

## ENGLAND

## ● Recent data on homelessness

In England, homelessness in all its forms has increased in recent years. Statistics from the Department for Communities and Local Governments (DCLG) show that in autumn 2016, the total number of people living on the streets in England was estimated at 4,134, an increase of 16% since autumn 2015, and 134% since autumn 2010. The number of households in temporary accommodation had also risen, from 48,330 in March 2011 to 78,170 in March 2017 (+ 62%). From 2000 to 2009, a lasting reduction in the number of people qualifying as statutory homeless<sup>27</sup> was observed. This trend has since been reversed. The DCLG statistics office announced the 2010/11 financial year to be the first year marked by an increase in the number of persons recognised as homeless (+ 10%) since 2003/04. Since then, the numbers of statutory homeless people have steadily increased each year, except in 2013/14 (-3%). In the 2016/17 financial year, 59,110 people were designated as homeless, an increase of 9% compared to 2014/15. In 2016/17, 105,240 households were threatened by homelessness and given support by local authorities so they could stay in their homes, a 63% increase since 2009/10.

According to these same statistics, homelessness among vulnerable groups in England has increased by 75% since 2010. The number of homeless households that include one person classified as vulnerable due to mental health issues increased from 3,200 in 2010 to 5,740 in 2017. Over the last seven years, the number of families with dependent children in temporary accommodation has increased from 22,950 to 40,130 (+75%), and the number of homeless households including one person with a physical disability has increased from 2,480 to 4,370 (+76%).

**Total population as of 1 January 2016:**  
55,268,000 people

**GDP/resident in 2016 (purchasing power parity)**  
**(United Kingdom): 31,300**

**Number of homeless people known:**  
**78,170 households in temporary**  
**accommodation in March 2017**

**Percentage of poor households**  
**(United Kingdom): 15.9%**

● Housing market situation  
in the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom in 2016<sup>28</sup>, 63.4% of the population were homeowners (35.5% with a mortgage, 27.9% without a mortgage) and 36.6% were renters (18% at market price, 18.6% at reduced-rent prices or free).

In London, between 2010 and 2016, private rents increased by 24%, eight times the increase in average incomes over the same period; in England, the increase in private rents is three times that of average incomes (except in the North and East Midlands, where the opposite is observed)<sup>29</sup>. Rents for social housing have also grown faster than incomes since 2001<sup>30</sup>. The notion of "affordable" housing is broad: it implies a rent amount up to 80% of local market prices. It was defined in 2011 by the UK Government, authorising social landlords (housing associations and local authorities) to set rent prices according to this definition; in 2014-15, new "affordable" housing tenants in London paid on average 60% more than new tenants in traditional social housing<sup>31</sup>. It is important to keep in mind that regional disparities in housing markets in England are becoming increasingly significant, particularly when comparing the situation in London and some areas of the south-east with the north-east and north-west of the country.

27

The "statutory" homeless are those to whom local authorities have a "statutory duty" to provide housing assistance because they are considered to be eligible, involuntarily homeless and fall into one of the groups characterised as having "priority needs". To find out more: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions#statutory-homelessness>

28

Eurostat/EU-SILC 2016.

29

National Audit Office (2017), *Homelessness in England*, <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/homelessness/>

30

National Audit Office (2016), *Housing in England: Overview*, <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/housing-in-england-overview/>

31

Ibid.

## 32

DCLG Housing Statistics, Table 104, Live Tables on Housing Stock, [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

## 33

DCLG Social Housing Sales Live Tables, Table 671, [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

## 34

Joseph Roundtree Foundation (2014), *The impact of welfare reform on social landlords and tenants*, <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/impact-welfare-reform-social-landlords-and-tenants>

## 35

National Audit Office (2017), *Op. Cit.*

## 36

This form of lease is the standard rental contract in England leading to a rental insecurity which is unique in Europe. In addition, recent changes in legislation have allowed local authorities to offload their obligation to house homeless households in the private rental sector, exposing these households to significant rental insecurity.

## 37

*Ibid.*

## 38

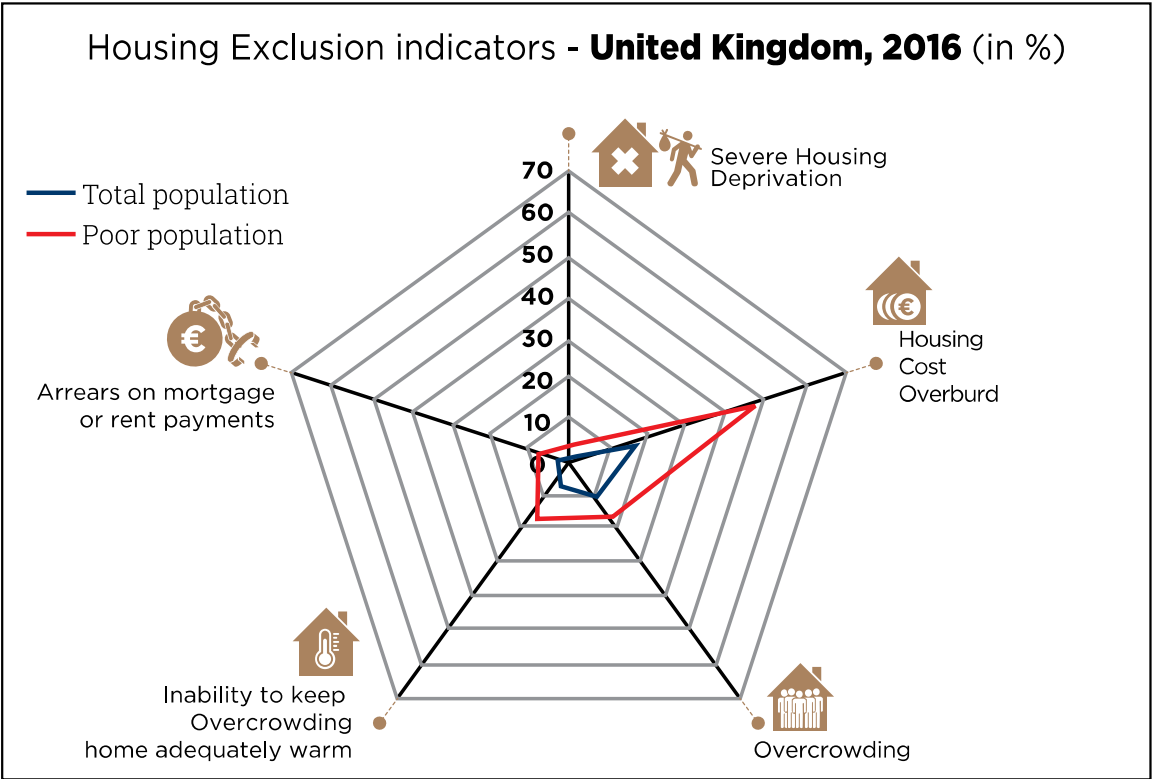
*"Homelessness in all its forms has significantly increased in recent years, driven by several factors. Despite this, government has not evaluated the impact of its reforms on this issue, and there remain gaps in its approach. It is difficult to understand why the Department persisted with its light touch approach in the face of such a visibly growing problem. Its recent performance in reducing homelessness therefore cannot be considered value for money". Amyas Morse, Head of the National Audit Office, 13 September 2017*

The chronic lack of affordable housing in England is the result of various factors. Housing construction has not kept pace with the increase in demand since the 1980s, especially in London; the construction of public housing has fallen, and that of private housing has been impacted by various economic recessions. Recent years have seen a sharp rise in private rental housing (+80% between 2003 and 2014), an increase in social rental housing belonging to housing associations (+42%), a stagnation of owner-occupied housing (+0.3%) and a reduction in social rented housing owned by local authorities (-32%)<sup>32</sup>. This is largely due to the liberalisation policy of the public rental market via the "Right to buy", initiated in the 1980s: from 1980 to 2013 in England, 1.87 million public housing units were sold to their tenants<sup>33</sup>. The successive reforms of the social system (bedroom tax, social security, Universal Credit, which replaces several allowances with a single payment per month, ceilings for housing subsidies, etc.<sup>34</sup>) have led to an increase in the pressure of housing costs on the budget of the most vulnerable households. Lease expiries in the private sector have become the number one cause of statutory homelessness in England<sup>35</sup>. The proportion of households accepted as homeless by local authorities as a result of the end of an insecure rental lease (assured shorthold tenancy)<sup>36</sup> increased from 11% in 2009/10 to 32% in 2016/17. In London, this proportion also increased over the same period from 10% to 39%. In England, the end of such a lease is the reason for the 74% increase in households eligible for temporary housing since 2009/10. Prior to this increase, homelessness was driven by other causes, including personal factors such as a family breakdown or parents who were unable or unwilling to house their children in their own home<sup>37</sup>. The end of the private lease is therefore the main cause of the increase in homelessness since 2010.

In England, the government's total spending on housing is estimated at around £28 billion for 2015-16, the most expensive component being housing benefits: that same year, 4.1 million beneficiaries were counted, the equivalent of around £20.9 billion. The National Audit Office, in its 2017 report on homelessness, criticised the Department for Communities and Local Government (which deals with the issue of homelessness) for its "light touch" approach in this area: "It is difficult to understand why the Department persisted with its light touch approach in the face of such a visibly growing problem. Its recent performance in reducing homelessness cannot therefore be considered value for money. [...]"<sup>38</sup>.

● Key statistics to housing exclusion and changes between 2012 and 2016

General population				
Indicator	2016		Change 2012-2016	
	Total	Poor	Total	Poor
Housing cost overburden rate	12.3%	42.4%	+ 68%	+ 63%
Total cost of housing (PPP)	588.5	542.6	+ 27%	+ 45%
Mortgage/rent arrears	3.4%	7.2%	0%	0%
Overcrowding	8%	14.4%	+ 14%	+ 5%
Severe housing deprivation	2.2%	4%	+ 10%	- 5%
Inability to maintain adequate home temperature	6.1%	14.2%	- 25%	- 26%
Young people				
Housing cost overburden rate (aged 18-24)	19%	50.2%	+ 52%	+ 32%
Overcrowding (aged 16-24)	13.7%	22.9%	- 2%	- 14%
Non-EU citizens				
	2016		Change 2012-2016	
	Aged 18+	Aged 16-29	Aged 18+	Aged 16-29
Housing cost overburden rate	28.9%	32.6%	+ 50%	+ 10%
Overcrowding	19.6%	20%	+ 31%	+ 30%



## FOCUS ON...

**Criminalisation of mobile EU citizens in precarious situations in England**

In November 2016, the UK adopted the [new European Economic Area 2016 regulations](#) which entered into force on 1 February 2017. They redrafted the 2006 regulations and transposed to national level the rules of Directive 2004/38/EC on the rights of EU citizens and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. At the same time as this entry into force, the UK Home Office published a Guide providing instructions on the administrative deportation of EU citizens and their family members. According to this first version of the Guide - it was amended in December 2017 - sleeping rough was considered an abuse of the right of residence, which led to the possibility of expelling EU nationals or members of their homeless family. These expulsions could be carried out even if the persons concerned had been in the United Kingdom for less than three months. Deported persons were also subject to entry restrictions for 12 months after their deportation or voluntary departure. FEANTSA lodged a complaint with the European Commission against the United Kingdom claiming that the Home Office did not comply with EU law.

The adoption of this legislation formalised a practice of deportation [that goes back several years](#). This allowed the authorities to substantially increase the number of people deported. [Government statistics](#) show that in the first

three months of 2017, the number of forced deportations of EU citizens increased by 26% compared to the same period the previous year. Between September 2016 and September 2017, more than [5,000 EU citizens](#) were returned to their country of origin.

Among the homeless people detained and facing deportation, claims on behalf of three EU citizens were brought by the Public Interest Law Unit and North East London Migrant Action (NELMA). On 14 December 2017, the United Kingdom Supreme Court ordered the government to stop deporting homeless EU citizens, after ruling that its controversial policy referring to sleeping rough as an abuse of treaty rights, was illegal. This decision held that it was contrary to EU law for the Home Office to define sleeping rough as an abuse of the right to freedom of movement. It also claimed that the policy in question was discriminatory and amounted to a systematic illegal verification of the residence rights of EU nationals. This decision is in line with [Commissioner Jourová's recent statements](#), which had ensured that homelessness did not affect the right of an EU citizen to live in another Member State. Following the Supreme Court decision, the Home Office published a revised version of the Guide, in which any reference to homelessness as an abuse of treaty rights was deleted.