# Liverpool homelessness costs soar to £19.4 million amid rising family crisis



A distressing rise in homelessness has forced families into desperate living conditions, as seen in the case of Abbie Coulthard and her two young children, Rocco and Dollie, who have been crammed into a small hotel room in Liverpool for over five weeks. The family’s only means to prepare meals consist of a kettle and an air fryer, with limited facilities exacerbating their struggle. Abbie, 31, has been unable to adequately care for her children, facing challenges not only in cooking but also in managing her health condition, which requires oxygen therapy that the hotel cannot accommodate. “It’s just a nightmare. We can’t stay here,” she lamented to local media, as she navigates the complexities of parental responsibilities in a confined space.

The crisis has intensified throughout Liverpool, as the city grapples with an unprecedented level of homelessness. Recent reports highlight that approximately 1,250 families are currently living in emergency temporary accommodation, a figure that has soared due to a perfect storm of inadequate social housing and increasing housing costs. The Liverpool Echo reports that the city council’s expenditure on housing the homeless has ballooned from £250,000 in 2019 to an alarming £19.4 million expected by the end of the current financial year—a staggering increase of over 7,600%. This financial burden is only set to grow, as estimates put the cost for the next fiscal year at a potential £30 million.

Liverpool’s struggles mirror a broader trend faced by councils across England, with spending on emergency housing surging nearly 80% in the year preceding March 2024. This increase reflects a national homelessness crisis, with the number of homeless families climbing 24% to a total of 56,000. Research conducted by the London School of Economics, commissioned by the charity Crisis, attributes this alarming rise to a critical shortage of affordable housing options and inadequate welfare benefits. As councils like Liverpool’s request urgent support from the government, local leaders are being urged to offer strategies that not only address the immediate need for housing but also tackle the systemic failures that have allowed such a crisis to fester.

Local authorities are confronting a dual challenge: managing the immediate needs of families taking shelter in hotels and implementing longer-term solutions to prevent homelessness from becoming a chronic issue. Reports indicate that the government has pledged to consider new strategies aimed at improving housing availability and abolishing "no fault" evictions, which have contributed to the surge in temporary accommodations. However, the Local Government Association has warned that without significant and immediate action, the trend is unsustainable, and the plight of families like Abbie’s may only worsen.

As local councils, including Liverpool’s, continue to face unprecedented demand for housing, the effects are felt deeply within communities. Individuals, such as Warren Smith, have found themselves in temporary accommodation for more than a year, highlighting the precarious situation many families endure. The alarmingly high number of children living in temporary housing has raised grave concerns, with fatalities reported, accentuating the urgent need for both short-term solutions and a comprehensive strategy to tackle the root causes of homelessness in the UK.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2065593/labour-council-housing-crisis-forces), [[4]](https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2023-11-29/council-requests-urgent-support-from-government-over-temporary-accommodation)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2065593/labour-council-housing-crisis-forces), [[3]](https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/city-councils-spend-on-temporary-accommodation-up-7660-83922), [[5]](https://www.localgov.co.uk/Liverpools-homelessness-bill-leaps-from-250000-to-19m/58340)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/d5251579-ed4e-4959-872e-5c8fb647073e), [[6]](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/northwest/news/2127567-move-to-engage-private-rented-sector-to-slash-councils-homelessness-costs)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/d5251579-ed4e-4959-872e-5c8fb647073e), [[5]](https://www.localgov.co.uk/Liverpools-homelessness-bill-leaps-from-250000-to-19m/58340)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2065593/labour-council-housing-crisis-forces> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/d5251579-ed4e-4959-872e-5c8fb647073e> - In the year leading up to March 2024, English councils' spending on emergency housing surged by nearly 80%, reaching £732 million. This increase highlights the severe homelessness crisis, with the number of homeless families rising by 24% to 56,000. The London School of Economics (LSE) research, commissioned by Crisis, points to a shortage of social housing and insufficient welfare benefits as root causes. The Local Government Association warns that this trend is unsustainable, and government responses include Labour's pledge for a new cross-government strategy and the current administration's commitment to affordable housing projects and abolishing "no fault" evictions. Alarmingly, the number of children dying in temporary accommodation has increased, emphasizing the urgent need for long-term solutions. ([ft.com](https://www.ft.com/content/d5251579-ed4e-4959-872e-5c8fb647073e?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/city-councils-spend-on-temporary-accommodation-up-7660-83922> - Liverpool City Council's expenditure on temporary accommodation is projected to increase by 7,660% by the end of the fiscal year compared to 2019. In 2019, the council spent £250,000 on housing people in temporary accommodation, and this figure is expected to rise to £19.4 million in 2023-24. The council attributes this surge to the use of expensive B&B accommodation, frozen Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, and a severe shortage of affordable and social housing options in Liverpool. Currently, there are approximately 15,000 households on the housing register, often for many years, leading to many homeless households remaining in unsuitable and costly temporary accommodation for extended periods, frequently families with children. ([insidehousing.co.uk](https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/city-councils-spend-on-temporary-accommodation-up-7660-83922?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2023-11-29/council-requests-urgent-support-from-government-over-temporary-accommodation> - Liverpool City Council has requested "urgent support" from the Government to address the city's housing and homelessness crisis. A record number of families are currently in temporary accommodation, with councils across the North West finding themselves at "breaking point" in managing homelessness. Individuals like Warren Smith have been in temporary accommodation for over a year, highlighting the prolonged nature of the crisis. The council anticipates spending more than £19 million on temporary accommodation in 2023, with 550 households currently in costly B&Bs, many of which are families with children. The council attributes this situation to an increase in "no fault" evictions and an acceleration of asylum decisions. ([itv.com](https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2023-11-29/council-requests-urgent-support-from-government-over-temporary-accommodation?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.localgov.co.uk/Liverpools-homelessness-bill-leaps-from-250000-to-19m/58340> - Liverpool City Council's homelessness accommodation bill has increased from £250,000 to £19 million over three years. Council leader Liam Robinson has called on the Government for additional support, stating that the current Homeless Support grant of £1.7 million does not reflect the growing demand in Liverpool. The council currently has over 550 households in bed and breakfast accommodation, with 250 of these being families with children. The rise in homelessness is exacerbated by the acceleration of decisions for refugees and asylum seekers by the Home Office, with over 1,000 likely to receive decisions before Christmas. ([localgov.co.uk](https://www.localgov.co.uk/Liverpools-homelessness-bill-leaps-from-250000-to-19m/58340?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/northwest/news/2127567-move-to-engage-private-rented-sector-to-slash-councils-homelessness-costs> - Liverpool City Council is seeking to collaborate with the private rented sector to reduce its homelessness support costs. The council's spending on temporary accommodation has risen from £250,000 in 2019 to a projected £25 million by the end of this financial year, a 10,000% increase. Nearly 1,000 families are currently in temporary accommodation, with 558 residing in B&Bs or hotels. The council attributes this surge to a rise in "no fault" eviction notices, driven by rent increases due to higher mortgage interest rates, and an increase in individuals granted the right to remain in the city. ([thebusinessdesk.com](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/northwest/news/2127567-move-to-engage-private-rented-sector-to-slash-councils-homelessness-costs?utm_source=openai))