# Alarming rise in children living in temporary accommodation signals deepening homelessness crisis in England



Newly released data reveals an alarming increase in the number of households, particularly those with children, living in temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast (B&B) settings in England, reflecting a worsening housing crisis. According to official figures published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) as of the end of December 2024, a record 127,890 households were living in temporary accommodation, up from 112,610 a year earlier. The number of children residing in such conditions rose from 145,780 to 165,510 over the same period.

While the total number of households in B&B accommodation fell slightly from 17,620 at the end of September 2024 to 16,390 by December, the duration of stays in B&Bs has dramatically lengthened. Legally, families should not stay in B&Bs for longer than six weeks, but data shows that 6,800 households had been in B&Bs for over six months by the end of December, up from 3,600 in March 2022. The number of households with children in B&Bs for over six months surged more than eightfold to 1,510 at the end of last year, from just 180 in March 2022. Notably, 90 households with children have been in B&Bs for over five years.

MHCLG highlighted a reduction in households with children living in B&Bs for more than the statutory six weeks, from 3,770 in June 2024 to 3,110 in December 2024. However, the climbing numbers of long-term B&B residents underline persistent challenges in providing permanent housing solutions.

Amid the rising homelessness crisis, London has seen a significant surge in rough sleeping. The latest Combined Homelessness and Information Network (Chain) statistics recorded a 38% increase in people sleeping rough, rising from 511 to 706 year-on-year in the capital. Overall, 4,427 individuals were documented as sleeping rough in London during the three months to March 2025, marking nearly an 8% increase compared to the same quarter in the previous year.

Homelessness organisations have expressed deep concern about the growing severity of the situation. Shelter described the figures as "a grim snapshot of the deepening housing emergency in England," while Crisis warned that the country's homelessness system is "at breaking point." Crisis reported supporting people in dire circumstances, including individuals discharged from hospital without secure housing and children suffering from illnesses linked to poor accommodation conditions.

Rick Henderson, Chief Executive of Homeless Link, the national membership body for homelessness services, commented: “News of the latest devastating number of people forced to sleep rough is a harsh reminder of how acutely critical the Government’s homelessness funding review and new national strategy will be, as well as the Mayor of London’s imminent Rough Sleeping Plan of Action.”

Emma Haddad, Chief Executive of St Mungo's, emphasised the human toll of the crisis, noting that many affected by job loss or relationship breakdown are pushed onto the streets without adequate sanitation, security, or support. She highlighted escalating health needs including anxiety, depression, substance use, and frailty among those experiencing homelessness, which complicates efforts to help individuals transition out of rough sleeping.

Shelter's Mairi MacRae warned that homelessness will "skyrocket up and down the country" without significant investment in social housing and cautioned that ongoing temporary accommodation expenses risk bankrupting councils. She called on the Government to commit to building 90,000 social rent homes annually for the next decade as the only viable long-term solution to end homelessness definitively.

Matt Downie from Crisis echoed this call for urgent government action. He stated, “The Westminster Government has a clear opportunity to stop this becoming the norm for generations to come through its upcoming strategy to end homelessness. They must commit to building the social homes we need, restore housing benefit and offer support to prevent homelessness in the first place. Ambition here is crucial – we must turn the tide on poverty and homelessness by giving people the foundation of a safe home.”

The data also revealed a sharp rise in homelessness among individuals leaving Home Office asylum support accommodation. By the end of 2024, nearly 5,000 households required assistance after being forced out of such accommodations, with those at risk of homelessness increasing from 630 in September to 1,390 by December, and those assessed as homeless and owed relief rising from 2,040 to 3,590 over the same period.

Homelessness Minister Rushanara Ali acknowledged the challenges ahead, stating: "Reversing the years of failure this government has inherited will not be easy but we’re wasting no time in ending this devastating crisis, with a record £1 billion going to crucial homelessness services this year, helping councils to support families faster. We will go even further to tackle all forms of homelessness through prevention and addressing its root causes. This goes alongside our mission to build 1.5 million new homes as part of our Plan for Change – boosting social and affordable housing and protecting renters by abolishing section 21 no fault evictions."

The figures underscore ongoing strains on England's housing and homelessness services, reflecting a complex and escalating crisis affecting tens of thousands of vulnerable households across the country.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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