# Children in England face record stays in temporary accommodation amid housing crisis



Children in England face an unsettling reality as an increasing number are forced to spend their formative years in temporary accommodation, often lacking stability and basic necessities. A recent report by Citizens UK reveals striking figures, indicating that as of December 2024, approximately 165,510 children were housed in temporary settings, with many families enduring prolonged stays—some dating back to 1998. Such figures underscore an alarming trend that has become more pronounced in recent years, with communities grappling not only with homelessness but also with systemic issues tied to the broader housing crisis.

Temporary accommodation encompasses a range of living situations, including hostels and bed-and-breakfast establishments. The number of households in temporary accommodation has reached a record high of nearly 130,000, reflecting a significant increase driven largely by the ongoing shortage of affordable housing. The report highlights that families are accruing substantial debts due to exorbitant fees for essential services, such as storage and laundry; in some instances, debts have soared to over £8,000, placing an insurmountable financial burden on already vulnerable households.

Moreover, the geographical challenges of homelessness shed light on the disparity in how different boroughs manage their homeless populations. Affluent areas, such as Richmond upon Thames, reportedly relocate up to 75 per cent of their homeless families out of the borough, compared to just 6 per cent in low-income areas like Brent. This practice not only exacerbates the situation for struggling families by moving them further from their support networks but also raises concerns regarding the social equity of housing policies across London.

The report suggests that families are increasingly sharing cramped quarters, with rising numbers of retired individuals also facing the indignities of temporary housing conditions. For instance, a 97-year-old in Brent found herself living in temporary accommodation for three years. Such cases illustrate the lack of options available within the housing system, with older residents often overlooked in discussions about homelessness.

The detrimental impact of living in temporary accommodation on children's education and overall well-being is profound. Space limitations often force children to engage in their studies in inappropriate settings, such as doing homework in shared areas or hotel bathrooms. Critics of government policy argue that the failure to address the root causes of the housing crisis exacerbates these pressures. Dame Siobhain McDonagh MP described the conditions as “abhorrent”, pointing out that the lack of adequate facilities for cooking, storage, and sanitation presents serious challenges for families trying to maintain a semblance of normalcy.

Local councils, while acknowledging the overwhelming demand for affordable housing, are attempting to offer some support. Croydon Council has indicated that the length of stays in temporary accommodation can be rare, although the current reality suggests otherwise. They have committed to exploring various types of housing solutions to alleviate the burden on families.

In response to the housing crisis, the UK government has pledged substantial funding aimed at improving support services, with over £1 billion allocated for tackling homelessness in the current fiscal year alone. They claim this investment, including a designated increase for London, is intended to help families secure stable housing more quickly while also addressing the broader supply crisis through the construction of new homes.

In summary, the plight of children living in temporary accommodation is indicative of a larger, systemic issue within the housing landscape of the UK. While commendable efforts are being made to address immediate needs, the sustainability and efficacy of these measures remain to be proven in a landscape fraught with economic and social inequalities.

**Reference Map:**1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 - Sources [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/children-temporary-accommodation-homeless-housing-b2752330.html), [[2]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/children-temporary-accommodation-homeless-housing-b2752330.html), [[3]](https://www.citizensuk.org/campaigns/housing-homelessness/), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-october-to-december-2024/statutory-homelessness-in-england-october-to-december-2024)2. Paragraphs 6, 7 - Sources [[5]](https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/children_homeless_in_temporary_accommodation_hits_shameful_new_record_of_151000_up_15_per_cent_in_a_year), [[6]](https://england.shelter.org.uk/what_we_do/updates_insights_and_impact/record_child_homelessness_and_soaring_rough_sleeping_figures)3. Paragraph 8, 9 - Sources [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/mar/09/homeless-kids-england-childhood-temporary-housing-families)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/children-temporary-accommodation-homeless-housing-b2752330.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/children-temporary-accommodation-homeless-housing-b2752330.html> - An article from The Independent highlights the severe state of temporary accommodation in England, revealing that 165,510 children were living in such housing at the end of 2024. The report discusses the prolonged stays of families, with one household in Croydon having been in temporary accommodation since 1998. It also addresses the financial burdens on homeless families, citing cases where storage costs have led to significant debts. Additionally, the piece sheds light on the practice of affluent London boroughs relocating homeless families to more deprived areas, exacerbating the challenges faced by these families.
3. <https://www.citizensuk.org/campaigns/housing-homelessness/> - Citizens UK provides comprehensive data on the housing and homelessness crisis in the UK. Their report indicates that at least 168,000 children are living in temporary accommodation, with a 663% increase in the number of children in hotels for longer than the six-week legal limit over three years. The report also highlights the shortage of affordable housing, with about 1.3 million households in England on local authority waiting lists. Additionally, it points out that 3.7 million homes in England are considered non-decent, posing health risks to residents.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-october-to-december-2024/statutory-homelessness-in-england-october-to-december-2024> - The UK government's official statistics reveal that as of December 31, 2024, there were 127,890 households in temporary accommodation, marking a 13.6% increase from the previous year. Among these, 81,060 households included dependent children, totaling 165,510 children in temporary housing. The data also highlights regional disparities, with London having a rate of 19.7 households in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households, compared to 2.7 in the rest of England. Newham London Borough had the highest rate in London, with 58 households per 1,000 households.
5. <https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/children_homeless_in_temporary_accommodation_hits_shameful_new_record_of_151000_up_15_per_cent_in_a_year> - Shelter England reports a record 151,630 children living in temporary accommodation as of August 2024, a 15% increase from the previous year. The press release highlights the escalating housing emergency, noting that 8,860 homeless families are in emergency accommodation such as B&Bs and hostels, a 29% rise in a year. It also points out that 117,450 homeless households are living in temporary accommodation, the highest figure ever recorded, up 12% in a year.
6. <https://england.shelter.org.uk/what_we_do/updates_insights_and_impact/record_child_homelessness_and_soaring_rough_sleeping_figures> - Shelter England's update reveals that as of September 2024, 164,040 children are homeless and living in temporary accommodation, a 15% increase in a year. The report also highlights that 126,040 households in England are homeless in temporary accommodation, a 16% increase in a year. It emphasizes the detrimental effects of temporary accommodation on children's well-being, education, and health, citing instances of children sharing beds with parents or siblings and lacking space to play or study.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/mar/09/homeless-kids-england-childhood-temporary-housing-families> - An article from The Guardian discusses the plight of homeless children in England, highlighting cases where children are growing up in temporary accommodation, doing homework on the bathroom floor of hotel rooms, and eating dinner perched on their beds. The piece criticizes the government's handling of the housing crisis and notes that the number of homeless households with children placed in B&Bs increased by 65.4% to 4,680 by the end of the previous September, with at least half staying beyond the six-week maximum stipulated by law.