

Rough Sleeping Statistics England - Autumn 2010 Experimental Statistics

- This is a new statistical release following the introduction of revised guidance on evaluating the extent of rough sleeping in September 2010.
- The autumn 2010 total of rough sleeping counts and estimates in England was 1,768.
- All authorities in England provided a figure. The total comprises counts provided by 42 local authorities and estimates provided by 284 local authorities.
- London, the South East and the South West had the highest number of rough sleepers with 415, 310 and 270 respectively. The North East had the lowest number with 49.

17 February 2011

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Introduction

This is a new statistical release presenting a new data series of rough sleeping counts and estimates following the introduction of revised guidance in September 2010 on evaluating the extent of rough sleeping.

Rough sleeping counts and estimates are single night snapshots of the number of people sleeping rough in local authority areas. Local authorities decide whether to carry out a count or an estimate based upon their assessment of whether the local rough sleeping problem justifies counting. Local authorities are encouraged to gain intelligence for street counts and estimates from local agencies such as outreach workers, the police, the voluntary sector and members of the public that have contact with rough sleepers on the street.

The release provides national and regional summary information on rough sleeping counts and estimates carried out by local authorities between 1st October and 30th November 2010. Accompanying tables showing figures as reported by individual local authorities are provided online alongside the release.

Rough Sleeping in England

The autumn 2010 total of street counts and estimates in England was 1,768. This comprises a figure from every local authority in England, with 42 authorities conducting a count and 284 providing an estimate.

Rough Sleeping by Region

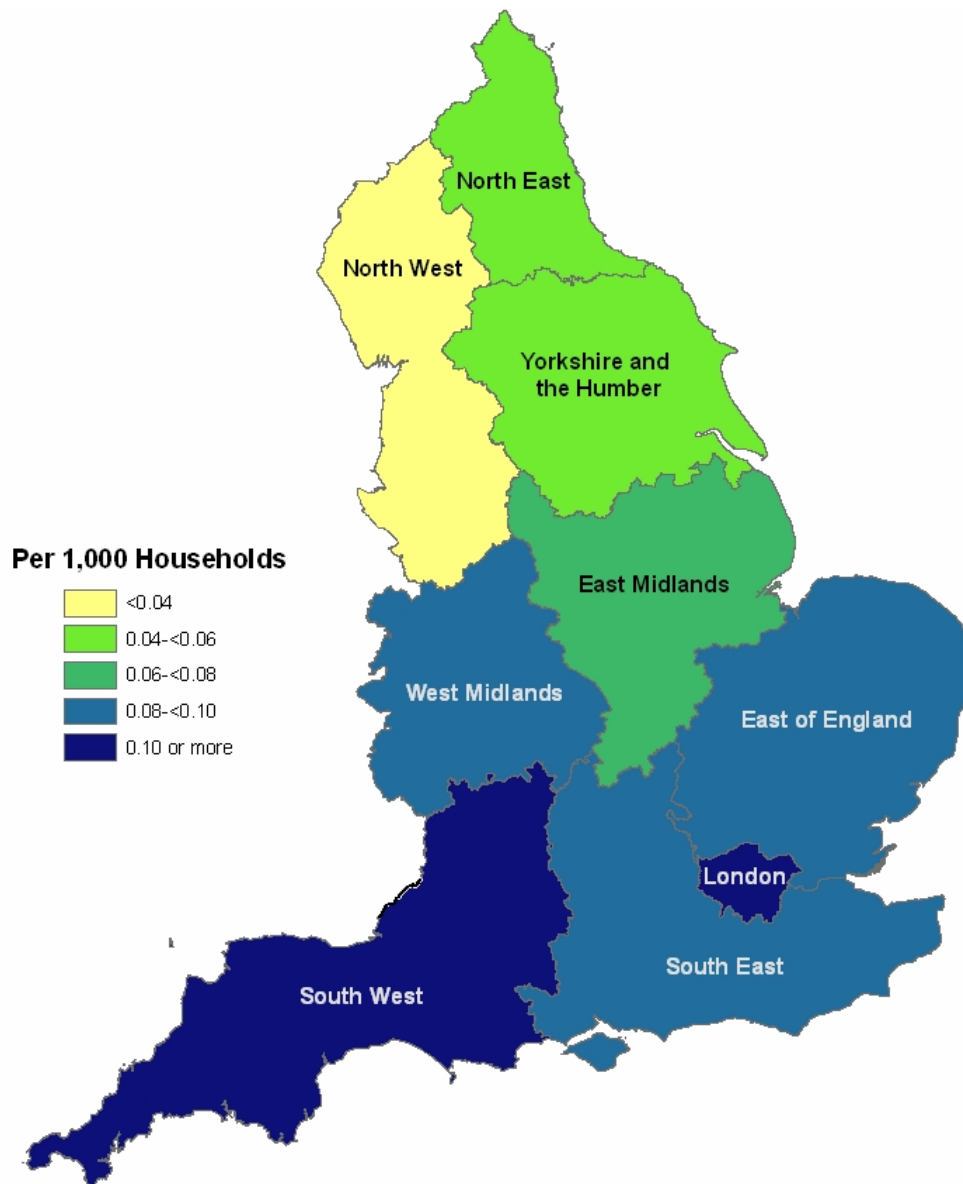
London had 415 rough sleepers, the highest number of all of the regions and 23 per cent of the national total. The South East and the South West had the next highest numbers with 310 and 270 rough sleepers respectively. These three regions had 56 per cent of the total of all rough sleepers in England. The North East had 49 rough sleepers, the lowest number of all the regions and 3 per cent of the national total.

Table 1: Total of rough sleeping counts and estimates, by region, autumn 2010

Region	Total	Rate per 1,000 households
North East	49	0.04
North West	100	0.03
Yorkshire and the Humber	115	0.05
East Midlands	121	0.06
West Midlands	182	0.08
East of England	206	0.09
London	415	0.13
South East	310	0.09
South West	270	0.12
ENGLAND	1,768	0.08

London and the South West had the highest incidence of rough sleepers per 1,000 households with 0.13 and 0.12 respectively, compared to the 0.08 national figure. The North West, with 0.03 had the lowest incidence of rough sleepers per 1,000 households. Within each region there is significant variation in the concentration of rough sleepers in each authority. Figures reported by each local authority area are provided in Table 2, published online alongside this release.

Map 1: Rough sleeping rates by region, autumn 2010



Accompanying tables

Table 1 – Total of rough sleeping counts and estimates by region

Table 2 – Rough sleeping counts and estimates by local authority

All accompanying tables can be found at the following link:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/roughsleepingautumn2010>

Definitions

Rough Sleepers are defined as follows for the purposes of rough sleeping counts and estimates:

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”).

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

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

Methodology

Since 1998 rough sleeping has been measured by street counts in areas with a known or suspected rough sleeping problem. Local authorities were asked to conduct an annual count if they estimated there were more than 10 rough sleepers in the area. In June 2010, to supplement the counts, local authorities that had not conducted a street count were asked to provide an estimate of the number of rough sleepers on a given night. Results of the June 2010 estimates and a time series of rough sleeping counts since 1998 are published here:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/roughsleepingcount2010>

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

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/1713784.pdf>

The main differences between this and guidance on which previous rough sleeping figures were based are:

1. Conducting street counts is a choice for individual local authorities based on their assessment of whether the local rough sleeping problem justifies counting – for instance, where local intelligence suggests there are rough sleepers in the area on a regular basis or that numbers may be

increasing. Counts are no longer required by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) when local authorities assess that they have more than 10 rough sleepers as was previously the case.

2. Where a local authority decides not to count they should submit a robust estimate of the number of people rough sleeping on a typical night. They should consult with and gather information from all agencies dealing with rough sleepers in their area, including the local community, to help compile and agree the figure. The rough sleeping guidance has been revised to include a new section offering local authorities some basic guidance on how to estimate numbers. Detailed supplementary guidance on estimates has been produced by Homeless Link and is available at:

www.homeless.org.uk/evaluating-roughsleeping.

3. The definition of rough sleeper has been expanded. The definition of what constitutes being “bedded down” has changed to include rough sleepers about to bed down (e.g. sitting or standing near their bedding but not actually lying down). The definition includes people in tents (not on campsites or on organised protests).

4. The guidance encourages neighbouring authorities to count on the same night and to count on a sub-regional or regional basis to avoid missing (or counting twice) rough sleepers who move back and forth between local authority areas.

5. The recommended starting time for counts should be geared to local circumstances. Counts can take place from midnight but should be later where rough sleepers bed down later (e.g. in city centres), so they can be counted.

6. DCLG will no longer provide officials to attend and oversee that counts are being conducted in accordance with the agreed methodology. The responsibility for providing independent verifiers to attend counts will become a responsibility of Homeless Link (the national membership charity for frontline homelessness agencies) and they will draw volunteers from their member agencies and interested faith groups.

The changes that have been made to the methodology and the definition of rough sleepers mean that this series is not directly comparable with previous statistics on rough sleeping as we cannot separate the impact of these methodological changes from changes in the level of rough sleeping between autumn 2010 and earlier time periods. A technical note setting out and explaining the

differences between the autumn 2010 rough sleeping statistics and previously published figures has been published alongside this release on the DCLG website:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/roughsleepingautumn2010>

Rates per 1,000 households have been calculated using the 2008-based household projections produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government. These projections were published on 26 November 2010 at the following link:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/householdestimates/>

Data Source and Scope

Local housing authorities report their annual rough sleeping count or estimate figures by completing the rough sleeping statistical return:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/1713802.xls>

These figures have been published approximately 2 months after the 15th December deadline for local authorities to submit their forms, on a pre-announced date in accordance with the Official Statistics Code of Practice.

The scope of this data collection and release is limited to a single night snapshot of rough sleeping in England. This release does not contain data on other forms of homelessness, for example local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation. The Department publishes quarterly statistics on Statutory Homelessness and these can be found here:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/homelessnessstatistics/publicationshomelessness/>

The Department also published statistics on homelessness prevention and relief. The most recent publication relating to Local Authority actions in 2009-10 can be found at the following link:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/homelessnessstatistics/homelessnesspreventionrelief/>

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

The Scottish Government publish figures on the number of households applying for assistance under homelessness legislation who say they have slept rough the previous night or have reported their housing situation as 'long term roofless'. Latest figures are published here:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/08/31093245/0>

In 2007 and 2008 local authorities in Wales undertook rough sleeping street counts to gauge the extent of rough sleeping in Wales. Results of these counts can be found at the following link:

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2009/090917roughsleep2007en.pdf>

The Combined Homelessness and information Network (CHAIN) contains information about people seen contacted by outreach teams and those who have accessed accommodation for rough sleepers in London. Latest figures are published here:

<http://www.broadwaylondon.org/CHAIN/NewsletterandReports>

Data quality

All rough sleeping returns submitted by local authorities undergo thorough validation and cross-checking, and late returns are pursued to ensure overall response is as complete and accurate as possible. Anomalous data are highlighted and verified by contacting the local authority.

Homeless Link independently verify all rough sleeping counts. Authorities providing estimates are asked to provide details of agencies that have been consulted in deriving the estimate (e.g. outreach workers, police, faith groups, voluntary sector organisations, mental health organisations and members of the community that have contact with rough sleepers on the streets). 96% of authorities that provided estimates reported that they had consulted with local agencies.

The Autumn 2010 figures are based on returns for all 326 local authorities (100 per cent response).

The Department for Communities and Local Government's statistical quality guidelines are published here:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statisticalnoticequalityguidance>

Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official statistics and the Communities and Local Government Revisions Policy (found at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statisticalnoticerevisionspolicy>).

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

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

Uses of the data

The data in this Statistical Release form the basis of evidence on rough sleeping in England. They will be used by ministers and officials in the Department for Communities and Local Government in the formulation and monitoring of policy, the allocation of resources, performance monitoring and to support bids for funding from the Treasury. The data will be used to ensure democratic accountability in answers to PQs, ministerial correspondence, Freedom of Information Act cases and queries from the public.

Local housing authorities are both providers and users of the statistics and will use the data to track progress, benchmark against other authorities and plan and commission services to prevent and tackle rough sleeping. The voluntary sector will also use the statistics to monitor and evaluate housing policy and for campaigning and fundraising purposes.

User consultation

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

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

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/engagementstrategystatistics>

Other information

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

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/researchandstatistics/statistics/nationalstatistics/>

The publication of autumn 2011 Rough Sleeping Statistics will be in early 2012. The date will be pre-announced on the UK Statistics Authority publication release calendar.

Enquiries

This Statistical Release, as well as previous Releases, can be accessed and all text, tables and charts downloaded electronically, from the Department's website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/roughsleepingautumn2010>

Further details on this Statistical Release are available from:

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

www.statistics.gov.uk.

Information about DCLG is available via the Department's website: www.communities.gov.uk

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