

Central and Eastern European Rough Sleepers in London: Repeat Survey

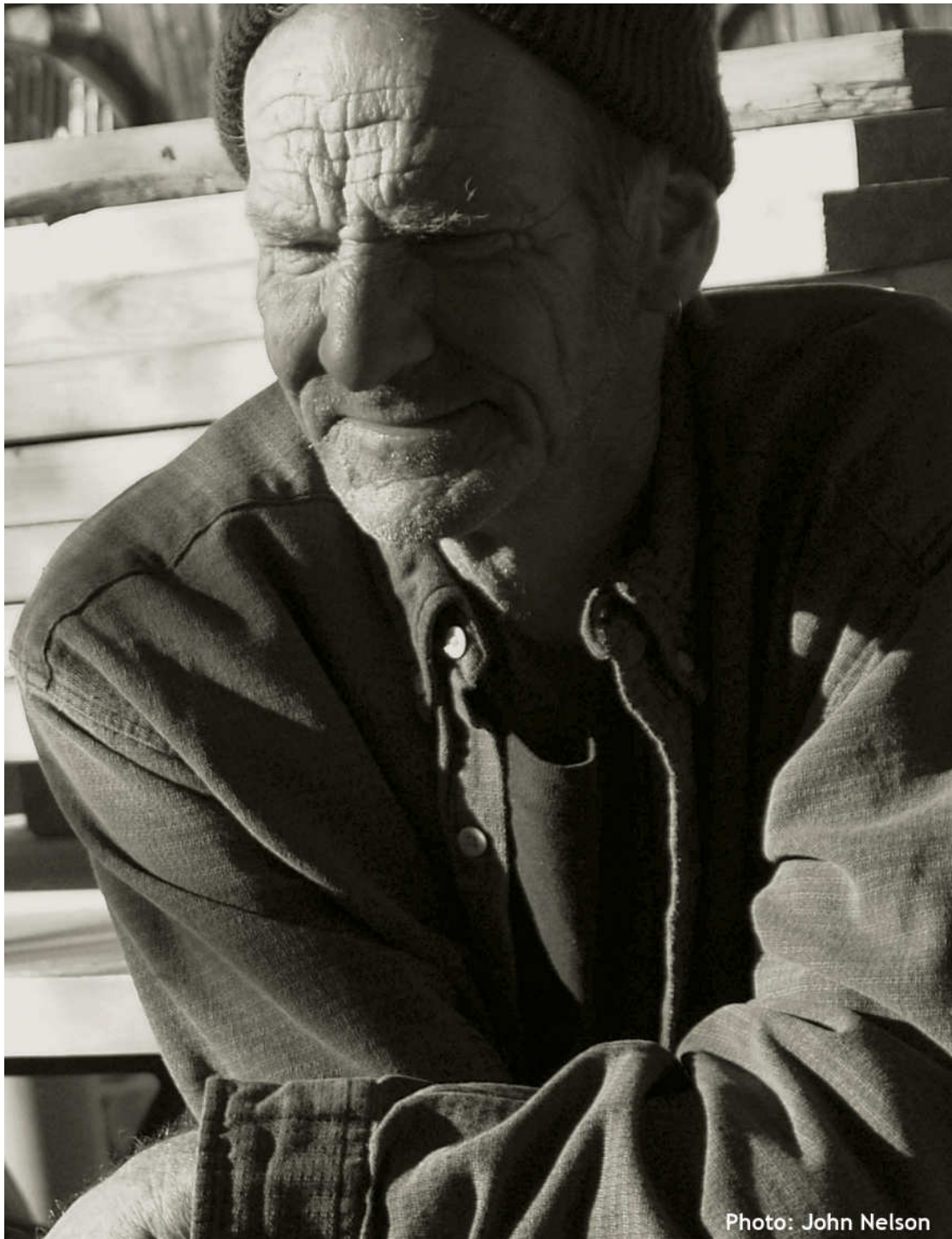


Photo: John Nelson

Introduction

Homelessness amongst Central and Eastern Europeans

The majority of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe successfully obtain employment and accommodation in the UK. However, as a result of restrictions to social provision and benefits, options are very limited for the significant minority who find themselves homeless.

In response to members' concerns over the growing number of Central and Eastern European (CEE) rough sleepers in London, Homeless Link secured funding from Communities and Local Government to develop and implement an action plan aimed at reducing rough sleeping amongst this group.

The baseline survey¹ was the first stage in this project. During a week in November 2007 it recorded that 18% of people found sleeping rough in London were from Central and Eastern European countries.

Following input from stakeholders in five London boroughs, the Action Plan² was published in June 2008 alongside the Government's *Managing the Impacts of Migration* report³.

Since then Homeless Link has worked with the homelessness sector, government departments, and a wide range of other partners to implement the work in the Action Plan.

A year on from the baseline survey, in November 2008 the survey was repeated using the same methodology to provide an updated picture of the current rough sleeping situation for CEE nationals in London. This report details those findings.

¹ Homeless Link (2008) *Central and Eastern European Rough Sleepers in London: Baseline Survey*, Homeless Link, London <http://www.homeless.org.uk/policyandinfo/issues/EU10s/basesurvey>

² Homeless Link (2008) *Reducing Rough Sleeping Among Central and Eastern Europeans in London: Action Plan*, Homeless Link, London <http://www.homeless.org.uk/policyandinfo/issues/EU10s/ceeactionplan.pdf/>

³ Communities and Local Government (2008) *Managing the Impacts of Migration: A Cross-Government Approach*, CLG, London <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/migrationimpact>

The methodology

Fourteen London outreach teams were asked to carry out a survey over the week 24 to 30 November 2008. The survey focused on rough sleeping and street activity contacts during 'usual shift patterns'. This follows the same methodology as was used in November 2007.

In total 108 outreach shifts were undertaken in the November 2008 survey, compared to 85 the previous year. The outreach teams were⁴:

- Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington & Chelsea
- Westminster x3 (Central, North and South)
- City
- Islington
- Ealing
- Camden
- Southwark
- Brent
- Lambeth
- Richmond
- Waltham Forest
- London Street Rescue

Outreach teams were asked to record numbers for:

- All individuals met during an outreach shift
- Individuals from Central & Eastern Europe met during an outreach shift.

They were also asked to record the nationality and support needs of the contacts from Central and Eastern Europe if known.

This report compares the Homeless Link survey data with the numbers of Central and Eastern Europeans recorded on Broadway's CHAIN database⁵ for the same week.⁶

⁴ Changes since November 2007 mean that City and Islington now have separate outreach teams. London Street Rescue now covers outreach in the borough of Croydon. Geographical coverage overall therefore remains the same as the November 2007 survey.

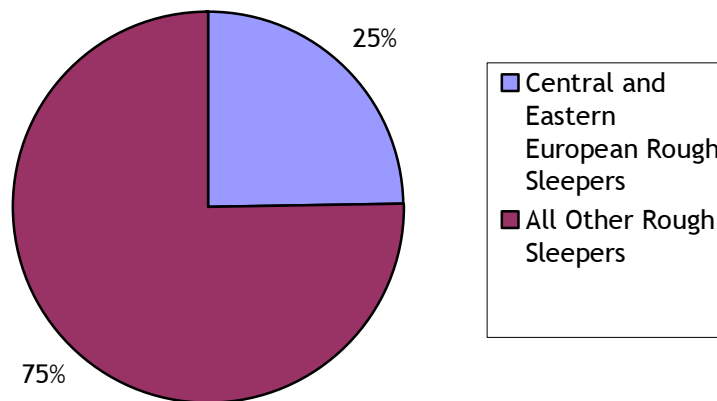
⁵ CHAIN is a database which records information on homelessness, rough sleeping and the street population. See <http://www.broadwaylondon.org/chain/>

⁶ As in the 2007 survey, using both datasets aims to provide a fuller picture of rough sleeping amongst Central and Eastern Europeans.

Rough Sleeping

Numbers

Out of the 508 rough sleepers recorded in total during the November 2008 survey week, 126 (25%) of them were from Central and Eastern Europe.



Outreach teams were also asked to compare these numbers to their experience of other weeks. Based on these experiences, outreach teams stated that the number of Central and Eastern European rough sleepers they recorded was:

- Average: 6 teams (43%)
- Below Average: 6 teams (43%)
- Above Average: 2 teams (14%)

This is not dissimilar to the November 2007 survey, where the results were average, 8; below average, 4; and above average, 2.

For the same week in November 2008, CHAIN recorded 280 individuals sleeping rough, of which 60 were from Central and Eastern Europe (21%). The following table provides an overview of the figures. Although there is a difference between the two datasets regarding the overall numbers of people found sleeping rough⁷ both datasets suggest that the proportion of rough sleepers from CEE countries is increasing (survey from 18%-25% and CHAIN 13%-21%).

⁷ The 2007 survey also found a difference between the CHAIN and Homeless Link survey data, as table 1 indicates. This could be due to the different rates of reporting amongst outreach teams to CHAIN. It should be noted that Homeless Link's survey may include some individuals who were recorded by more than one outreach team.

Table 1: Total number of individual rough sleepers and proportion of Central and Eastern Europeans, November 2007 and November 2008

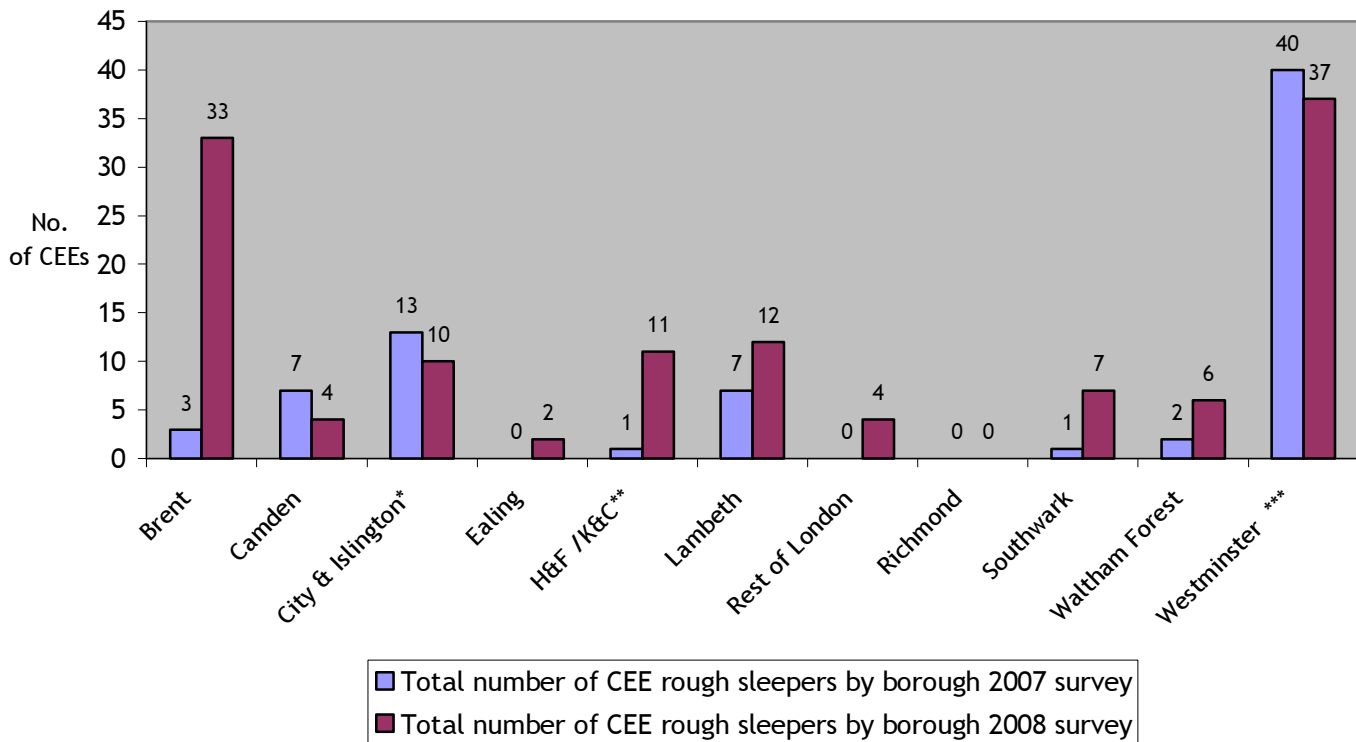
	November 2007	November 2008
Survey		
Total individuals	402	508
CEE individuals (as a % of total individuals)	74 (18%)	126 (25%)
CHAIN		
Total individuals	269	280
CEE individuals (as a % of total individuals)	35 (13%)	60 (21%)

Source: Homeless Link survey and CHAIN data

Borough Analysis

The chart below shows a breakdown, by borough, of the number of CEE individuals who were recorded as rough sleeping in both the November 2007 and November 2008 surveys.

Total number of rough sleepers from CEE countries by borough



The information suggests that the number of CEE rough sleepers has reduced in several of the inner London boroughs which have experienced a long standing issue of rough sleepers amongst this client group. However, this is coupled with a significant increase in some of the outer London areas. ⁸

⁸ * In 2007 Islington data was included in the City team's data, so this has been presented in a similar way in 2008 for consistency. In 2008, teams returned separate data, in the City they reported 6 CEE rough sleepers, and Islington reported 4 CEE rough sleepers.

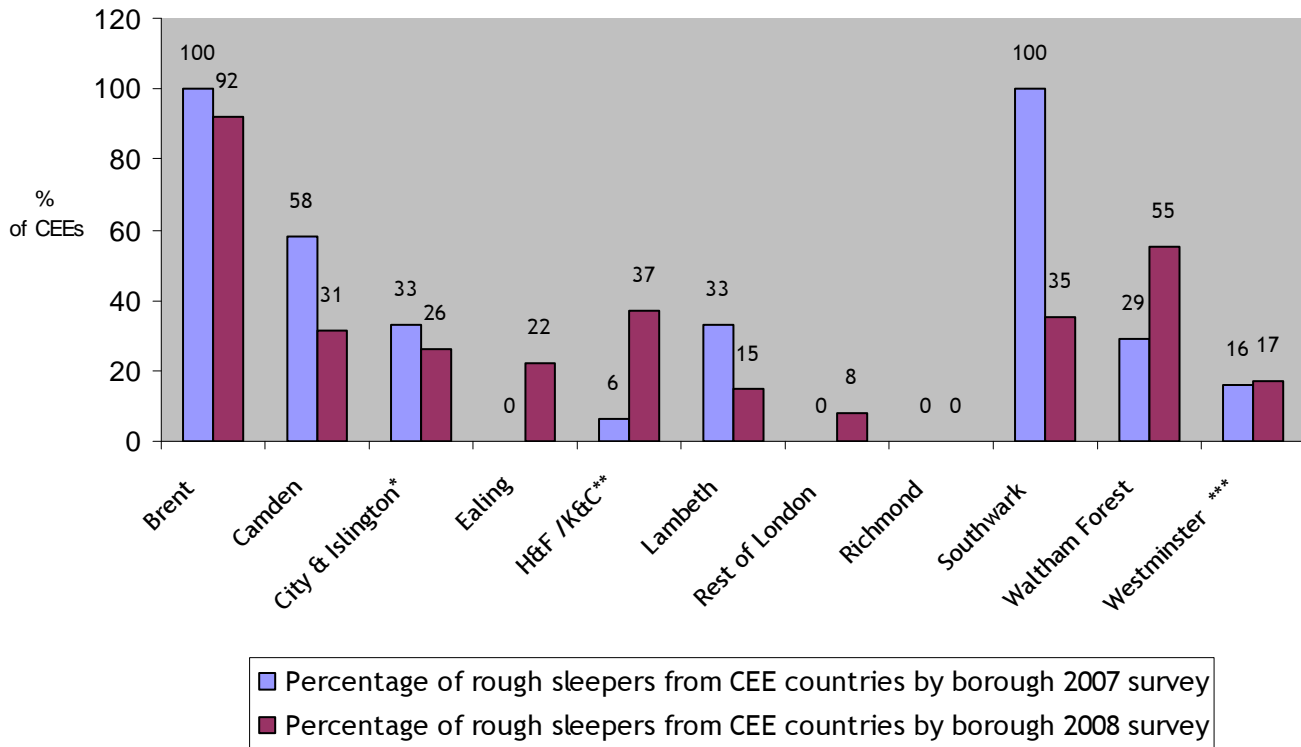
**In the 2007 survey Hammersmith and Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea submitted combined data for both boroughs. This has been presented in a similar way in 2008 for consistency. In 2008, the teams returned separate data, H&F reported 5 CEE rough sleeping clients, and K&C reported 6 CEE rough sleeping clients.

***Westminster includes data from all 3 outreach teams operating in this borough, for consistency with the 2007 reporting.

The chart below indicates the **percentage** of the total number of rough sleepers in each borough who are from CEE countries. This is to provide an indication of whether the proportion of rough sleepers who are from CEE countries has risen or decreased since 2007.⁹

Some of the base line numbers are low, and therefore we suggest the percentage figures must be viewed with caution.

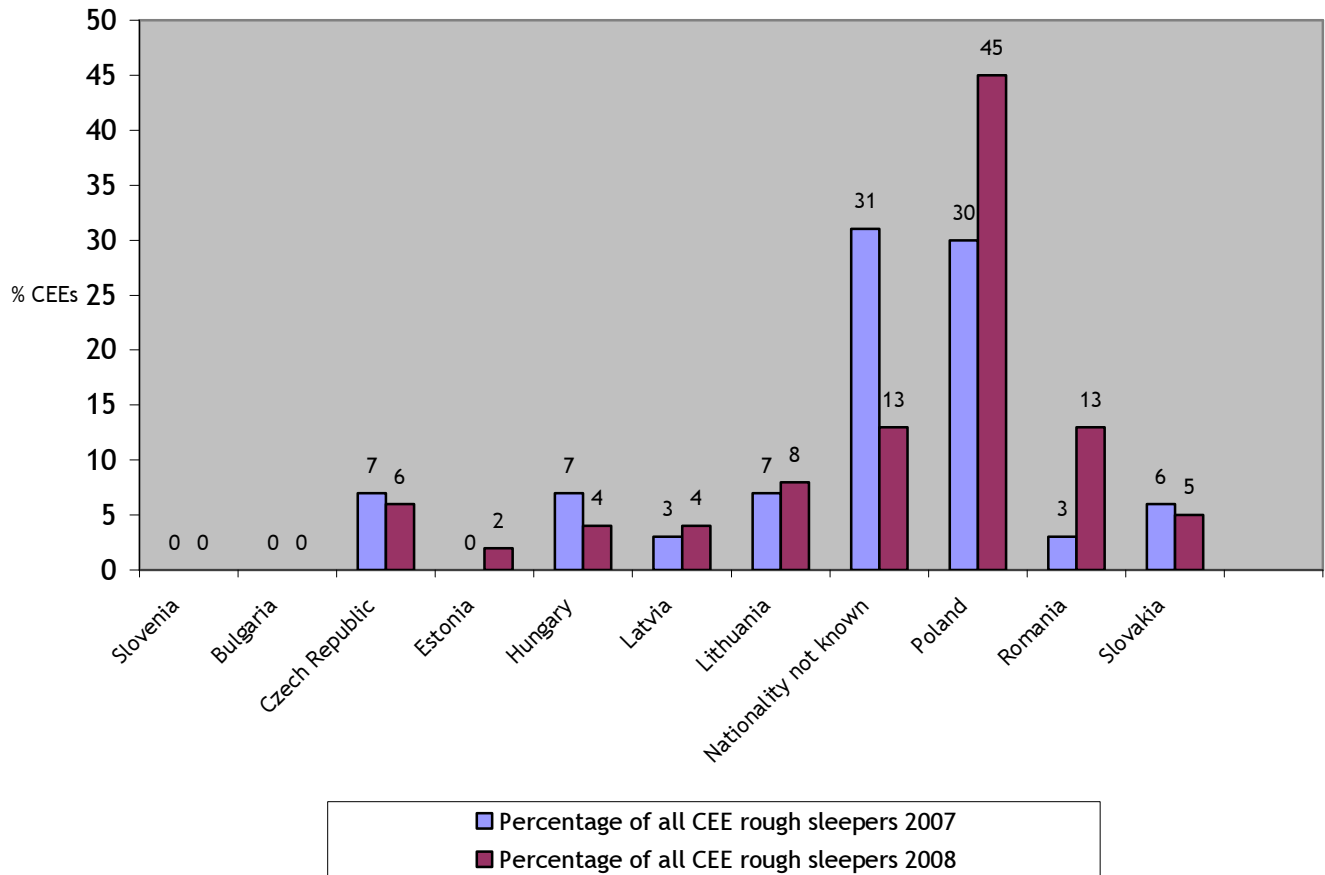
Percentage of rough sleepers from CEE countries by borough



⁹ *In the 2007 Islington data was included in the City team’s data, so this has been presented in a similar way in 2008 for consistency. In 2008 however, teams returned separate data, in the City the percentage of CEE rough sleepers was 23%, and in Islington 31% of all rough sleepers were from CEE countries.
 In the 2007 survey, Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington & Chelsea submitted combined data for both boroughs. This has been presented in a similar way in 2008 for consistency. In 2008 the teams reported data separately, in H&F 56% of rough sleepers were from CEE countries, in K&C it was 29%. *Westminster includes data from all 3 outreach teams operating in this borough, for consistency with the 2007 reporting.

Nationalities

Nationalities of CEE rough sleepers



Base equals 74 clients 2007 survey, 126 clients 2008 survey

Outreach teams were asked, where possible, to record the nationality of Central and Eastern European rough sleepers. Although data was not available for all people, the figures show high numbers of Polish nationals, followed by Romanians, Lithuanians and Czech.

The figures suggest that clients from Poland remain the largest group. The proportion of clients from other CEE countries has remained relatively consistent, with the exception of Romania which has seen a significant increase. CHAIN figures also showed the majority of Central and Eastern European rough sleepers to be Polish (45%), followed by Czech (15%).

Support needs

Outreach teams were asked to record, where possible, the support needs of the Central and Eastern European rough sleepers they contacted. Not all teams provided this information, however, the November 2008 survey found that of the 126 individuals from Central and Eastern Europe, 84 individuals (67%) had alcohol support needs, 37 individuals (30%) a mental health support need, and 13 individuals (10%) a drug related support need. Another 30 individuals (24%) were noted as having 'other' support needs, predominantly relating to physical health¹⁰.

By comparison, on the CHAIN database, of the 60 individuals recorded, eleven individuals (18%) had alcohol support needs, one individual (2%) a drug support need and 2 individuals (3%) a mental health support need.

Alcohol therefore remains the dominant support need. The survey figures suggest that the proportion of Central and Eastern European rough sleepers with alcohol support needs has increased from 35% in November 2007 to 67% in November 2008. However, the CHAIN data records this need as remaining stable, at around 20%.

Both datasets report increases in drug and mental health support needs.

Table 2: Support needs of Central and Eastern European rough sleepers, November 2007 and November 2008.

Support Need	November 2007		November 2008	
	Number	%	Number	%
Survey (126 individuals)				
Alcohol	26	35%	84	67%
Drug	2	3%	13	10%
Mental Health	4	5%	37	30%
CHAIN (60 individuals)				
Alcohol	7	20%	11	18%
Drug	0	0%	1	2%
Mental Health	0	0%	2	3%

Source: Homeless Link survey and CHAIN

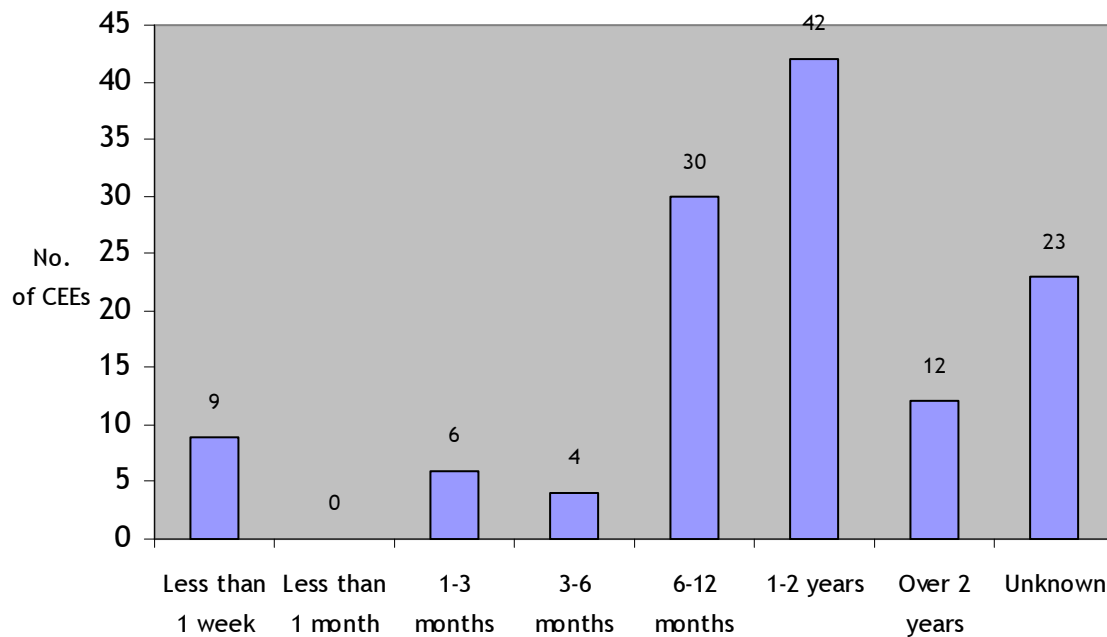
¹⁰ Note that individuals may have more than one need.

Flow to and from the streets

The November 2008 survey included additional questions on flows to and from the streets.

Outreach teams were asked to record the length of time that the individuals recorded in the November 2008 survey had been on the streets - either in their borough or known to be sleeping rough in other boroughs.

Length of time on the streets

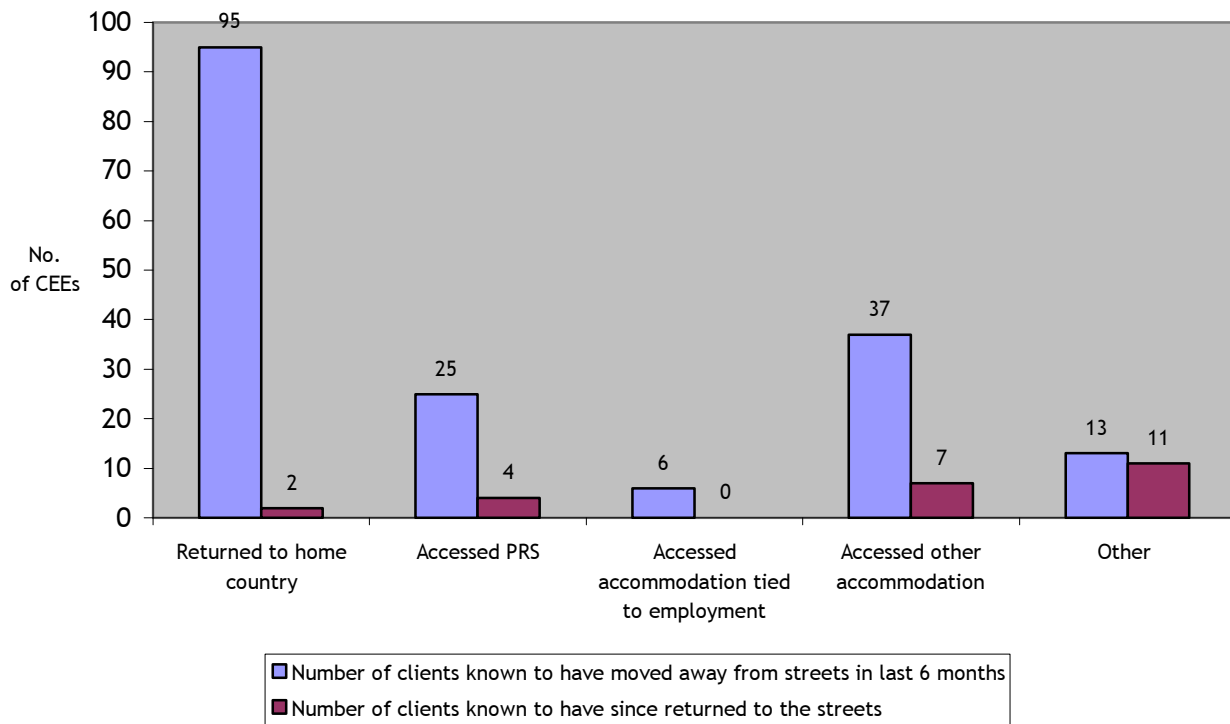


Base equals 126 clients

The data suggests that the majority of clients have been sleeping rough for 1-2 years. It shows a relatively low number of clients who been sleeping rough for less than 6 months. However it does suggest there is a flow of new clients to the streets, with 9 clients sleeping rough for under a week.

Outreach teams also provided data on the flow of CEE clients away from the streets. They were asked to share information about all the CEE clients they had been in contact with over the last 6 months. This question was included to provide a longer-term picture of the routes away from rough sleeping amongst this client group.

Flow from the streets



Not all teams returned data for this question. However, the information provided does show that a high number of clients have returned to their home country. There are also a number of clients who have also accessed the Private Rented Sector (PRS) and other accommodation. The ‘other’ category included hospitalisation, and 2 deaths.

Street Activity

Street activity refers to problematic or anti-social behaviours such as street drinking, drug use, sex work and begging.

Numbers

Out of 213 individuals recorded as engaged in street activity overall during the week, 93 were from Central & Eastern Europe (44%). However, not all outreach teams collated information on street activity.¹¹

Information from CHAIN shows that outreach teams recorded 126 individuals as engaged in street activity during the week, 20 from Central and Eastern Europe (16%).

Both datasets indicate an increase in the number and proportion of individuals engaged in street activity from CEE countries compared with the 2007 survey, when 117 were recorded as engaged in street activity, 40 of whom were from CEE countries (34%). For the same period, CHAIN recorded 85 individuals, 5 of whom were from CEE countries.

Nationalities

Outreach teams were asked to record, whenever possible, the nationality of the Central and Eastern Europeans engaged in street activity. The highest proportion of individuals were from the following countries:

- Polish: 71 (76%)
- Romanian: 13 (14%)
- Lithuanian: 3 (3%)

Of the 20 individuals from Central and Eastern Europe recorded on the CHAIN database, 12 were Polish.

Support needs

Outreach teams also recorded the support needs of the individuals from Central and Eastern Europe engaged in street activity, if this information was available. Of the 93 individuals in the data collected by outreach teams during that week, 81 reportedly had alcohol support needs, 38 had mental health support needs and 12 had drug support needs.¹² For the same week, CHAIN found that of the 20 individuals, 12 were reported as having alcohol support needs, and 1 as having a drug support need.

¹¹ Some individuals engaged in street activity were also seen and recorded as rough sleeping during the period.

¹² Note that individuals may have more than one need.

Conclusion

These findings suggest that there are still significant numbers of Central and Eastern Europeans rough sleeping in London.

They indicate that the proportion of rough sleepers from Central and Eastern European countries has increased over the past year. Individuals from Poland continue to make up the largest part of this group.

The data also suggests that the support needs of CEE rough sleepers has increased since the 2007 survey.

The findings show that whilst a number of clients have moved away from rough sleeping, principally through returning to their home country, there remains a very high number of individuals who have been on the streets for long periods as well as a significant new flow to the streets.

Since the data was collected by outreach teams for this survey in November 2008, there have been several key developments linked to the action plan, including the launch of a pan-London Reconnection Team and the opening of an employment and reconnection based accommodation project for CEE clients.¹³ Homeless Link and member agencies continue to seek solutions to support this client group.

For further information: www.homeless.org.uk/policyandinfo/issues/EU10s

¹³ For more information on the London Reconnection Team, launched in January 2008 by Thames Reach, please visit <http://www.thamesreach.org.uk/what-we-do/london-reconnection-project/>. The employment and reconnection based accommodation project, the Olallo project, is run by the charity Saint John of God.

Homeless Link is the national membership organisation for frontline homelessness agencies in England. Our mission is to be a catalyst that will help to bring an end to homelessness.

Our two goals are to:

- raise standards in the services that support homeless people and tackle homelessness
- influence the development of policy, strategy and investment at all levels of government.

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