Rough sleeping: This term covers the experience of people who sleep outside or in buildings or places that are unfit for human habitation (e.g., car parks, cars, stations, doorways).⁶

Trends in single homelessness

The varying definitions of homelessness, the absence of a unified and consistent approach in recording single homelessness, and the 'hidden' and 'mobile' nature of the experiences of many homeless people, make measuring single homelessness particularly challenging. With local authorities not being required to record the scale or needs of single homeless people, official statistics are likely to underestimate the extent of the issue.⁷ In addition, any attempt to count single homelessness faces issues of the double counting of individuals between services and an overlap between the various categories, and some individuals may not be captured at all. Despite these limitations, existing data on non-priority decisions and rough sleeping estimates give some indication of the key trends within single homelessness.

'Non-priority homelessness'

People considered 'non-priority' by their Local Authority will most likely fall into the category of single homeless people, which then provides a reference point when determining trends. Annual non-priority decisions across England have remained relatively stable over the past years at approximately 20,000.⁸ The number of single homeless people that were found to be vulnerable has also remained relatively stable.⁹

In April 2016 – March 2017, a total of 115,580 households in England made a homelessness application to their local authority. 19,460 people were found not to be in priority need, and the majority of them were likely to be single homeless people. This represents 17% of the total number of households making a homelessness application during this time (Graph 2).

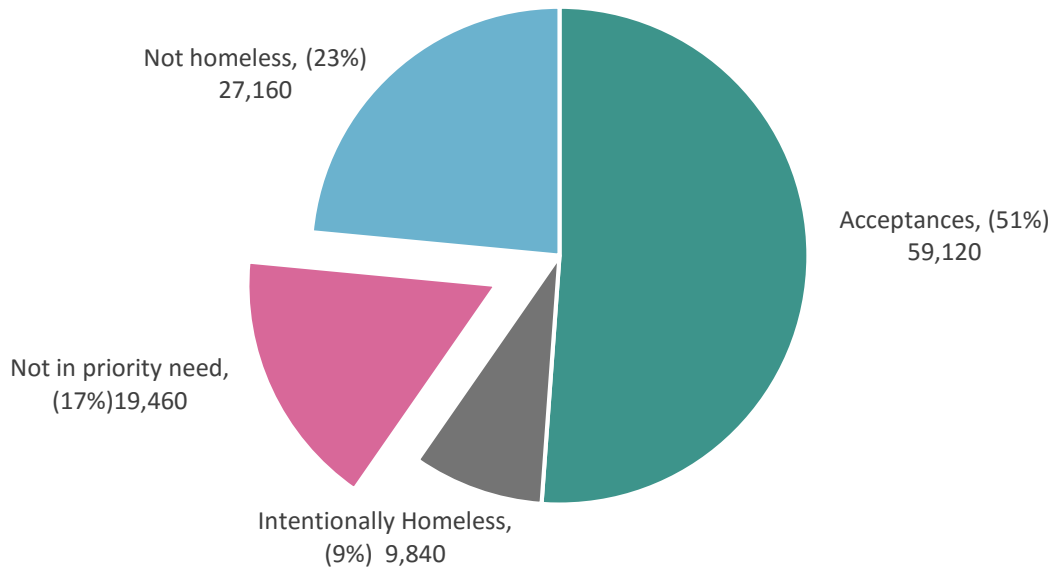
⁶ Since 2010, national rough sleeping statistics have used the following definition: 'People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes")'.

⁷ Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S., and Watts, B. (2017) *The homelessness monitor: England 2017*. London: Crisis.

⁸ *ibid*

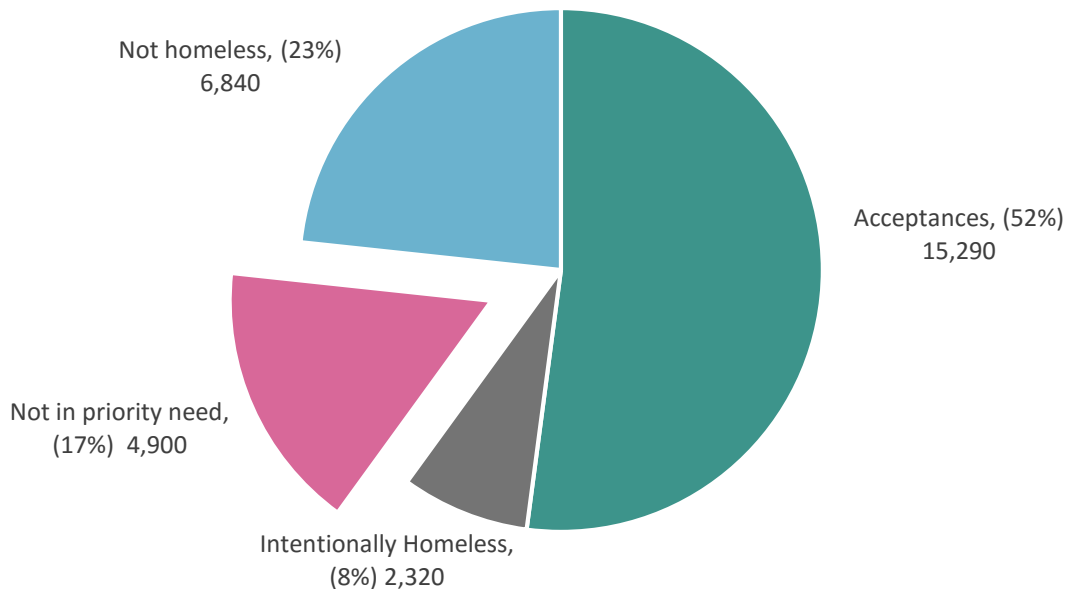
⁹ *ibid*

Graph 2: Statutory Homelessness decisions, April 2016 - March 2017

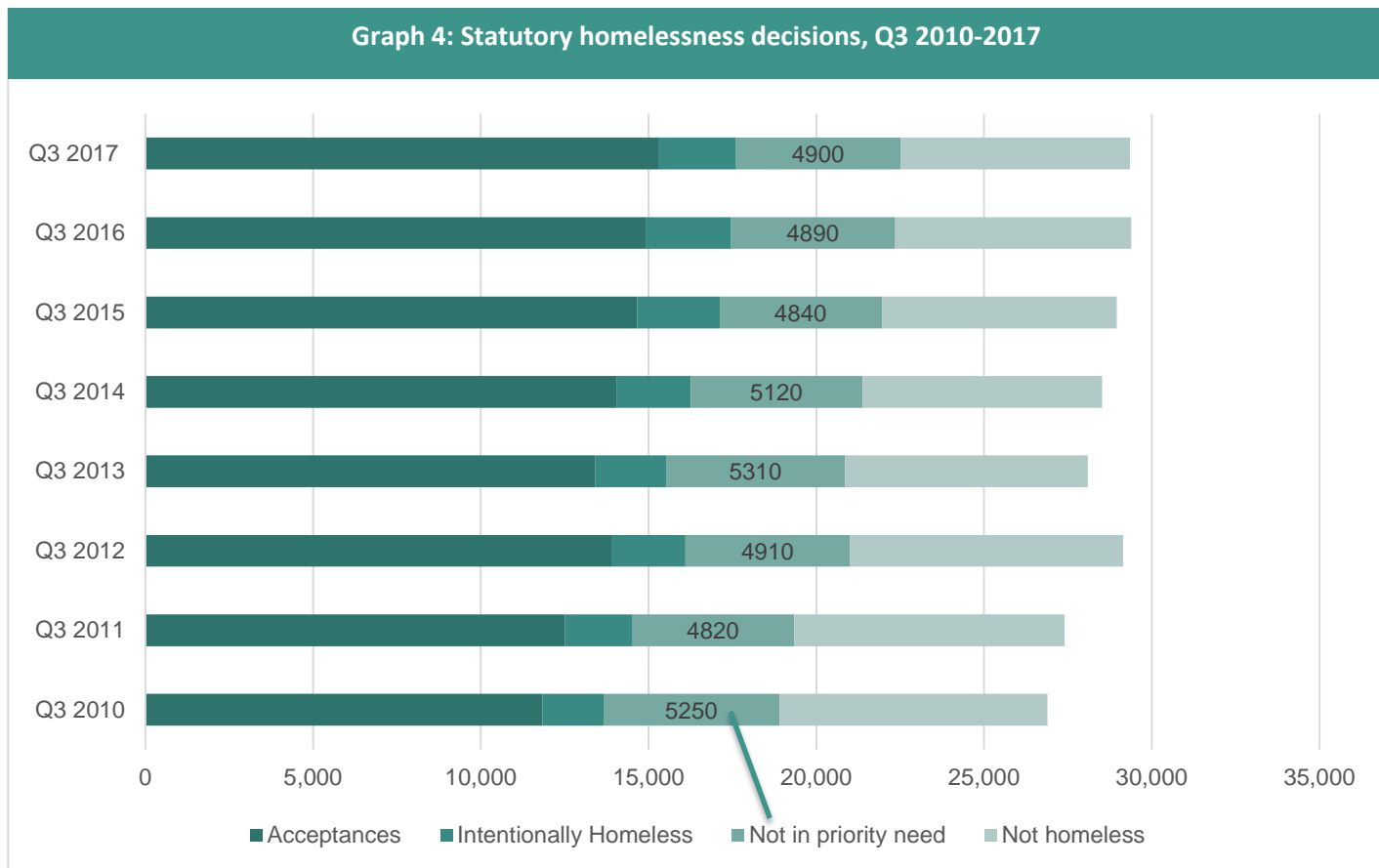


The following graph looks at a specific quarter in 2017. Between July-September 2017, 4,900 people making a homelessness application at their Local Authority were found not to be in priority need, also representing 17% of the total number of households making a homelessness application during this time (Graph 3).

Graph 3: Statutory Homelessness decisions, July - September 2017



Graph 4 below shows the statutory homelessness caseload has remained relatively stable since 2010. However, these statistics only show part of the picture, with a greater number of households having received prevention and relief assistance since a Housing Options approach was introduced in England. Prevention covers positive action taken by local authorities to provide assistance to people at risk of homelessness, relief involves actions to secure accommodation for households that have already become homeless.



Graph 4 shows statutory homelessness decisions between the months of July and September over the past seven years. The number of ‘not in priority need’ cases has remained relatively stable (between 17% and 20% of the total). This indication of stable rates of single homelessness is inconsistent with testimony from voluntary service providers. For example, in our 2015 Annual Review, some services reported dealing with extra demand following budget cuts to statutory and voluntary sector services.¹⁰ What the above statistics do show, is that a significant number of single homeless people are not protected by our current legal system.¹¹

Rough sleeping

Local authorities in England carry out a yearly count or estimate of the number of people sleeping rough on one particular night. These statistics provide a snapshot figure of those sleeping rough in different local authorities and regions.

¹⁰ Homeless Link (2015) *Single homelessness support in England: Annual Review 2015*, Available at:

<https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Full%20report%20-%20Single%20homelessness%20support%20in%20England%202015.pdf>

¹¹ The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which will come into force in April 2018, aims to enhance protection for single homeless people by placing a new duty on local authorities to help prevent the homelessness of anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness if they are eligible for assistance, regardless of their priority need (see pg.14 below).

A total of 4,751 people were counted or estimated by local authorities to be sleeping rough in England on any one night in the autumn of 2017 (Table 2); an increase of 15% from the 4,134 figure of 2016 (Table 3).

Since the current methodology for measuring rough sleeping was introduced in 2010, estimates indicate a 2,983 or 169% increase in rough sleepers (Table 3).

Table 2: Rough sleeping in England 2010 – 2017

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of rough sleepers	1,768	2,181	2,309	2,414	2,744	3,569	4,134	4,751

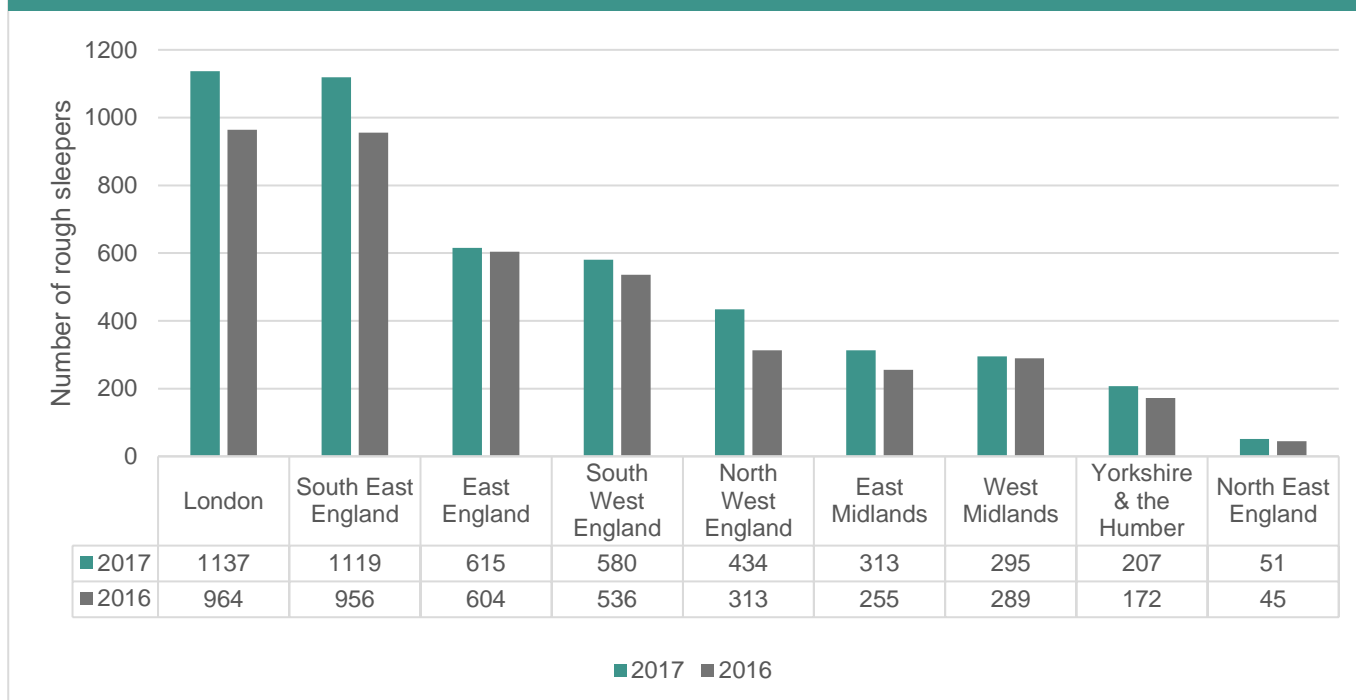
Table 3: Changes in rough sleeping 2010 – 2017

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Percentage change	+169%	+118%	+106%	+97%	+73%	+33%	+15%
Numerical change	+2983	+2570	+2442	+2337	+2007	+1182	+617

Regional trends in rough sleeping

All regions in England reported an increase in rough sleeping in 2017 when compared to 2016 figures (although this increase varies geographically, see graph 5). London, the South East of England and North West England reported particularly sharp increases in 2017 compared to the previous year.

Graph 5: Number of rough sleepers in England, by region, 2016 - 2017



In terms of overall distribution of rough sleeping across England, London and the South East reported the highest number of rough sleepers, with the North East reporting the lowest numbers (Table 4)

Table 4: Rough sleeper regional distribution	
	% of total
	2017
East England	13
East Midlands	7
London	24
North East	1
North West	9
South East	24
South West	12
West Midlands	6
Yorkshire & the Humber	4



Recent estimates

In a 2017 study exploring the housing needs of single homeless people, the homelessness charity Crisis developed estimates of the number of single people experiencing homelessness in England¹². In their report, the scale of single homelessness is quantified by means of analysis of several national surveys, statutory homelessness data and existing studies on homelessness. Their analysis includes people sleeping rough, living in homeless accommodation projects, staying in squats and other makeshift arrangements, and those staying temporarily with friends or family because they lack alternative options. The following key findings emerged from their study:

- Around 200,000 single people experience homelessness each year in England. The minimum estimate is 120,000 and the maximum estimate is 345,000.
- On average, 77,000 single people will experience some form of homelessness on any one night. The low estimate is 52,000 and the high estimate is 111,000.

¹² Crisis (2017) *Moving on: Improving access to housing for single homeless people in England*, Available at: https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237833/moving_on_2017.pdf

Chapter 3: Availability of homelessness services

This Chapter draws on findings from the Homeless England database and the online surveys to explore the availability of homelessness services. It provides an outline of changes in the number of projects and bed spaces in the various regions over the past 12 months, before then moving on to discuss resources which are available to the sector.

Key findings

- There are currently 1,121 accommodation projects for single homeless people in England.
- A total of 196 day centres currently operate throughout England.
- Homeless England data identifies a reduction in both the number of accommodation projects (-5%) and the number of day centres (-8%) in the past year.
- The number of bed spaces in England has decreased by 3%, and now stands at a total of 34,497.
- 52% of projects have 20 bed spaces or fewer.
- Most respondents reported that their primary funding stream comes from housing-related support, with funding from non-statutory sources remaining low.
- 39% of the responding accommodation providers reported a decrease in funding, with 38% reporting no change in funding over the past 12 months. 15% reported an increase in funding.
- Day centres continue to rely primarily on fundraising and donations as their main funding source.

Funding context

Over the past year there has continued to be investment in tackling homelessness at a national level. This includes investment of £139m to tackle homelessness, which was announced in the 2015 spending review for the current spending period, during which funding for the homelessness prevention grant for local authorities was protected. In the most recent budget in Autumn 2017, there was additionally £20m funding pledged for private rented sector access and support, and £28m to pilot Housing First in three areas in England.

There has also been investment to support the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act, which became an Act of Parliament on the 27th April 2017. The Act amends part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and places new legal duties on councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to support, irrespective of their priority need status, as long as they are eligible for assistance. This is through:

1. Improving advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness
2. Extending the 'threatened with homelessness' period from 28 to 56 days
3. Introducing new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness for all eligible people, regardless of priority need and intentionality
4. Introducing assessments and personalised housing plans, setting out the actions housing authorities and individuals will take to secure accommodation
5. Encouraging public bodies to work together to prevent and relieve homelessness through a 'duty to refer'.¹³

£72.7m has been made available to support LAs implement the HRA between now and 2020.¹⁴

¹³ For more detail see <http://www.homeless.org.uk/webinar-homelessness-reduction-act> and the source document <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/contents/enacted>

¹⁴ See https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652195/New_burdens_allocation.pdf

There is, however, evidence that funding at a local level on single homelessness, particularly housing related support, has fallen over recent years. A report by the National Audit Office published in 2017 found that spending on overall housing services has fallen by 21% in real terms since 2010, including a 59% real terms decrease in Supporting People funding (housing-related support).¹⁵

Definitions

Homelessness provision is described in various ways, and accommodation projects and day centres differ in size, as well as in the level and nature of support offered. The following definitions cover the key features of both forms of provision:

Accommodation projects: These services provide both short and long-term accommodation and generally aim to support people to prepare for independent living. Examples of accommodation projects cover foyers, supported housing schemes and hostels. The level of support, access criteria, and target groups vary between projects. Some services offer lower level support; this is usually for those who are homeless or in housing need but otherwise fully capable of independent living. Other services offer high level support for those who have support needs besides their accommodation needs and often face a number of barriers to independent living. Not included in this report are night shelters and specialised services that specifically target people with needs relating to substance use, mental health, and offending.

Day centres: Day centres offer non-accommodation-based support for those sleeping rough and/or those who are either experiencing or at risk of other forms of homelessness. Day centres are usually provided and run by churches and other voluntary organisations, and have often emerged in response to a local need. Research shows that many day centres in England have expanded beyond basic service provision to provide other services such as advice, computer and Internet access, and access to specialised support services.¹⁶ The way individual projects are set up will be informed by varying histories, working ethos and key principles, and will operate in different ways (see case study 1).

Case Study 1: The Booth Centre, Day Centre (Manchester)

The Booth Centre is a large day centre in Manchester that has worked with approximately 2000 individuals over the past year. Around half the day centre's visitors are rough sleepers, and many have support needs around mental health, substance misuse and/or chaotic behaviour. The centre prioritises co-production and provides a wide range of activities throughout the day.

The central aim of the day centre's approach is to maximise service users' control over decision-making, and service users are involved in shaping all aspects of the day centre's work. For example, service users will contribute to staff and volunteer training sessions, and routinely attend internal and external meetings. Equally important is the widespread involvement of service users in day-to-day activities, such as clearing tables after meals, carrying out small repairs and painting and decorating the day centre.

Another key strength of the day centre's approach is that it seeks to treat its service users as equal partners. For example, service user volunteers have the same status as community volunteers and service user panel recruitment decisions carry the same weight as the staff/trustee panel. People are encouraged to be realistic about what they can participate in and are supported around these choices. Staff also share financial and other information with service users, to support more viable decisions and to generate creative fundraising solutions for activities.

¹⁵ National Audit Office, Homelessness: report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, September 2017

¹⁶ Cloke, P., May, J. and Johnsen, S. (2010) *Swept Up Lives? Re-envisioning the Homeless City*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

The development of service user involvement at the Booth Centre is acknowledged as being time- and resource-intensive and has also involved a degree of culture change. However, staff feel this is more than offset by the positive impacts on service users' skills, confidence and self-esteem. Individuals feel more resilient and less isolated and this improves their chances of sustaining long-term accommodation. They also want to 'give back' to the centre, improving opportunities for currently homeless people to develop skills and social networks.

Availability of homelessness services

Data from the Homeless England database identifies 1,121 accommodation projects for single people in England, representing a 5% decrease from the previous year's figure of 1,185. A total of 34,497 bed spaces are listed, representing a decrease of 3% from last year's figures. The number of day centres has also decreased by 8% to a total figure of 196. These figures indicate a reduction in the availability of support for single homeless people over the past year, and mark a continuation of the downward trend in the number of accommodation projects and bed spaces, as highlighted in previous Annual Review reports.¹⁷

The map on the next page shows that the scale of provision for single homeless people is characterised by significant geographical diversity. A clear contrast can be noted between the availability of services in London and the rest of the country: 24% of all bed spaces and 15% of all accommodation projects are based in London. Although London has only a slightly larger number of projects in place than other regions (i.e., South East and East England), a significantly higher number of bed spaces are provided in this region. These numbers reflect that, when compared to the rest of the country, London has a greater number of large accommodation projects. This is supported by other research by Homeless Link, which showed that nationally about a quarter of supported accommodation projects have 10 bed spaces or fewer, compared to 16% in London.¹⁸ That report also showed that London is more likely to have projects with more than 100 bed spaces (8% of projects in London).

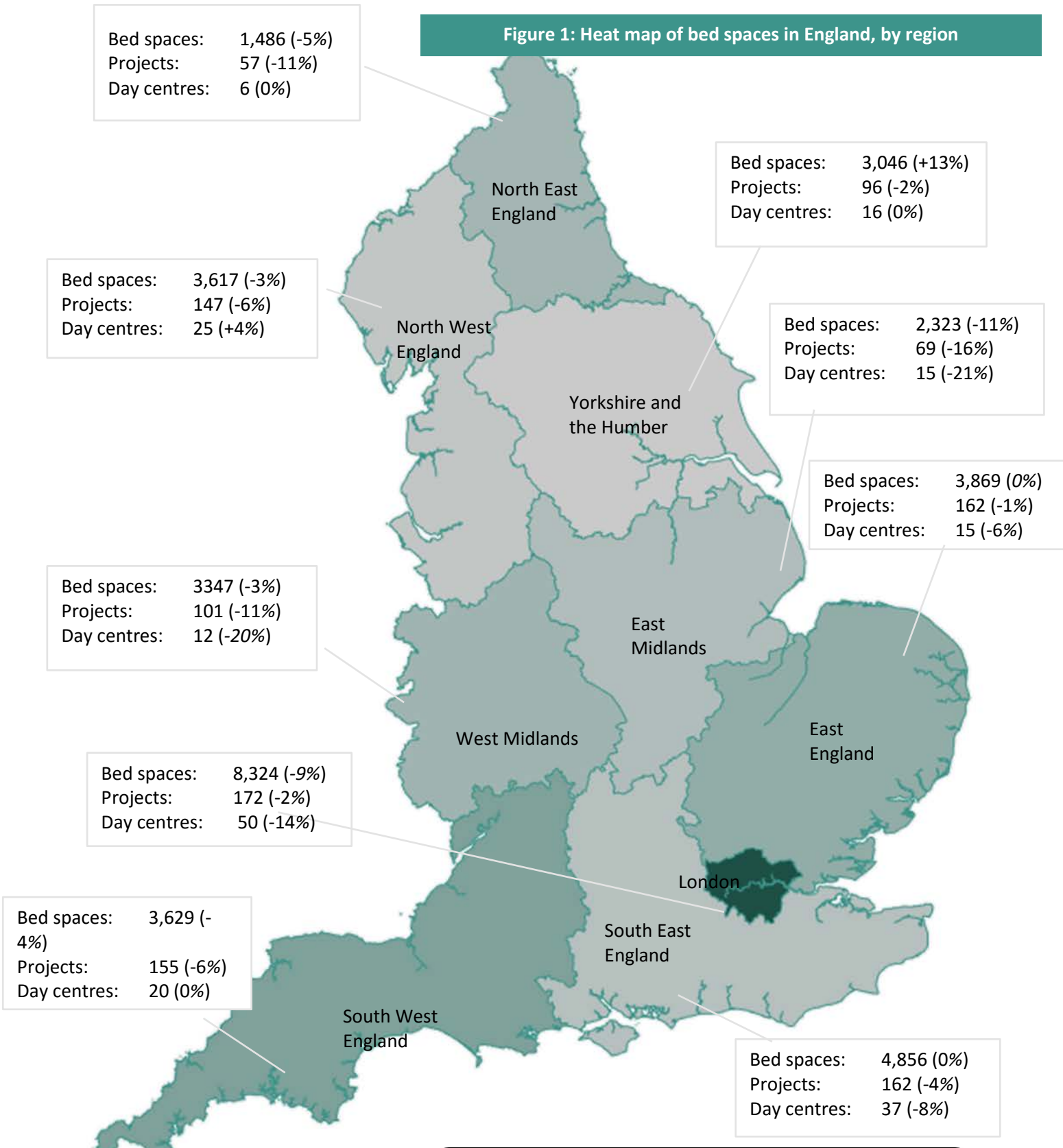
The findings of this study show that Yorkshire and the Humber is the only region where the number of bed spaces has increased. In this region the number of projects has decreased by 2%, whilst the number of bed spaces has increased by 13%, suggesting an increased project capacity within certain services in this region. A noticeable reduction in the number of bed spaces was found in the East Midlands, where the number of bed spaces reduced by 11%, and the number of projects decreased by 16%.

The findings of last year's survey showed a decrease in the number of day centres in only two regions (East England and South West England). This year, five regions reported a decrease in the number of day centres, with only the North West reporting an increase (4%). Given the vital role of day centres in addressing rough sleeping and meeting people's immediate needs, and considering the upward trend in rough sleeping (as discussed in Chapter 2), these findings are particularly troubling.

¹⁷ All previous Annual Reviews reports can be downloaded from the Homeless Link website - <https://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/our-research/annual-review-of-single-homelessness-support-in-england>

¹⁸ Homeless Link (2017) *The Future Hostel* (awaiting publication)

Figure 1: Heat map of bed spaces in England, by region



Total in England	Number	% change on previous year
Bed spaces:	34,497	(-3%)
Accommodation projects:	1,121	(-5%)
Day centres:	196	(-8%)

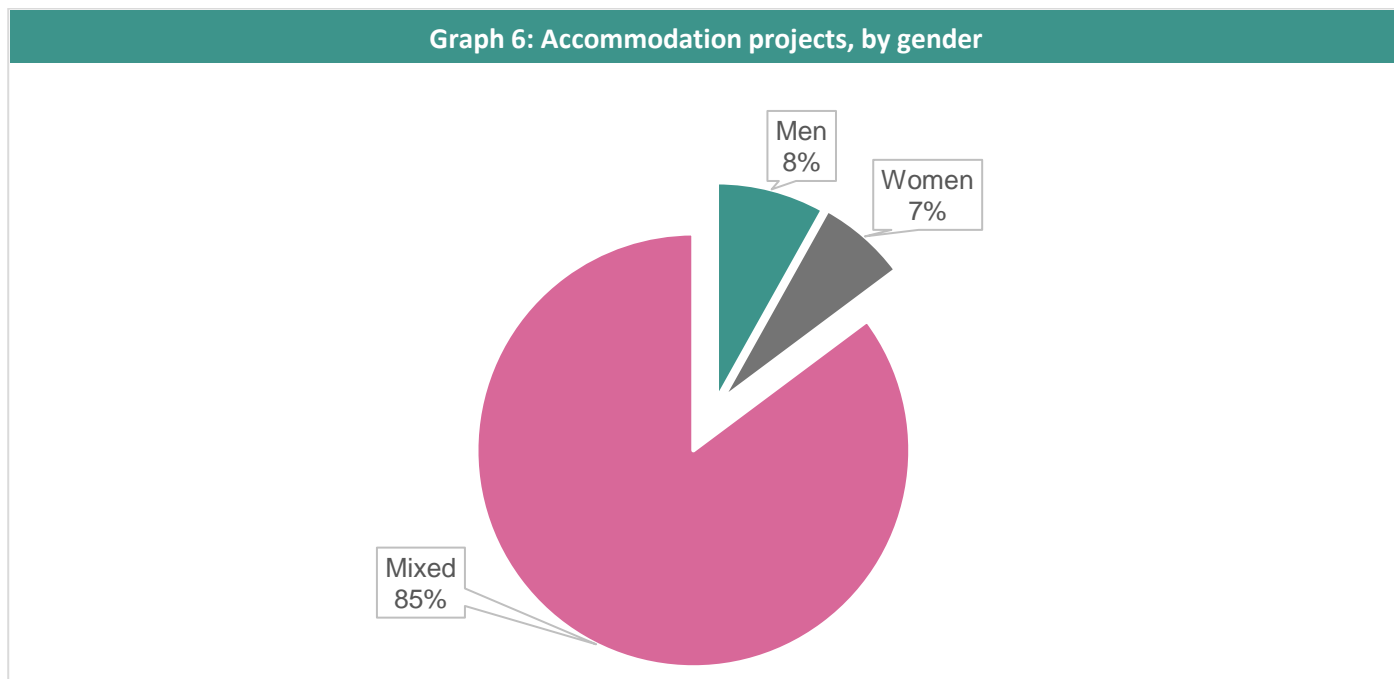
Source: Homeless UK database, November 2017

Availability for couples

In the online survey, just 47 providers reported having bed spaces available for couples (17% of total of 272). This is particularly significant in light of feedback from our members which suggests that presenting as a couple can be a barrier to accessing services.¹⁹

Availability of accommodation projects by gender

A total of 85% of accommodation projects in England provide mixed accommodation, with others offering men-only (8%) or women-only (7%) services. There are 75 projects that are specifically set up for women (Graph 6). Research has shown that many women accessing homelessness services have been victims of violence and abuse and have complex needs, and that many women therefore prefer women-only spaces and/or all female staff.²⁰



Source: Homeless England

Youth-specific accommodation

A total of 455 projects cater specifically to young people aged 16-25, showing a high proportion of youth-specific projects (41% of total). These findings reflect an increasing awareness that rather than all-age projects, age-specific accommodation services may be a more appropriate option for those that fall within this age bracket.²¹

A total of 99% of the 1,121 accommodation projects accept young people under the age of 25; a figure which has remained stable since last year. A smaller proportion (56%) will accept 16 and 17-year olds. This can be seen as reflective of a recognition of the need for more specialist provision for those that fall within this age bracket.

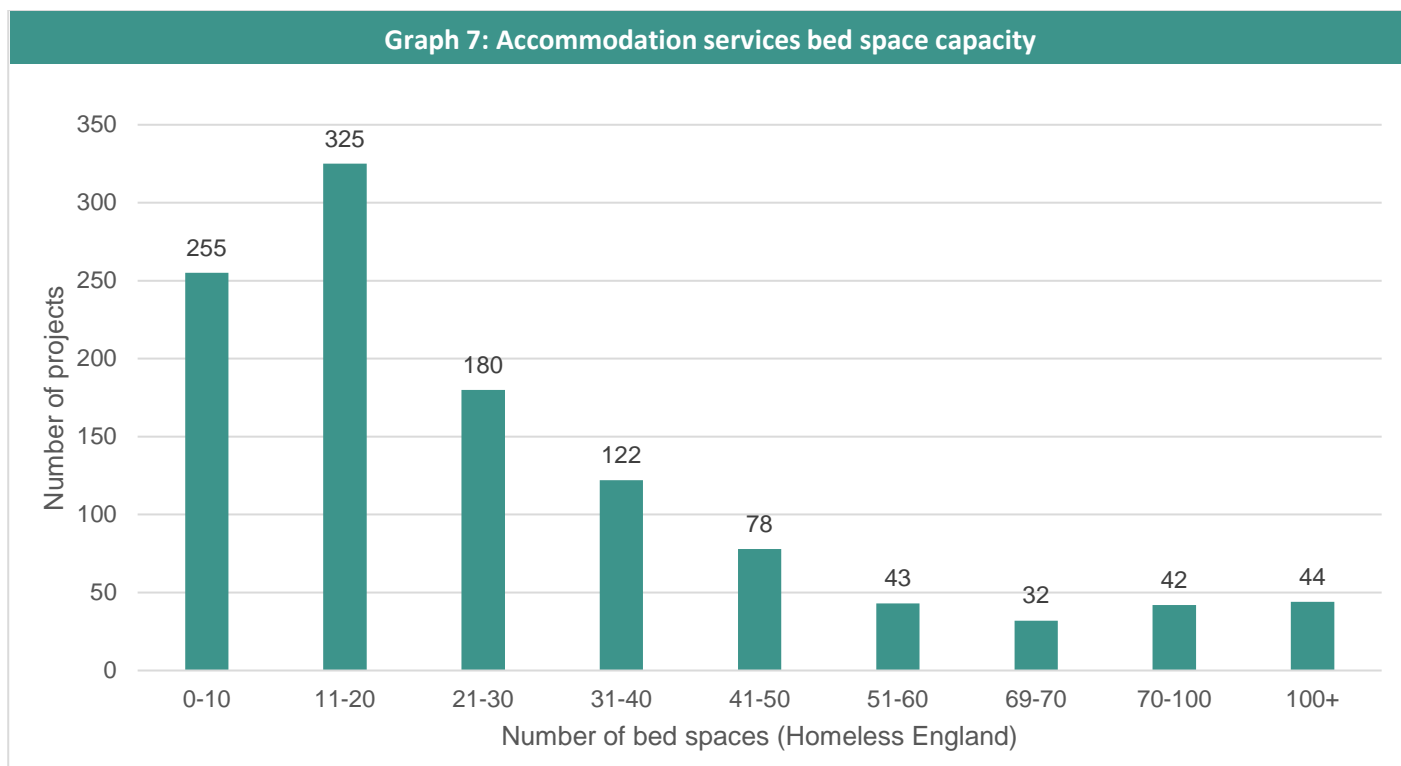
¹⁹ <https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/features/2017/nov/13/homeless-couples-is-it-time-for-new-approach>

²⁰ Homeless Link (2014) *Supporting woman who are homeless: Briefing for homelessness services*, Available at: https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Supporting%20women%20who%20are%20homeless%20March%202017_0.pdf

²¹ Quilgars, D., Johnsen, S. and Pleace, N. (2008) *Youth Homelessness in the UK: A Decade of Progress?* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Size of accommodation projects

Since the 1980s, homelessness provision has followed a trend of downsizing accommodation provision into smaller scale projects.²² Data from Homeless England shows the majority of projects are relatively small scale, with 52% of projects having 20 bed spaces or fewer (Graph 7). Project size may impact outcomes, with smaller projects often able to offer a more personalised approach.



Bed night voids

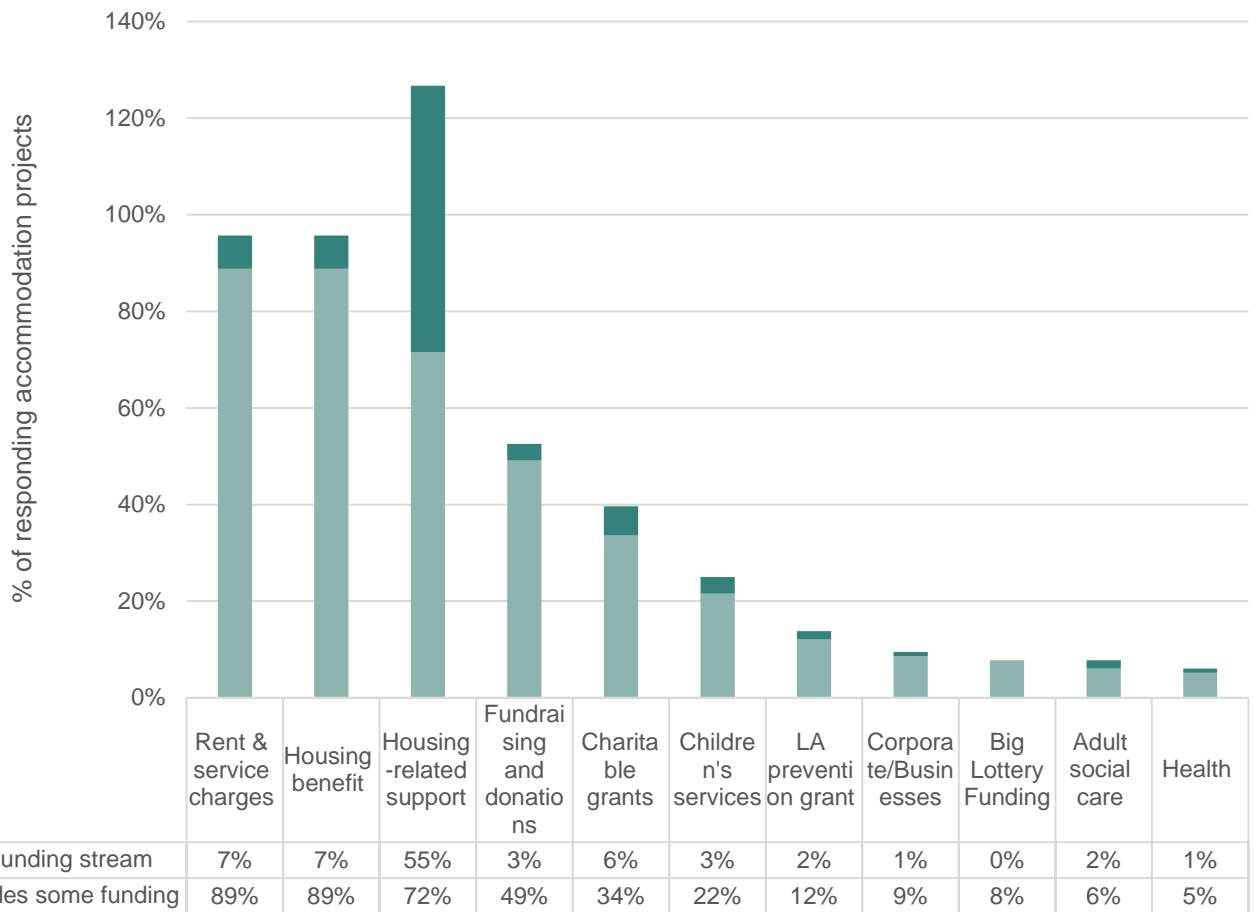
To explore the level of demand for beds, the online survey asked respondents whether they had had any voids (i.e., empty beds) the night before. Some projects are contracted to provide a certain number of beds to meet a particular need (e.g., people sleeping rough). Reflecting findings from earlier reports, accommodation providers reported very limited spare capacity:

- 37% of responding providers (94 respondents) reported operating at full capacity the previous night.
- 101 organisations (40%) reported having 1-10% voids the previous night.
- The most commonly reported number of empty beds was one.
- 42% of reported voids were because of refurbishment.
- 19% of empty beds were contracted voids (beds reserved for particular groups or referrals).
- 38% were unplanned voids (e.g., people leaving at short notice because of an emergency such as a hospital admittance).

Given the low rate of voids overall and the high percentage of voids being due to contractual arrangements or refurbishment, the findings suggest there to be a limited amount of spare capacity within the homelessness sector.

²² May, J., Cloke, P. and Johnsen, S. (2006) Shelter at the margins: New Labour and the changing state of emergency accommodation for single homeless people in Britain, *Policy and Politics*, 34, 711-729

Graph 8: Funding sources for accommodation projects



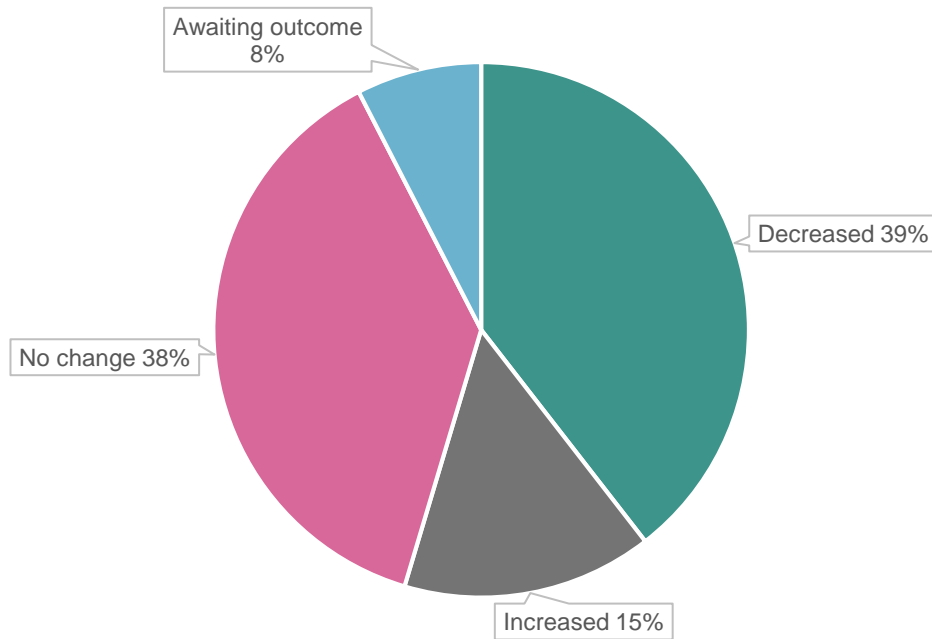
N: 116

While most responding providers (89%) received some funding through rent and service charges and Housing Benefit, these were rarely the main source of funding. The majority of responding providers identified housing-related support (formerly Supporting People) as their primary funding stream (55%).

Funding from non-housing statutory services that target criminal justice, public health, substance abuse, and social impact bonds remained low: 3% or fewer of the participating providers reported receiving some funding from these sources.

Accommodation providers were also asked about changes in funding levels over the past 12 months. A total of 39% of respondents reported a decrease in funding, and a similar percentage reported no change (Graph 9). 15% of respondents reported an increase in funding.

Graph 9: Changes in funding for accomodation projects

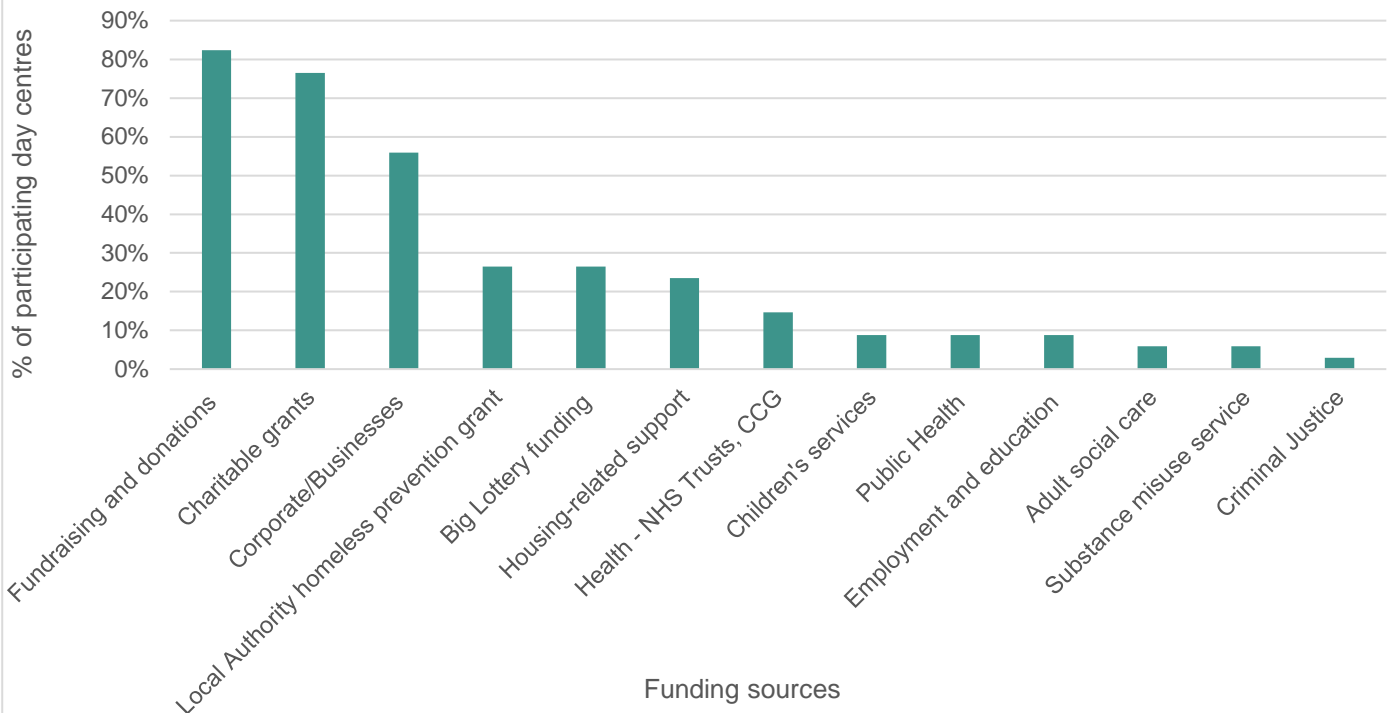


N: 119

Day Centre funding

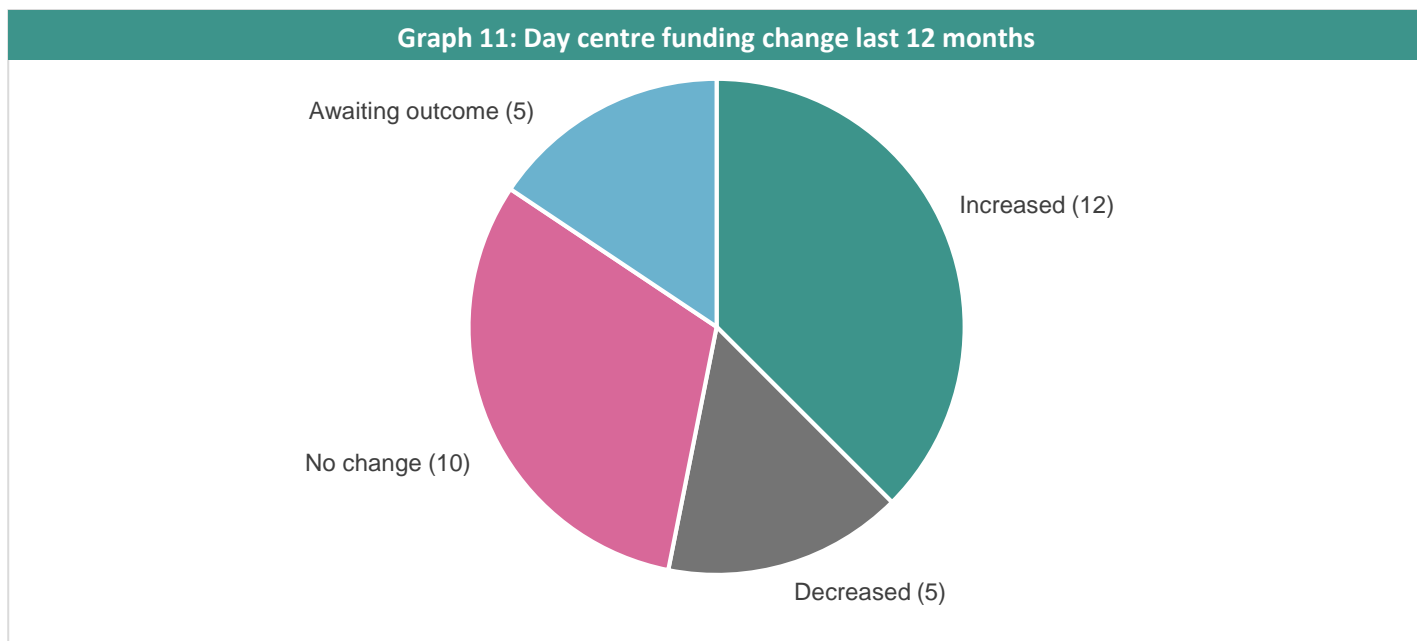
Funding sources for day centres differ compared to accomodation providers, with most responding projects reporting a continuing reliance on fundraising, donations and charitable grants (Graph 10). Very few participating projects receive public sector funding and often rely on a diverse range of funding sources.

Graph 10: Day centre funding sources



N: 34

The graph below shows changes in funding among the participating day centres, with most reporting an increase or no change in funding.²³



N: 32

²³ Due to the small sample size, caution should be taken in viewing these findings as an indication of funding changes across the sector.

Chapter 4: Use and delivery of services

Drawing on findings from the survey of accommodation providers and day centres, this Chapter explores the characteristics and support needs of single homeless people, before moving on to discuss the main services provided by homelessness services. The Chapter also looks at the barriers that single homeless people face in accessing support.

Key headlines

- The majority of single homeless people using accommodation projects are male with almost half being young people aged 16-25.
- Many single homeless people experience support needs in addition to their immediate need for housing, including: physical ill health, mental health problems, drug and alcohol issues and multiple and complex needs.
- Accommodation providers and day centres provide a wide variety of services to address these needs, e.g., life skills training, welfare and debt advice and drugs/alcohol services.
- Accommodation projects however reported that residents face many difficulties in accessing certain services, and in particular, mental health services.
- Services provided in-house on an organisation's premises are less likely to have barriers to access than services provided via formal referral to an external service.

Single homeless people: characteristics

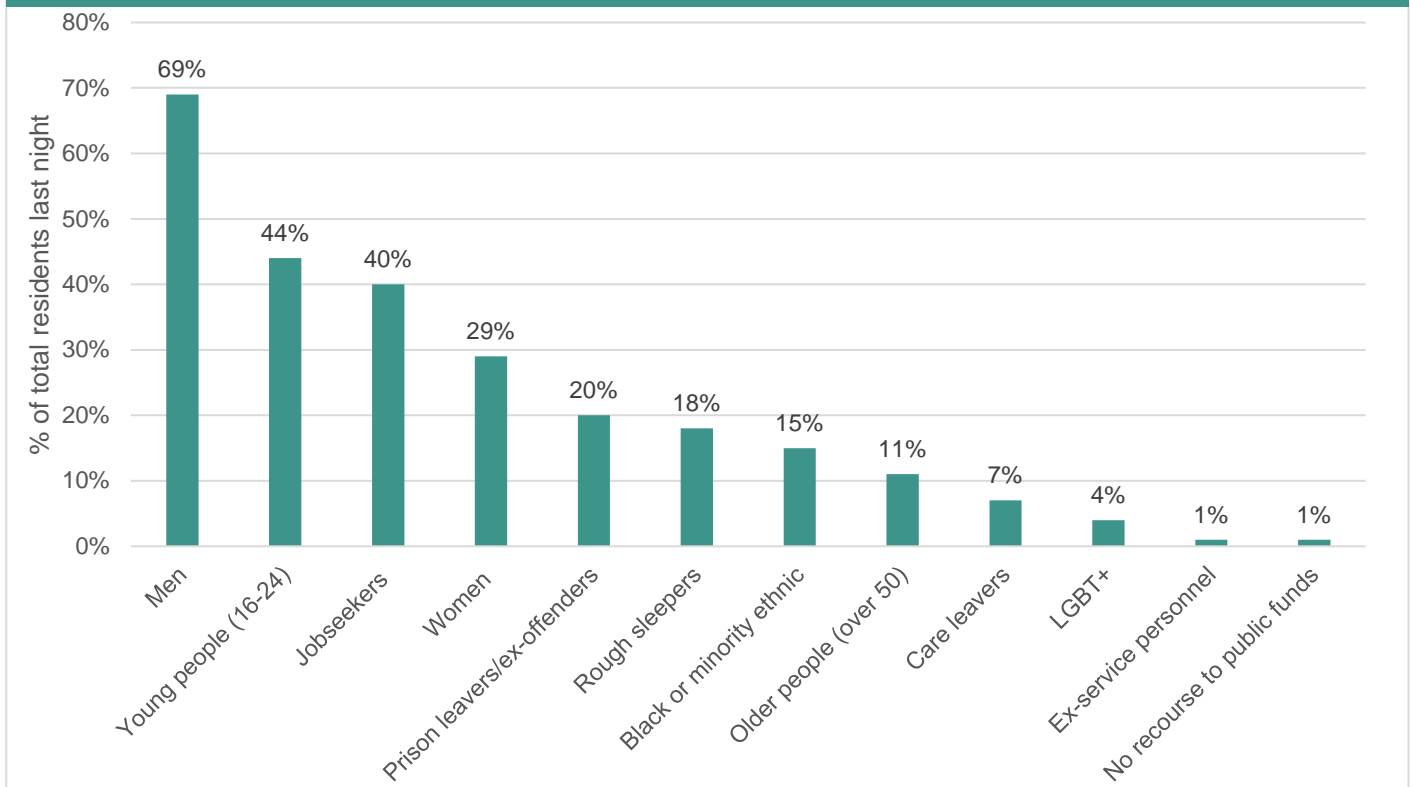
In the survey, accommodation providers were asked to provide socio-demographic information on people accessing their services in a single night in 2017. Socio-demographic characteristics are important to measure so that services can understand the specific needs among different groups and target support accordingly.

Echoing earlier research suggesting that the majority of single homeless people are male,²⁴ the findings showed that a substantial proportion (69%) of those accessing participating accommodation services are men (Graph 12). Research has however also shown that many women will stay in 'hidden homeless' situations, and will often rely on informal sources of support rather than attend (largely male-dominated) services.²⁵ Many single homeless women may therefore not be captured in the existing statistics.

²⁴ https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/20608/crisis_nations_apart_2014.pdf

²⁵ Crisis (2008) *Policy briefing: Homeless Women Briefing*, Available at: http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/2945Homeless_women_policy_recommendations.pdf

Graph 12: Characteristics of people accessing accommodation projects



N: 212

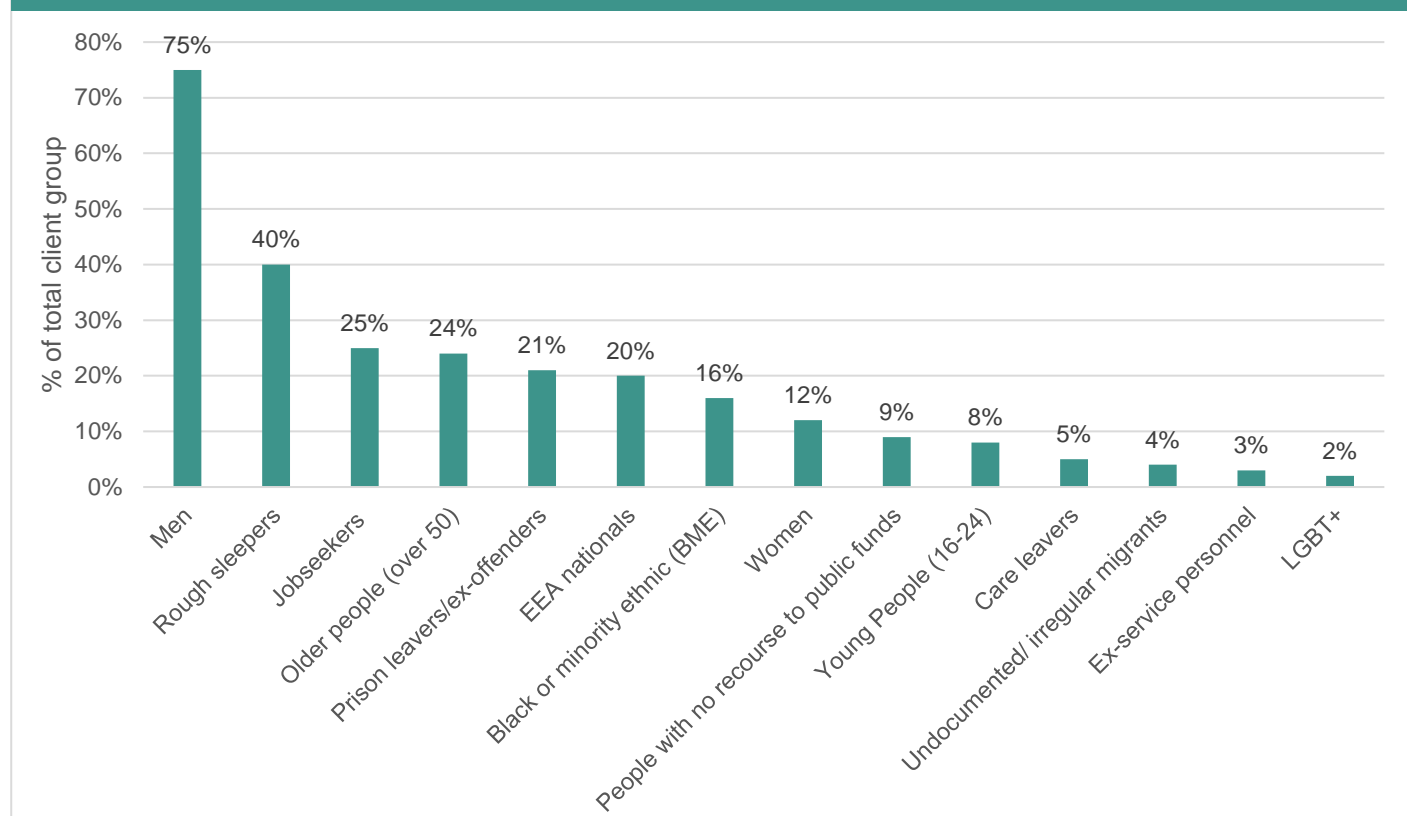
Reflecting findings in previous Annual Review reports, accommodation providers seem to support more young people (aged 16-24) (44%) than people of 50 and older (11%). This is consistent with previous research, which has shown most single homeless people in England to be between 21 and 50 years old.²⁶

With most accommodation providers commissioned to work with people who are eligible for Housing Benefit, respondents reported only a very limited number of undocumented migrants and people without recourse to public funds.

Graph 13 below shows the socio-demographic characteristics and experiences of people accessing day centres who were included in the online survey. Although nearly 1 in 5 of those who accessed the participating accommodation services had experiences of rough sleeping (18%), this figure was higher among day centres (40%), which illustrates the critical role of day centres in responding to this most visible form of homelessness. The proportion of women and young people (ages 16-24) accessing days centres was also lower than accommodation projects.

²⁶ Crisis (2014) *Nations apart? Experiences of single homeless people across Great Britain*, Available at: https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/20608/crisis_nations_apart_2014.pdf

Graph 13: Socio-demographic characteristics of day centre clients



N: 57

Findings that suggest that only a small minority of homeless people accessing day centres and accommodation projects are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) should be treated with caution. Research has shown that people who identify as LGBT+ are overrepresented in the UK homeless population as a whole, with research indicating that consistent and accurate recording of sexual identity may not be common practice among homelessness services.²⁷

Single homeless needs: support needs

Respondents were also asked for information on the support needs of people accessing their service in a single night in 2017 (Graph 14). Many single people experiencing homelessness have support needs other than their need for housing and as such require some type of tailored assistance. In this study, only 39 out of 154 accommodation providers reported that their residents had no support needs other than a housing need.

The survey findings reflect earlier research showing continuing poor levels of physical and mental health among those experiencing homelessness, with diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health problems reported as being particularly prevalent.²⁸

Complex or multiple needs were also highlighted to be common among accommodation residents (32%). These are defined within this study as people experiencing two or more of the following support needs:

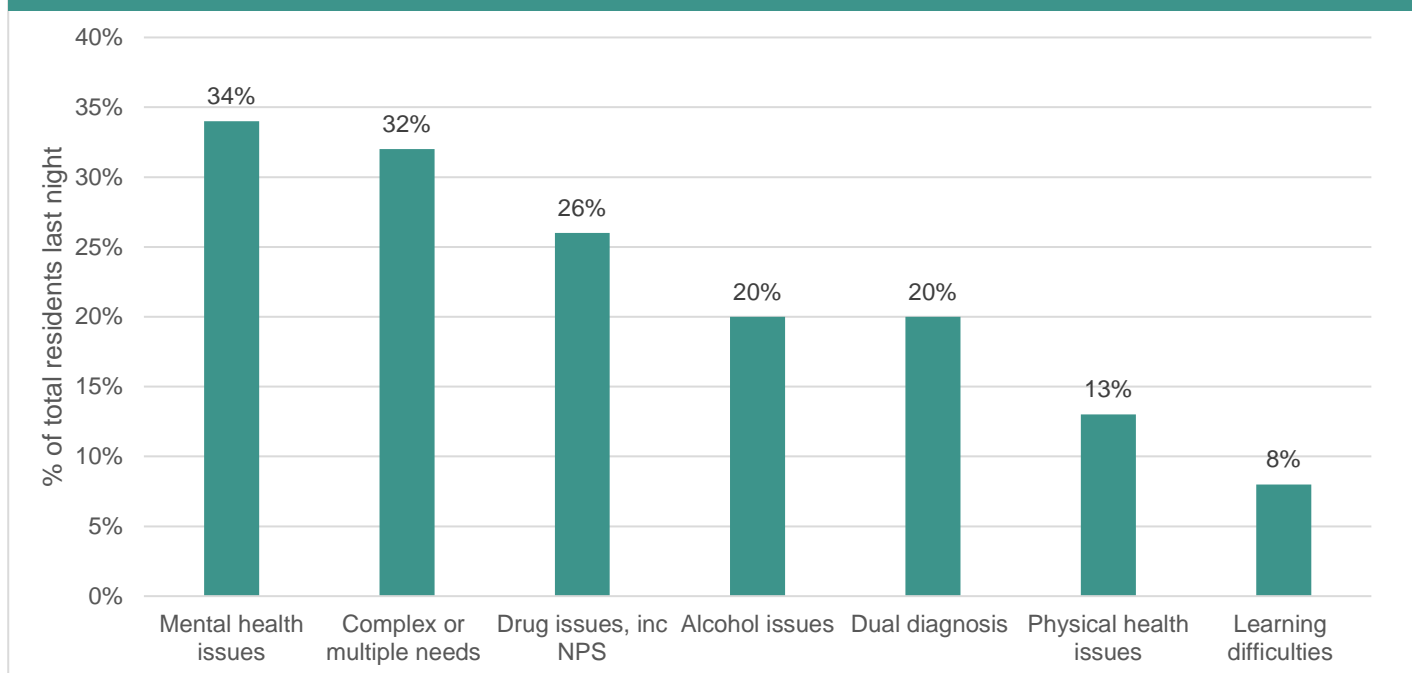
²⁷ The Albert Kennedy Trust (2014) *LGBT Youth Homelessness: A UK National Scoping of Cause, Prevalence, Response and Outcome*, Available at: <https://fostercarerresources.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/lgbt-youth-homelessness-scoping-report.pdf>

²⁸ Homeless Link (2014) *The unhealthy state of homelessness: Health audit results 2014*, Available at:

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/The%20unhealthy%20state%20of%20homelessness%20FINAL.pdf>

mental health, alcohol or drug abuse, learning difficulties, or offending behaviour. People with multiple and complex needs often have long-term experiences of economic and social disadvantage alongside experience of childhood trauma.²⁹

Graph 14: Support needs of accommodation project residents



N: 212

Qualitative research has shown that many single homeless people face significant challenges, which often involve adverse childhood experiences such as trauma, neglect and poverty which are not captured in the above statistics.³⁰ Also, the findings of this report do not address the varying support needs of different groups of homeless people, e.g., the specific needs of women and young people (as explored in other Homeless Link studies).³¹ Homeless Link is currently working to support services, which are looking to improve their practice around support for women. Case Study 2 provides an example of an organisation that is designed and delivered to respond to the challenges faced by women experiencing homelessness.

²⁹ Lankelly Chase Foundation (2015), *Hard Edges: Mapping severe and multiple disadvantage: England*, Available at: <http://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Hard-Edges-Mapping-SMD-2015.pdf>

³⁰ Crisis (2014) *Nations apart? Experiences of single homeless people across Great Britain*, Available at: https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/20608/crisis_nations_apart_2014.pdf

³¹ Homeless Link, (2010-2015) *Young and Homeless research series*. Available at, <https://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/our-research/young-and-homeless-research>

Case Study 2: The Green Room: Emergency Accommodation for Women Rough Sleeping (London)

The Green Room is a service managed by St Mungo's that provides emergency accommodation for women and girls who are homeless, at risk or have experienced violence.

The service has women-only staff, including a night team who offer holistic and mindful activities for guests to access during nocturnal hours, whilst conducting sensitive assessments around current and historical need relating to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). There is also a specialist Domestic Violence Worker and an Assessment and Reconnection Worker, who continue to support guests during the day.

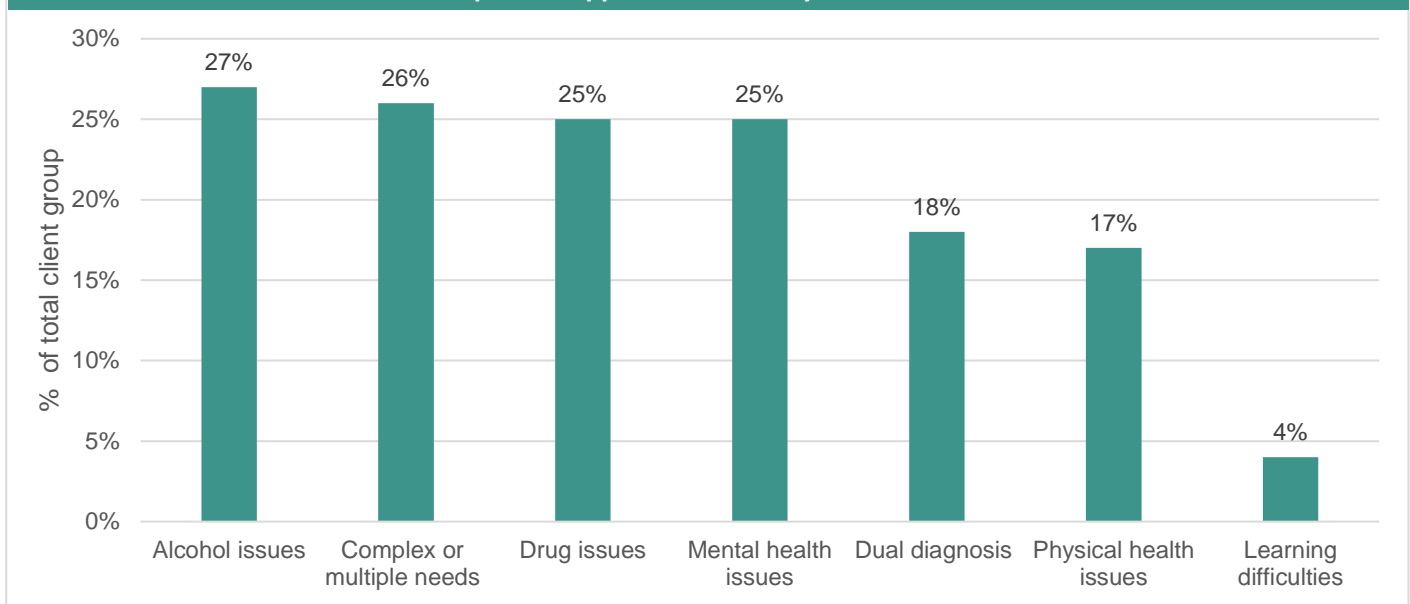
The service adopts a creative, flexible and personalised approach to support women to leave the street and access specialist support. The Green Room works closely with Domestic Violence and other services to ensure a multi-agency approach to supporting women. By providing guests with a safe women-only space, opportunities to rebuild control and links with other services, the women can start their recovery journey and eventually move on to longer term supported services or independent living.

In the short time Green Room has been running, professionals and guests have provided positive feedback about the sensitive approach adopted by staff and how it contributes to a safe and welcoming environment.

Support needs of day centre visitors

The support needs of those accessing the participating day centres were similar to those accessing accommodation projects, with approximately one quarter of the visitors presenting with complex or multiple support needs, alcohol/drug issues (including New Psychoactive Substances), or mental health problems (Graph 15). Learning difficulties was the least commonly reported support need.

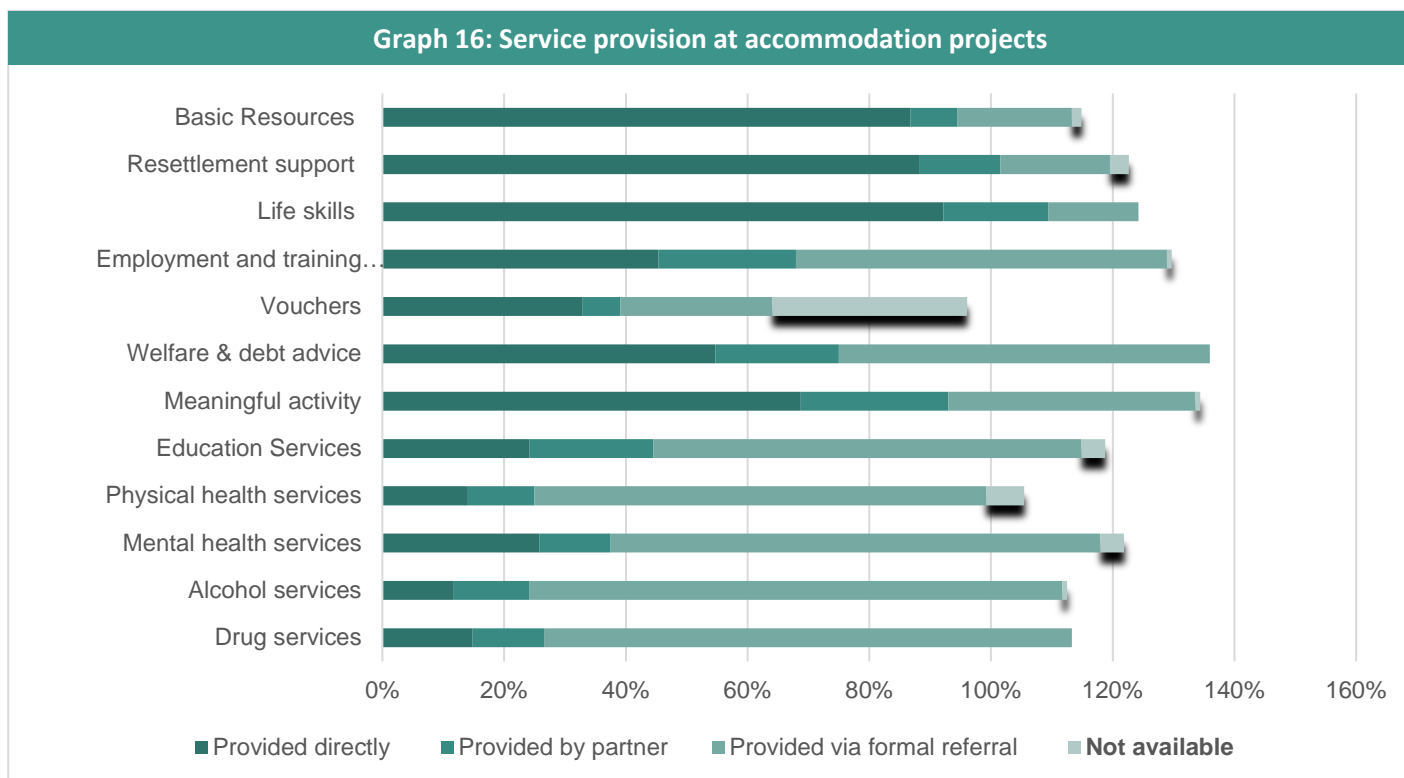
Graph 15: Support needs of day centre clients



N: 57

Service provision

Accommodation services and day centres provide an array of services to help single homeless people to address their needs, access key resources, and develop new skills. These services can be provided within structured in-house support programmes on the organisation's premises or by referrals to external agencies (e.g., addiction services and health services) (Graph 16). Services will often work in partnership with various statutory and voluntary bodies, which allows a wide range of needs to be addressed (e.g., physical or mental health problems, addiction, family conflicts, or unemployment).³²



N: 128

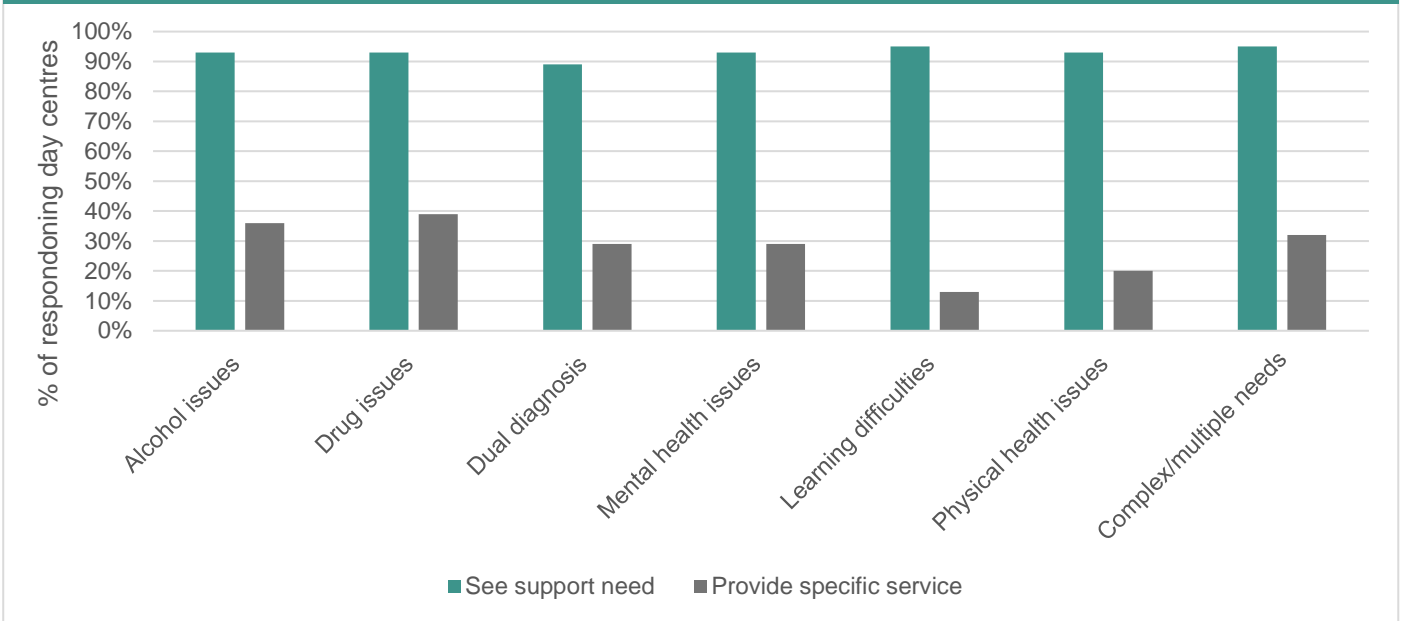
Among the responding accommodation providers, support services that address basic resources, resettlement, and life skills were most likely to be provided in-house (Graph 16). Access to drug, alcohol, education and mental health services were likely to be provided via a formal referral to an external agency.

Except for vouchers for approved purchases, most services were reported to be available either on the premises or via external referrals. Although very few gaps were identified in regard to the existence of these services, findings do suggest that residents can often face barriers in accessing them (see below).

Day centres generally support those who face significant challenges in moving towards independent living, and may struggle to meet the additional complex needs of their guests. Some services did however report offering specific services to meet the needs of their clients (Graph 17). For instance, between 30 and 40% of the responding day centres provide specific services for clients with alcohol/drug issues (including NPS). The graph below provides further evidence to suggest that day centres will support individuals with a wide variety of needs in addition to their immediate need for housing.

³² Homeless Link (2017) *The Future Hostel* (awaiting publication)

Graph 17: Support needs and services provided at day centres



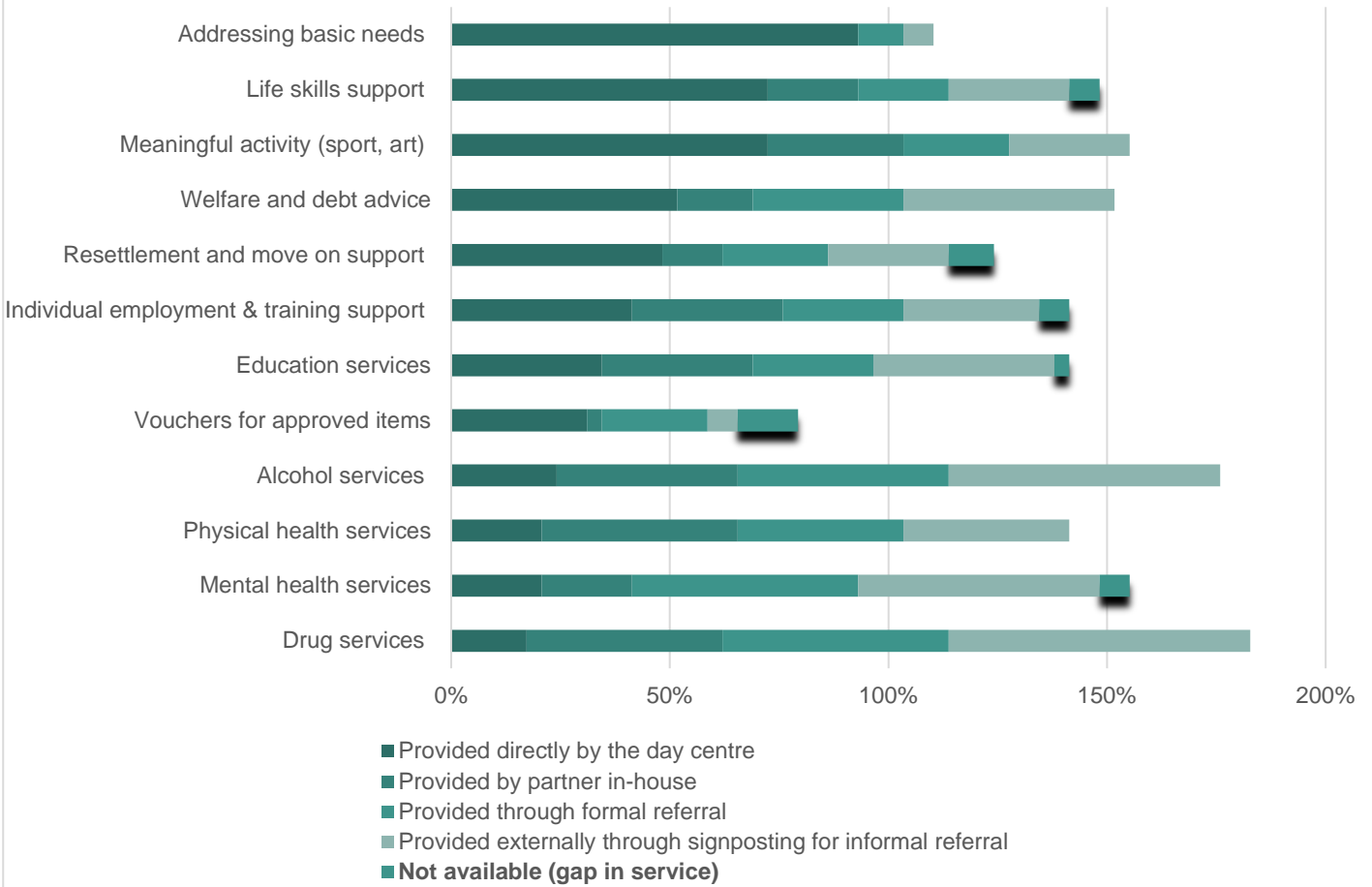
N: 56

Responding day centres reported that the most common service in-house consists of meeting the basic needs of their clients (Graph 18). Life skills support and meaningful activities were also more likely to be provided in-house, whilst drug/alcohol, and mental and physical health services were more likely to be provided via formal referral to external agencies.

The findings of this study reflect other research that suggests that many UK day centres have expanded their basic provision to include other services, such as life skills support, and welfare and debt advice.³³ The findings suggest that although the day centres themselves may not always provide services for specific needs, access will often be facilitated by means of formal or informal referrals (Graph 18).

³³ Cloke, P., May, J. and Johnsen, S. (2010) *Swept Up Lives? Re-envisioning the Homeless City*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell

Graph 18: Services provided by day centres

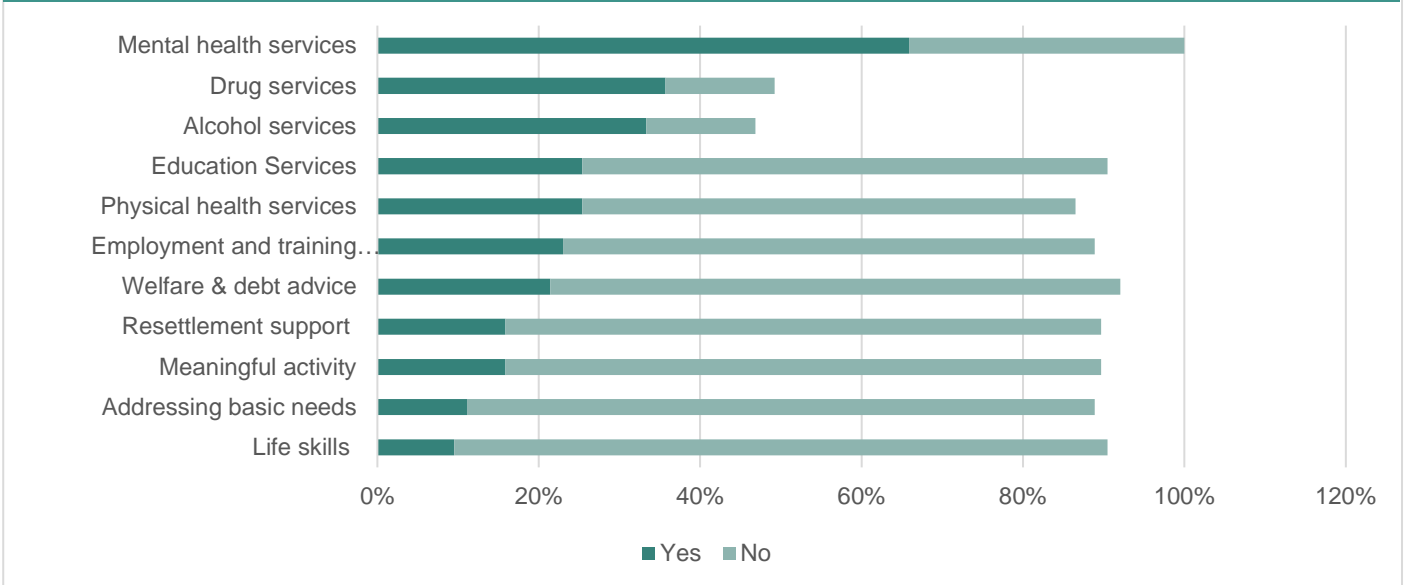


N: 29

Barriers to accessing services

Accommodation providers were asked if their clients ever experienced problems in accessing services. The findings are outlined in Graph 19 below.

Graph 19: Do you ever have problems with clients accessing these services?



N: 126 (Accommodation providers)

Respondents most often reported difficulties in clients accessing mental health services (66% of the responding providers); a finding which is particularly concerning in light of the prevalence of mental health problems among those accessing the services (see above). A significant proportion of responding accommodation providers also reported that service users encountered difficulties in accessing drug services (36%) and alcohol services (33%).

A smaller proportion of accommodation providers reported that residents face barriers to accessing life skills training (10%) and in addressing their basic needs (11%). Respondents were also less likely to report difficulties in accessing meaningful activities or resettlement support (16%).

Alcohol, drugs, and mental health services are most likely to be provided via external referrals rather than taking place on the organisation's premises (see Graph 16 and 18). The findings indicate that there are fewer challenges in accessing services which are provided in-house on an organisation's premises (i.e., life skills, addressing basic needs, meaningful activities, and resettlement support).

Barriers to accessing mental health services

In the open-text responses, accommodation providers reported that the difficulties clients face in accessing mental health services relate to the following key factors:

Long-waiting lists: several respondents reported very long waiting lists and slow referral processes for mental health services, which sometimes surpassed the length of an individual's stay at a service.

High thresholds: some respondents highlighted the difficulties of gaining an official mental health diagnosis and reported that people were excluded because their problems were not deemed severe enough to meet the thresholds for support from specialist mental health services.

Problems of dual diagnosis: respondents highlighted a lack of willingness from mental health services to work with people who faced mental health problems and issues relating to substance use and/or dependency. Respondents also identified a lack of joined up working between alcohol/drug and mental health services.

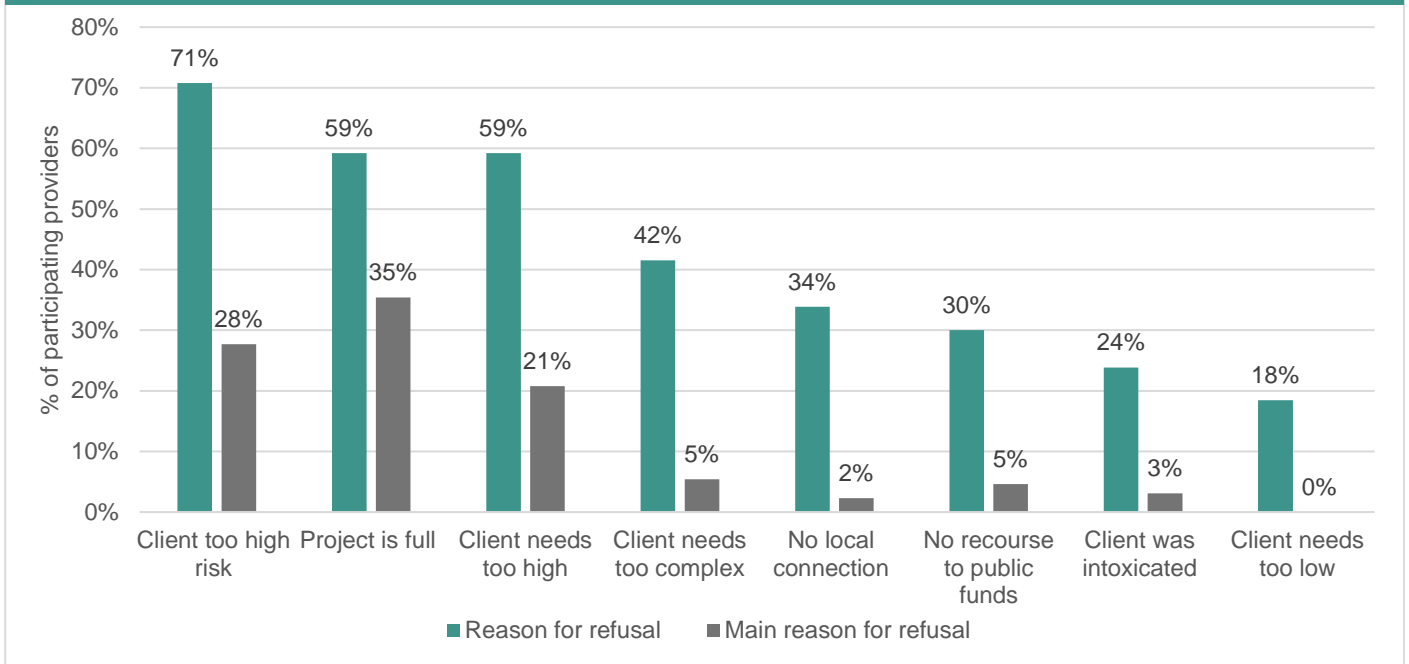
Transitions to adult services: some respondents reported a breakdown in support when young adults transition from children to adult mental health services.

Limited service capacity: some participants highlighted a scarcity of mental health services in certain areas whilst existing services were reported to be underfunded and understaffed, which in turn contributed to the barriers listed above.

Accessing accommodation services

Accommodation services usually apply access criteria, which have been put in place either by commissioners, or on the basis of assessments of support needs, or the risks that can be safely managed within an accommodation project. Respondents were asked to identify the primary and contributory reasons for refusing people access to their services over the past 12 months (Graph 20).

Graph 20: Reasons for refusals to accommodation projects



N: 130

Reflecting findings from earlier reports, the most common contributory factor was found to be a “too high risk” assessment, with 71% of the respondents identifying this as a reason for refusals. The findings suggest that the severity and complexity of people’s needs are further key contributory factors for refusal.

A lack of service capacity was most commonly identified as the primary reason for refusing service access (35%). The limited number of bed night voids, the reduction in bed spaces (see Chapter 2), and the rate of capacity-based refusals among responding providers, indicates that the needs of some single homeless people may not be met by the existing support system.

Chapter 5: Outcomes, move-on and service developments

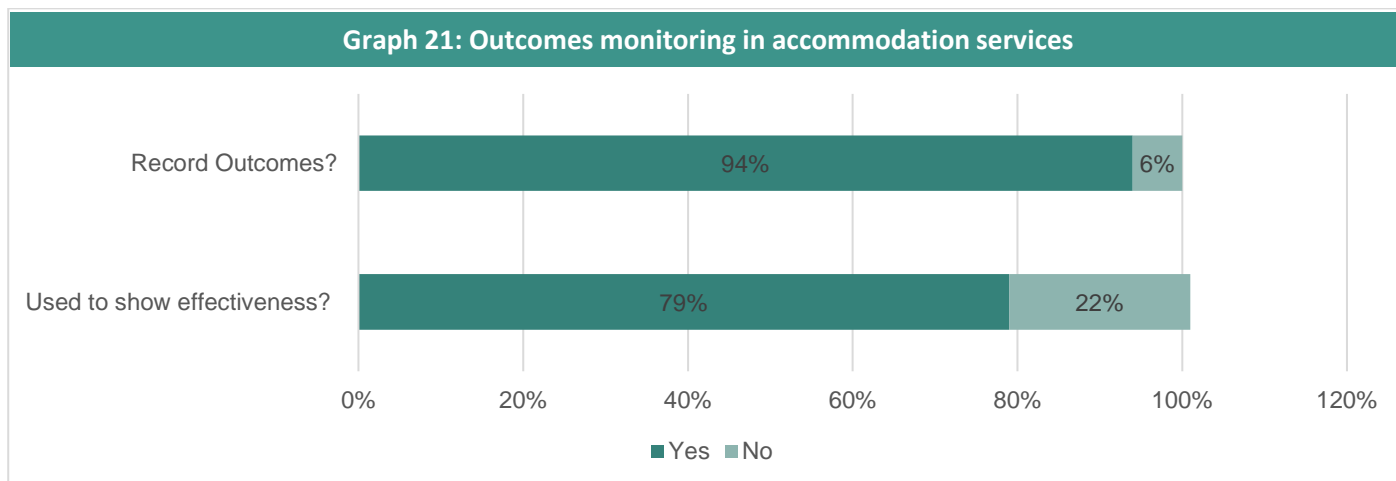
Drawing on findings from the online surveys, this Chapter addresses the outcome monitoring processes of service providers, and highlights key trends in people's experiences in moving on from homelessness services. The Chapter also examines the different models and approaches that are being explored within the sector.

Key headlines

- The majority of accommodation providers record outcomes of individuals accessing their services (94% of respondents).
- Respondents reported resident engagement to be highest for money management activities (26%) and for meaningful activities such as sports or art groups (23%).
- Accommodation providers were most likely to report homelessness prevention as their main outcome.
- 63% of the 10,544 people accommodated by 118 projects moved on from the project over the past 12 months.
- 74% accommodation providers continue to support individuals after they move on from their services.
- People accessing accommodation services face significant structural barriers to moving on.

Outcomes

Measuring outcomes helps to capture changes and benefits for people accessing homelessness services. Survey findings indicate that it is common practice for accommodation services to record outcomes, with 161 providers (94%) recording outcomes for individuals who access their services (Graph 21). In the open text responses, the remaining 6% of providers explained they did not record outcomes because they provide emergency accommodation services, which are characterised by short residencies and spontaneous move-on.



N: 172, 107

Monitoring outcomes provides vital evidence of the impact of a service on individuals and helps services to understand whether they are meeting their aims and purposes. Although most survey respondents used outcomes to demonstrate effectiveness (79%), 22% of accommodation providers did not keep records for this particular purpose, and only a few day centres completed the outcomes-related survey questions. It may therefore be helpful to further explore the various factors affecting the recording and use of outcomes in different services.

Developing outcome measures

In the open text responses, accommodation providers were asked how they had developed the particular outcome measures used by their services. Most respondents stated that these had been put in place by their funders or commissioners and, in many cases, they reflected the original Supporting People outcomes framework (1).

Although the measures may have been developed in collaboration, the language that was used by some respondents indicates a one-way process:

'Instructed by commissioner as to what their requirements were'

'Given by commissioner'

'Set up by commissioner and supporting people forms'

(In-text responses)

The above examples stand in contrast to other responses suggesting that the development of measures had been more of a collaborative process, involving a wide array of statutory and voluntary sector partners:

'These were developed by the LA in consultation with all local supported housing and homelessness organisations'

'Developed through partnership with external agencies and recording on In-Form system'

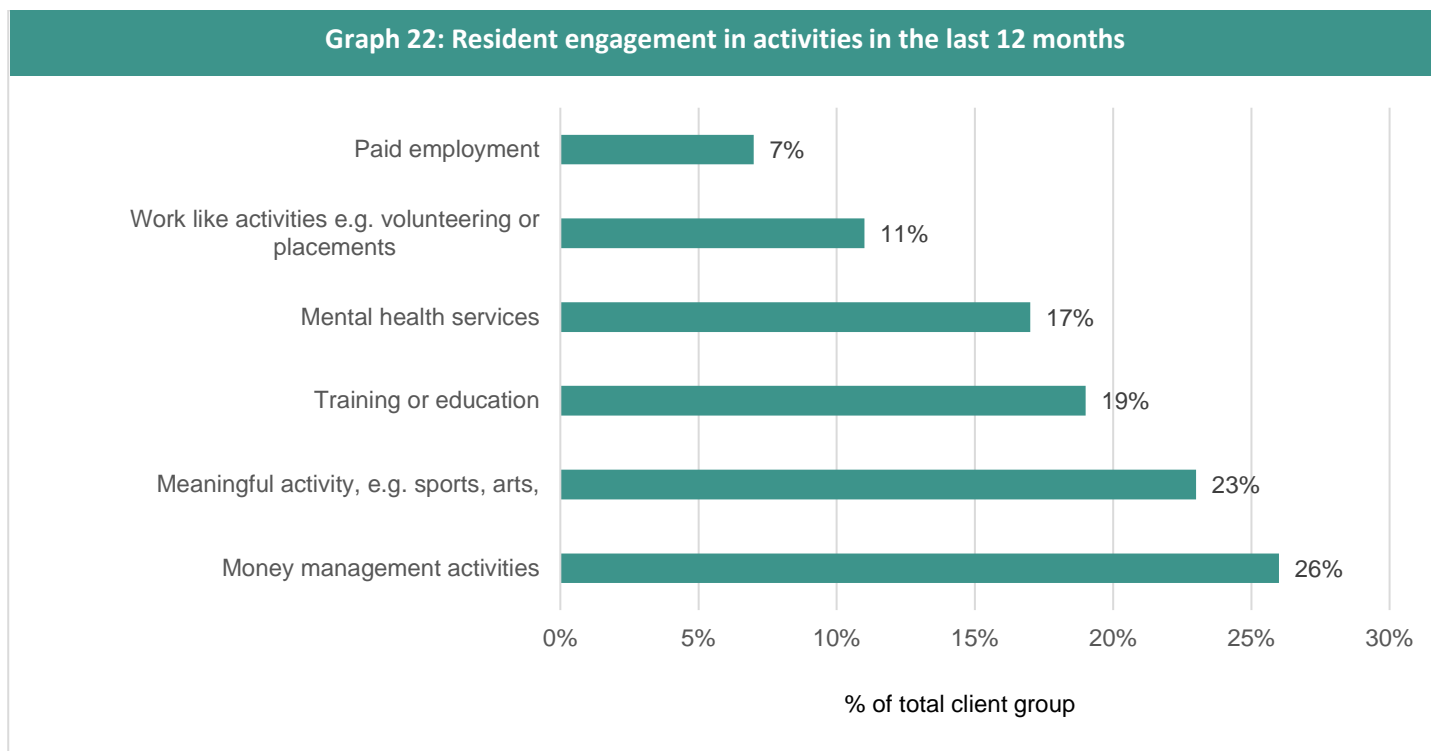
(In-text responses)

A smaller number of organisations reported that they had developed their outcomes by means of a multi-tier approach involving commissioner input and sector-wide consultation, and in response to the needs of those using the services. Some respondents also reported that In-Form (the client relationship and service management system provided by Homeless Link) played a role in developing their outcome measures.

(1) All Supporting People funded services were requested to provide information under five high level outcomes, including: economic wellbeing, enjoy and achieve, be healthy, stay safe, and make a positive contribution.

Key achievements

Accommodation providers were asked to provide data on the number of residents engaging in specific services and activities over the past 12 months (Graph 22). Reflecting findings from earlier reports, survey data suggests that over the past 12 months, participating accommodation providers had been the most successful in helping people engage with money management activities. This type of activity usually focuses on the development of budgeting skills, which can then help minimise rent arrears and help people to sustain future tenancies.



N: 143

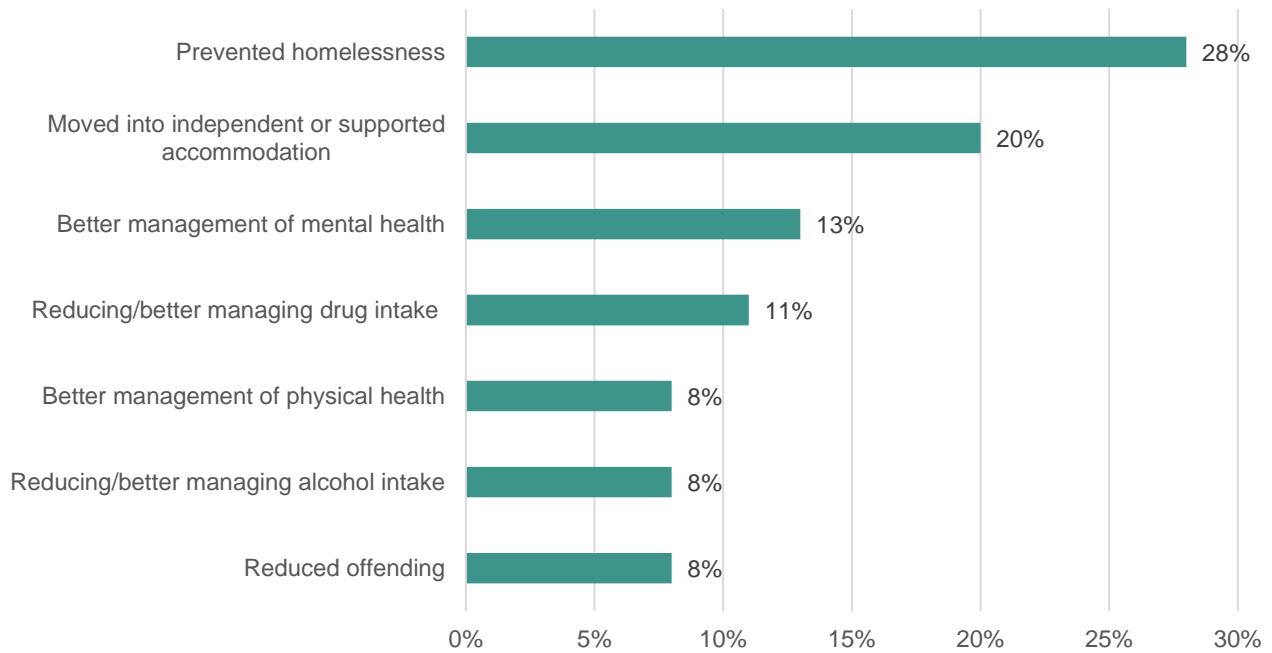
Responding providers also reported supporting 26% of their residents in meaningful activities over the past 12 months (such as sports and art groups). These activities can help people to develop the skills, confidence and motivation to move towards independent living, while simultaneously addressing feelings of isolation.³⁴

Reflecting findings of previous years, resident engagement was lowest for employment-related activities (7%). Respondents reported that a larger number of residents (19%) engaged in volunteering or placements, activities that can also benefit individuals (such as by gaining qualifications and/or experience).

This year the survey queried for the first time how many people supported by services had been prevented from becoming homeless over the past 12 months (Graph 23). The findings suggest that this is the most common outcome that was achieved by the participating accommodation providers (28%). The second most common outcome was supporting people to move on to independent or supported accommodation (20%).

³⁴ Homeless Link (2014) *Evidence Review on Homeless Hostels* (unpublished)

Graph 23: Outcomes for accommodation residents over the past 12 months



N: 143

Case Study 3: New Horizons Youth Centre (London)

New Horizon Youth Centre (NHYC) adopts a holistic and multi-disciplinary approach to supporting young people aged 16-25 to avoid and move on from homelessness. NHYC aims to help young people access safe and appropriate accommodation, and move into employment. By providing age appropriate services underpinned by a youth work framework and an understanding of the cognitive development of young people, NHYC helps young people to fulfil their potential.

When young people arrive at NHYC, their individual needs are prioritised above procedural and administrative tasks. The worker will then focus on building trust with the young person, allowing a thorough assessment and plan to be developed together over time, with a focus on helping young people to move forward in their lives. NHYC delivers three key projects focusing on homelessness prevention:

Under 25s Housing and Employment Project is a partnership project between Local Authorities in the North London Housing Partnership (Haringay, Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Islington, and Westminster) and NHYC. Once referred, young people are able to access the full range of support offered by NHYC, including access to short and long-term accommodation.

London Youth Gateway provides young people with a “seamless journey” through the services provided by partners, including: emergency accommodation, advice and information, mediation services, and support with employment, training and education. The idea is to join up services to provide support that may not be available through the local authority in every London borough.

Project Vista – New Horizon Youth Centre also offers accommodation and employment, training and education (ETE) support directly to young people in precarious employment through their partnership with a Housing Association, with properties provided to NHYC under a management agreement. In combining the provision of affordable accommodation with employment, training and education support, this project provides stable accommodation in the present, whilst allowing young people to build the skills and experience that will prevent future homelessness.

The outcomes achieved by NHYC in 2015/16 includes preventing 90 young people from rough sleeping by supporting them to access emergency accommodation, 2,536 young people reported gaining homelessness prevention skills, and 476 young people accessed one or more opportunities of employment, apprenticeship, work placements, education or training.

Move-on

‘Everything we do is aimed at supporting the client to give them the skills they need to move on’ (in-text response, provider survey)

Homelessness services usually aim to not only provide accommodation, but also resettlement and change-focused support to help people progress to independent living. In a recent qualitative study exploring hostel provision in England, all participating services regarded supporting independence as their ultimate aim.³⁵ Depending on an individual’s circumstances, a successful move-on can consist of a move into lower support accommodation, or into independent living.

In the open text responses, accommodation providers were asked about their views on the main outcomes of their services. Most respondents saw supporting people to move on to independence as the primary outcome of their service, and considered this process to include helping people to improve their tenancy sustainment skills and broader life skills, develop healthy lifestyles and secure affordable accommodation.

‘The majority of clients receive the support and guidance they need in order to move on to more independent accommodation.’ (In-text response)

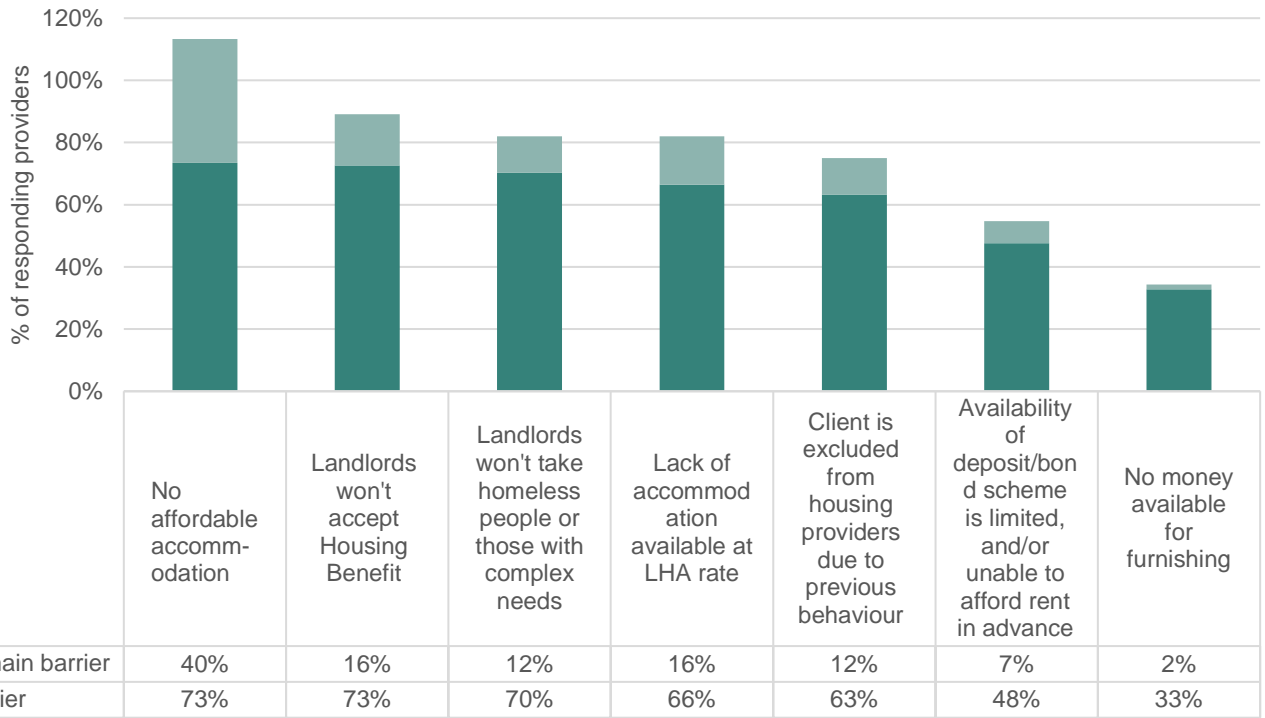
The responses also indicate that accommodation providers successfully perform preparatory work with individuals by helping them develop “softer skills” to help address barriers to independent living. Several respondents felt that they especially excelled at not only helping people move on, but also at helping them develop the necessary skills to access and sustain future accommodation.

‘Increased health, feeling of self-worth and confidence which allow them to positively address issues that contributed to their homelessness and move forward positively’ (In-text response)

Survey respondents reported that between April 2016 and March 2017, a total of 6,547 individuals moved out of 118 projects, representing 62% of the 10,544 people accommodated by these projects in the same period. The findings of this research suggest that people in supported housing face significant barriers in moving into independent accommodation (Graph 24).

³⁵ Homeless Link (2017) *The Future Hostel* (awaiting publication)

Graph 24: Barriers to move on

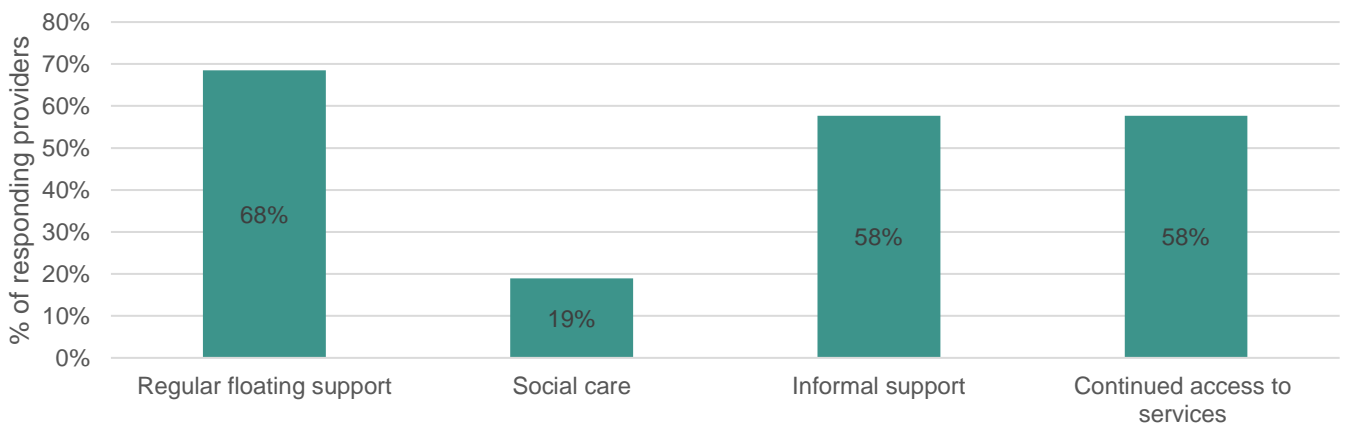


N: 119

A large percentage of respondents identified the lack of affordable housing as both a contributory barrier (73%) and the primary barrier (40%) that prevents people from moving on from their services. Although the reluctance of landlords to accept tenants who receive Housing Benefit, are homeless, or have complex needs was rarely reported to be a main barrier, many respondents stated these to be contributory factors.

A total of 74% (n: 101) of the responding accommodation providers continue supporting clients after they moved on from their project. The following graph illustrates the services available to those who have moved out of supported accommodation.

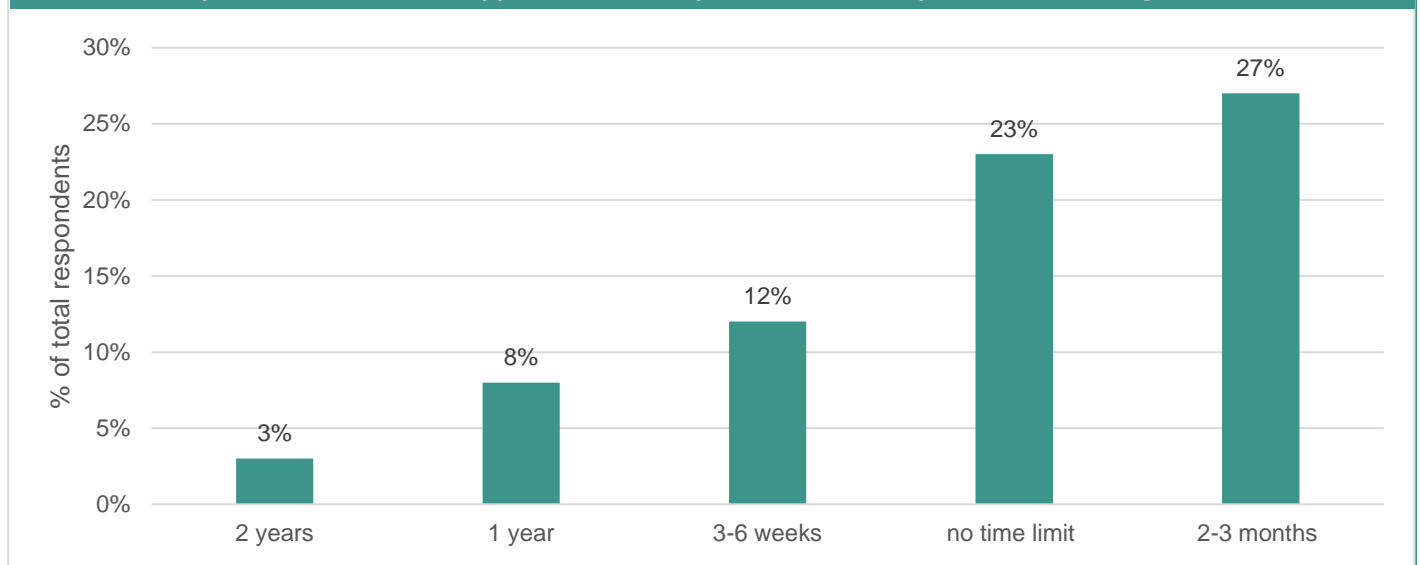
Graph 25: Move-on support available to single homeless people



N: 111

Most responding services provided ongoing support for two to three months, with a significant proportion having no time restrictions in place and providing support for as long as people wanted to engage (Graph 26). Several providers with time limits reported in the open text responses that they never turned people away and at the very least would provide sign-posting and/or onward referrals.

Graph 26: Length of time support is offered by accommodation providers following move on



N: 100

What makes move on successful?

Accommodation providers identified the following factors as key in helping people move on successfully from homelessness services:

Holistic and personalised support packages: Robust support packages delivered by dedicated project workers during people’s residency, were identified as key in ensuring that clients could develop the skills, abilities and resources needed to progress towards independent living. Providing assistance that was holistic and tailored to people’s personal needs was also highlighted as particularly important:

‘Client move ons are successful because of the investment made in helping clients address their specific, often complex, issues - issues which may have been a contributory factor in their becoming homeless or contributed to their continued social isolation. Clients are given access to the key personal, financial, work related, and practical skills they will need to be able to lead a successful independent life back in the community.’ (In-text response)

Planned departures: Several respondents said that moving people on in a planned way is key to achieving successful move on. Planned departures ensured residents developed the necessary skills and abilities and moved at a time when they felt ready.

‘Move on is successful for those who wait for the right time to move. Now we are no longer Supporting People funded there are no time constraints which has helped a great deal to get move-on right.’ (In-text response)

Floating support: Reflecting findings from other research by Homeless Link, several services reported that ongoing or floating support once a person had moved on from an accommodation project was not always available, despite being key to successful move-on.³⁶

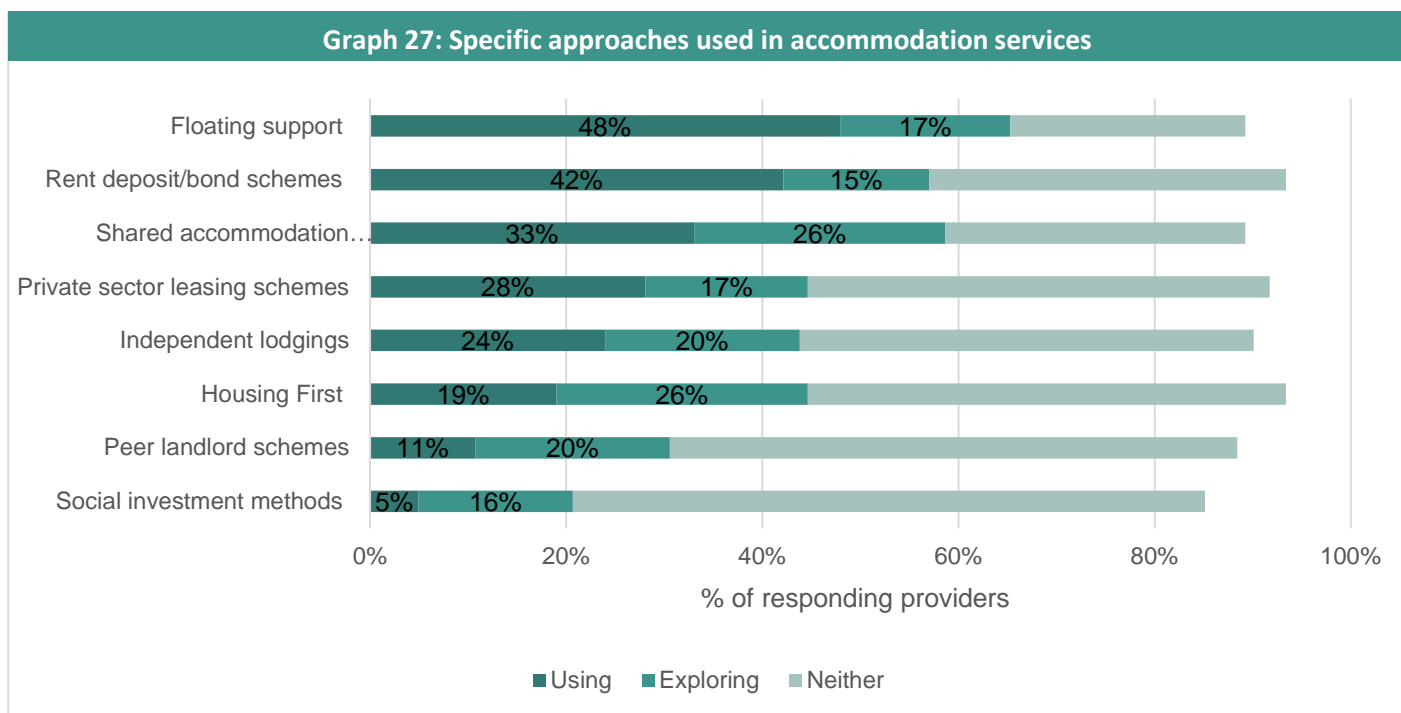
‘Even when people move on, things can go wrong and so resettlement support does not have time limits ... I believe the flexible approach helps enormously and they know they can always come back if things go a bit pear shaped!’ (In-text response)

Appropriate and affordable accommodation: Many organisations emphasised that the lack of reasonable and affordable housing has particularly hindered their ability to move people on from their services over the past year.

‘Our clients must have a local connection to be referred into the hostel but when they are ready to leave they will have to move to a borough where they have no connections due to the LHA rate being too high for Housing Benefit to pay for. We are expecting vulnerable people to move away from what support networks they do have.’ (In-text response).

Accessing accommodation

The findings suggest that a number of specific approaches are being used across the homelessness sector to improve access to accommodation and other longer-term options available for homeless people (Graph 27).



N: 121

The findings suggest that some homelessness services have certain schemes in place to help address the barriers to accessing move on accommodation. For example, a number of accommodation services provided (42%) and explored (15%) rent deposit and bond schemes to help those who cannot afford a deposit to rent from a private landlord.

³⁶ Homeless Link (2017) *The Future Hostel* (awaiting publication)

Floating support services usually provide individuals with support to live independently, and can help prevent the loss of secure and settled accommodation, or help people resettle into independent living after a period of living in supported accommodation. The findings suggest that floating support is currently being used (48%) or explored (17%) by a number of accommodation providers.

Peer landlord schemes, whereby a resident takes on certain landlord responsibilities for other residents (often other formerly homeless people) are used by only 11% of responding accommodation projects, with another 20% exploring this model. Social investment methods which involve the use of repayable finance to achieve a social as well as a financial return, was the least common approach among responding providers. Although a relatively new type of finance, social investment can help fund housing solutions for those in need.³⁷

Changes to improve outcomes and practice

Some accommodation providers reported changing the design and delivery of their services in order to improve policy and practice. The most commonly identified change related to increased or improved partnership working with other organisations. Other research has shown that collaborative working with a wide array of agencies is key to ensuring the effectiveness of homelessness accommodation services.³⁸

Respondents reported the benefits of inter-agency working as higher rates of move-on, an improved ability to support individuals with a wide range of needs, and the introduction of new or improved approaches, such as asset-based approaches.

'We are working collaboratively and innovatively with [external service] to develop an asset based approach to supporting residents and managing risk. This has increased the level of engagement with very complex individuals.' (In-text response)

'We have changed a few of our models to work better within the drug and alcohol sector and offer better support to customers now.' (In-text response)

Despite operating within a challenging funding environment, some services introduced new ways of working, including new staff roles, additional on-site service provision, more diverse training for staff, and the use of volunteers so that residents can receive further support.

Some services also reported that the introduction of a Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE)³⁹ and/or trauma-informed approach had reduced the rate of evictions and introduced a better way of dealing with challenging behaviour. Some providers reported developing their services so as to meet the specific needs of their client group:

'We have had high numbers of those on ESA (Employment and Support Allowance) and not on JSA (Jobseeker's Allowance), so we have concentrated on the mental health aspect of homelessness, and set up a complete programme of wellbeing and coping skills, run by a mental health practitioner.' (In-text response)

³⁷ Homeless Link, Big Society Capital (2016) *Social investment in homelessness services. An introduction for providers*, Available at: <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Introduction%20to%20Social%20Investment.pdf>

³⁸ Homeless Link (2017) *The Future Hostel* (awaiting publication)

³⁹ Maguire (2017) *Why PIE? The rationale for psychologically informed environments*. Available at:

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2017/feb/08/why-pie-rationale-for-psychologically-informed-environments>

Case Study 4: M25: creating a positive environment for move-on (Doncaster)

M25 is a supported housing service that provides dispersed community housing in shared properties of between 1-13 individual units. They provide a flexible and person centred service, in which residents can move within the properties according to their needs. M25 is self-funded through a combination of private investment and social enterprise, allowing increased flexibility and ability to implement new practices to improve move-on.

M25's social enterprise provides high quality, low cost flooring to improve the quality of private rented accommodation through partnerships with private landlords. M25 are looking to expand this by working with Social Housing Providers to provide flooring for properties that are usually let bare. For residents who move on into properties not floored by the social enterprise, M25 offer affordable flooring which can be paid for weekly through a zero interest "lay away" scheme. This scheme supports the sustainability of move-on by removing a significant cost of moving into a new property, and by creating higher quality move-on properties.

In addition to helping to drive up the standards of move-on accommodation, M25 has developed a new accommodation offer for those who are close to living independently but are not quite ready for the now rapid change from supported housing to the private rented sector, where no support is offered and where rents costs are high.

M25 saw that many residents were moving into work that was unstable and low paid, including many on zero hours contracts. This meant that individuals were seeing their incomes fluctuate and there was a real risk that their tenancies would not be sustainable without first learning to manage this challenging financial situation. Workers rooms were developed in response to this and are offered to residents moving into work at the standard Housing Benefit rate. This allows people to stay within M25 while they adjust and stabilise in a new situation. It represents a new 'transitional step' in the move-on process and is seen as an important response to the changing housing and employment market: "We've created a little bit of a safety net because employment is a bit volatile, shall we say, for people who are at the lower end of the skills, labour market." (staff member)

Residents feel positive about moving on from M25, and feel well equipped to do so. People generally move on from M25 in between three to six months. The Chief Executive of M25 attributes this to the increased personalisation of the service as well as to the new options that the service has created.

Conclusion

This year's Annual Review helps provide a picture of how homelessness services support some of society's most vulnerable individuals. Against a backdrop of increasing levels of homelessness, it finds demand for these services remains high with most projects operating at full capacity.

Although national spending on homelessness has been protected over the past year, evidence shows funding for single homelessness at a local level has fallen significantly since 2010. This year's survey indicates this has resulted in funding reductions for many services and a loss of overall bed spaces across the country.

Despite this challenging climate, homelessness services continue to provide a range of services and options to respond to the multiple characteristics and diverse and complex needs and circumstances of single homeless people. The case studies also provide encouraging evidence of the development of interventions that are personalised and responsive to the needs and circumstances of particular groups of people, such as women and young people. However, the findings also indicate that organisations face a number of difficulties in helping people access specific services. Despite the prevalence of mental health problems among single homeless people, accommodation providers continue to report particular difficulties in helping people access mental health services.

The findings show that accommodation projects and day centres provide support and achieve positive outcomes which go beyond the provision of accommodation and basic resources. Services can help people avoid homelessness and, when it does occur, support people to develop the needed capabilities and skills to move out of homelessness and into independent living. These activities are however taking place within the context of wider structural constraints, and services are facing particular challenges and barriers in helping people move into independent accommodation.

Over the next year, as the Homelessness Reduction Act comes into force and proposals about the future of supported housing funding are developed, we expect further changes to impact on the way homelessness services are resourced and delivered at a local level. It is vital that the sector and its statutory partners continue to protect investment in support for people experiencing homelessness and build on the work they already do to bring about lasting, positive change to ensure that everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.



What we do

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for organisations working directly with people who become homeless or who live with multiple and complex support needs. We work to improve services and campaign for policy change that will help end homelessness.

Let's end homelessness together

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