

# Nottinghamshire Homeless Watch 2015 Headline Findings

Survey carried out  
**21st September - 4th October 2015**



# About the Homeless Watch Survey 2015



2015  
survey

Homeless Watch Nottinghamshire is not a 'count' of homelessness but rather a snapshot of homeless presentations<sup>1</sup> across the City and County of Nottinghamshire. Key statutory, voluntary and community agencies across all the districts volunteered to complete the questionnaires with every homeless person they saw in the survey's two week period. The information captured by the survey is subject to a number of factors. We are indebted to the agencies that are willing to give their time to engage with the survey, and we are aware that the nature of these agencies, their target groups and where they are located does inevitably influence the data. As commented last year we are also aware that many agencies have faced further cuts and closures, and some are now reliant on volunteer workers, this too will have had an impact on volume and type of returns received by the survey. Finally, the two weeks in which the survey was conducted was again unseasonably mild which will have possibly affected the presentations, especially for rough sleepers. It should be noted that the figures recorded for each area represents where homeless households presented for assistance, but they did not necessarily have a local connection in that local authority.

Homeless Watch Nottinghamshire has unique value in being the only multi-agency, cross boundary survey, and it has been conducted in the same two week period for the past 12 years with a questionnaire that has largely maintained the same format, enabling a longitudinal comparison and analysis of the of the captured data.

YEAR	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012*	2013	2014	2015
Presentations	1187	938	995	863	695	543	561	496	617	536	509
Organisations taking part	171	181	186	191	136	57	54	26	54	52	55
Nil returns <sup>†</sup>	51	56	70	78	60	7	6	3	9	16	11

<sup>†</sup> Organisation responded to indicate no homeless presentations

\*A significant number of survey returns for Nottingham City were lost in this year, therefore the analysis of trends that would be affected by this discounts figures for 2012

Homeless Watch is funded by Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and the local housing authorities in the county (Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Broxtowe, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood and Rushcliffe).

## Further information

This report gives only a brief overview of the most significant findings of the 2015 survey. The full data summary tables are available at [www.hlg.org/homeless-watch](http://www.hlg.org/homeless-watch)

including extensive further data on:

- Age, gender, household type and pregnancy
- Number and age of children
- Immediate outcome of contact with agency
- Repeat homelessness
- Local connection
- Ethnic origin

Anonymous case level data is also available to researchers on request.

## Acknowledgements

The Homeless Watch steering group would like to thank and acknowledge the hard work and ongoing support of all the staff and key workers who were involved in delivering the survey on the ground and all the agencies that participated in the survey. Without this commitment and support the survey would not happen. We would also like to thank HLG for all their hard work in collecting and analysing the forms and producing the final report.

<sup>1</sup>The agreed definition of homelessness is 'any person sleeping rough, sleeping somewhere not designed for habitation (e.g. in a vehicle, or squatting), living in insecure accommodation where they may have to leave within 28 days, or living in a state of dispossession (i.e. they cannot have their belongings in the same place where they sleep)'. As a general rule it does not include people living in homeless hostels or other supported housing projects, unless they are likely to lose their accommodation within 28 days.



# Presentations

A total of **509 households presented as homeless** across the City and County during the two week period.

This shows a decrease over the last two years and the **lowest figure recorded by the survey.**

The largest reduction was seen in Ashfield (a drop of 44%), while Broxtowe, Gedling and Newark & Sherwood saw slight increases and Rushcliffe recorded an increase of 83%.

White British individuals were, as always, in the majority of presentations (69%). Almost 10% were described as 'White Other', and of these 63% were Polish.

## Of 509 people seen

315 were male 186 were female and 1 was transgender (7 not stated)

## Males represented 62%

of all presentations the highest proportion recorded by the survey

## Nearly one third were sleeping rough

## Over a quarter were under 25 years

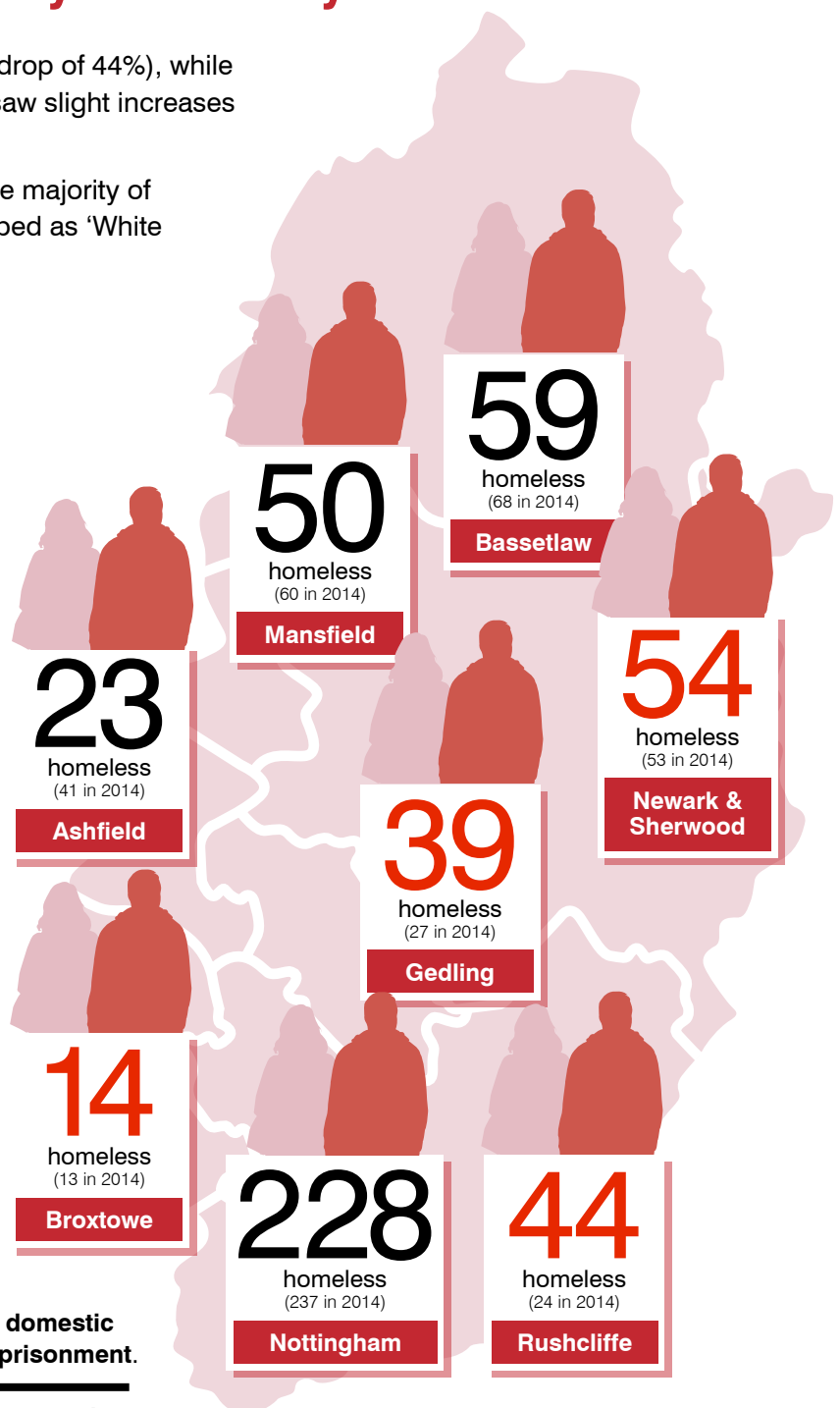
## The number of over 60's nearly doubled this year

19% of households had dependent children with them

## 24 women were confirmed pregnant

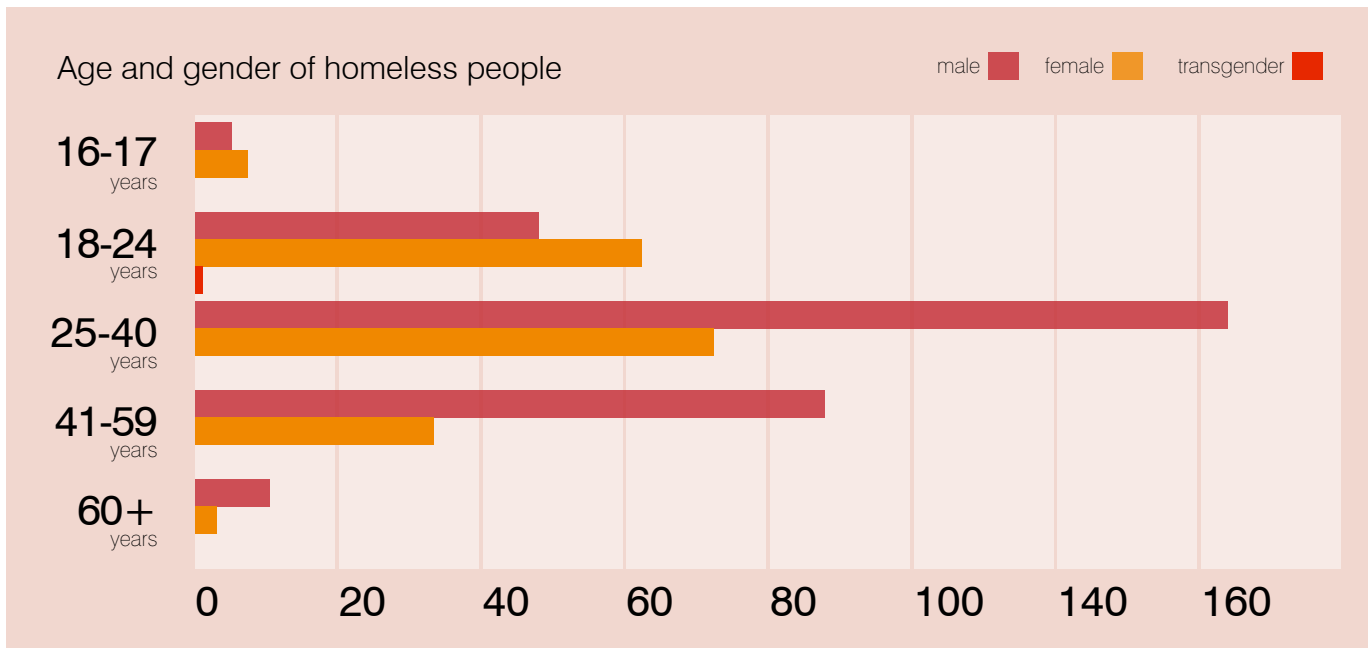
Over 1 in 5 women had lost their home because of **domestic violence** and 1 in 6 men were homeless due to **imprisonment.**

One quarter of households reported **no additional support** needs beyond being homeless

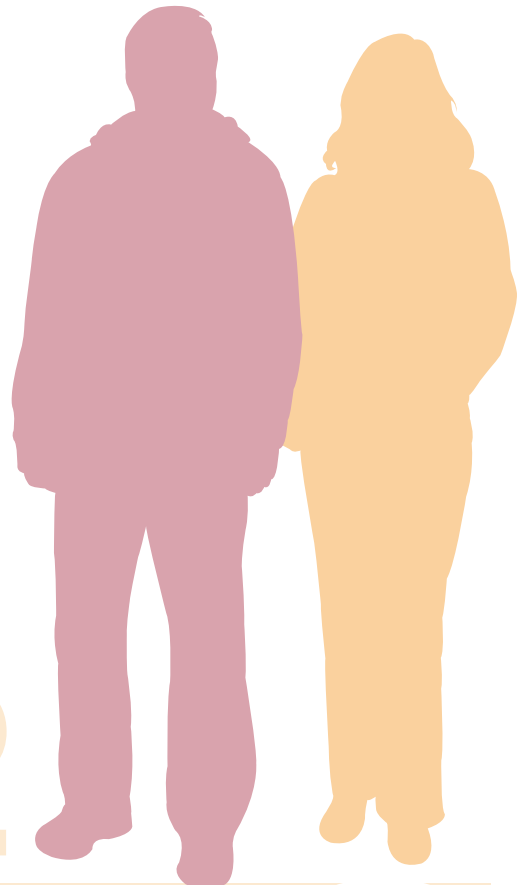




# Gender and age



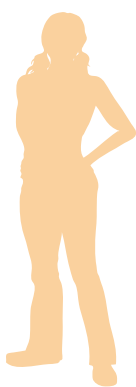
The majority of presentations fell into the **25-40 years category**, as has been the case in all previous years. This year's proportion of **42% is the highest recorded.**



The number of **over 60's** seen this year was 15 nearly double that of 2014 and the **highest ever recorded.**



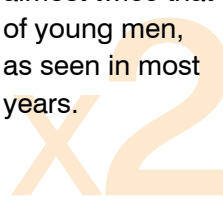
The **women** who present always tend to fall into **younger age categories** than men.



The number and proportion of women being seen during the survey has dropped this year. Just **37% of presentations were female** and this is the **lowest recorded** bar 2010.

However the number of **women rough sleeping has increased.**

The number of young women aged 16-17 was almost twice that of young men, as seen in most years.



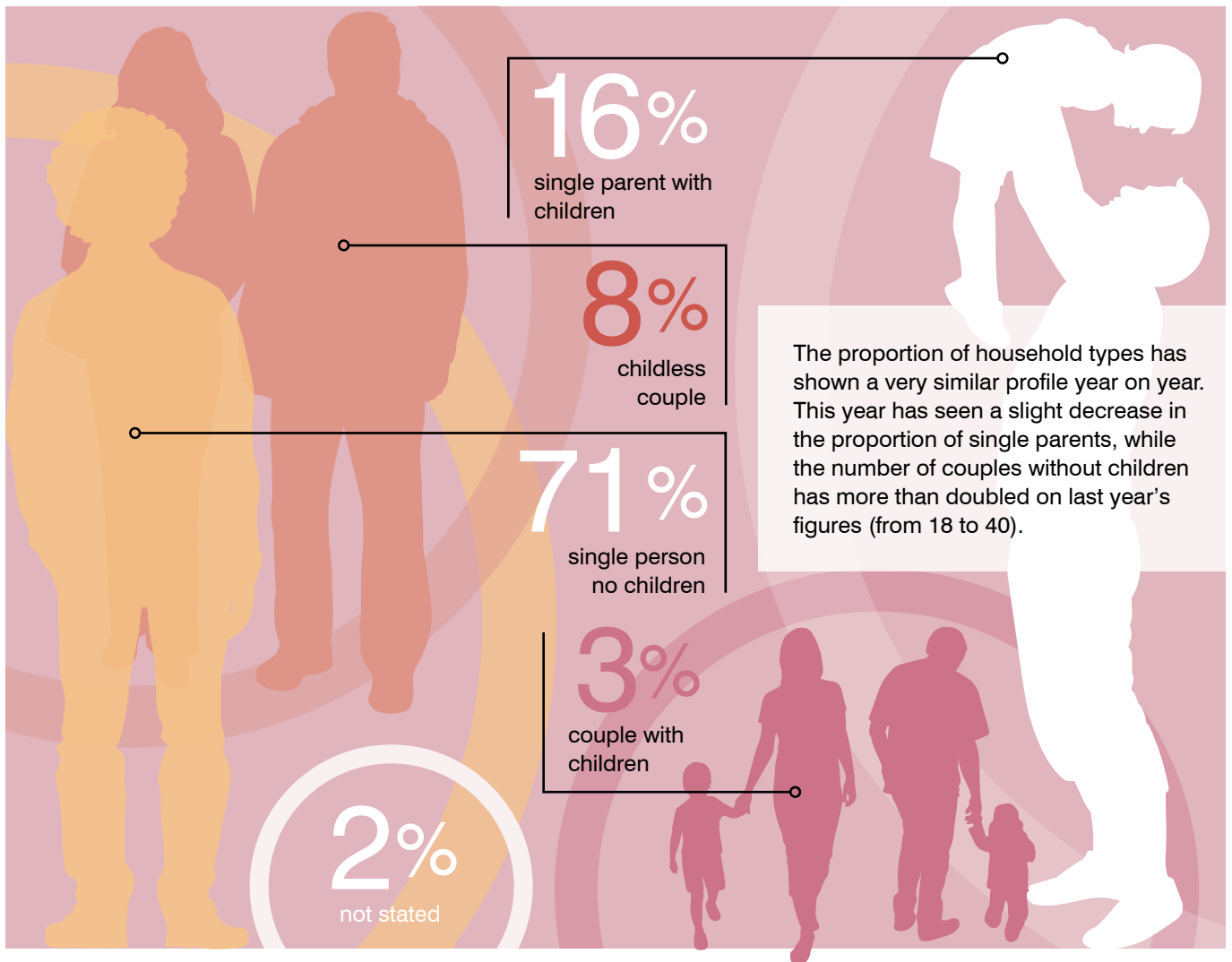
**26% of men**  
**38% of women**  
were homeless for the first time



**27% of men**  
**8% of women**  
have been homeless 3 times or more



# Household types



The total number of dependent children has reduced over the last 5 years, and this year's total of **153 children within 97 households**

households is the second lowest recording (in 2010 135 children were recorded).

## 22% of children presented in Gedling and 35% in Nottingham City.

This reduction in presentations by homeless families is a welcome finding and may indicate the success of local authorities enabling these vulnerable and at risk households to secure and maintain appropriate stable accommodation.

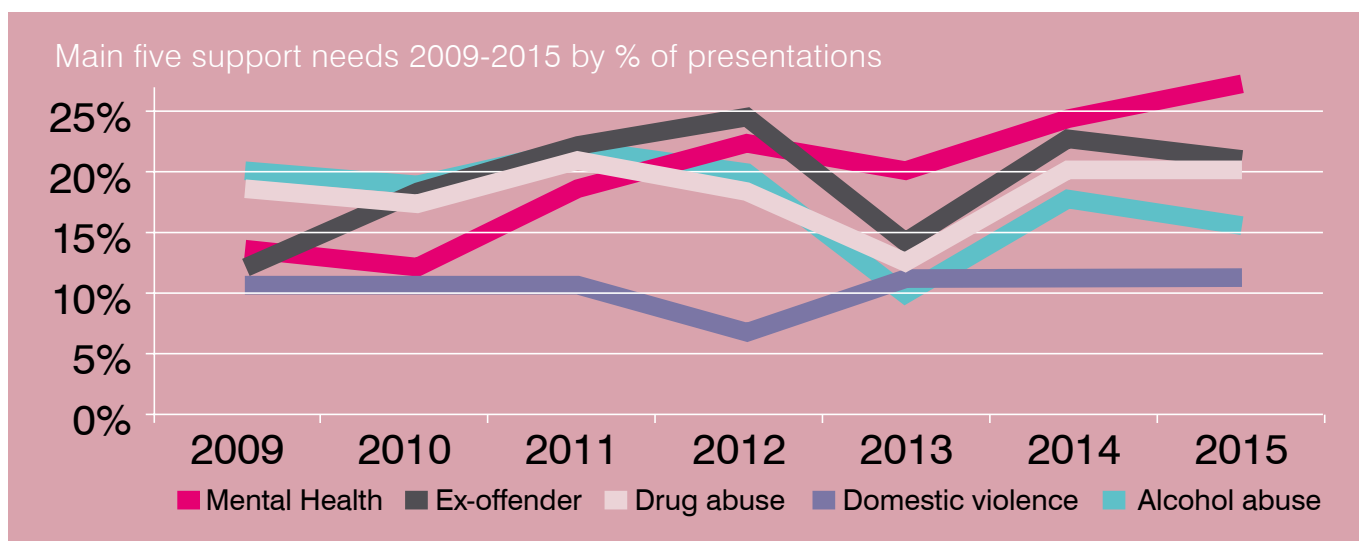
This is in contrast to UK wide findings that placements in temporary accommodation for homeless families is increasing and the use of B&B has more than doubled in the last 5 years.<sup>2</sup>

The age profile of dependent children has remained relatively constant over the years of the survey with the majority falling in the 0-5 years category. This year saw a slight increase in the proportion of 16-17 year olds and a reduction in 18 years+ presenting with their parents.



<sup>2</sup>Shelter Policy Blog 15th July 2015

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	% ACROSS PREVIOUS SURVEYS 2004-14	% IN 2015
Single person	Always the largest group ranging from 68-77%	71%
Single parent	Second largest group has varied between 12-19%	16% (2% decrease from last year)
Couple with children	Ranged from 3-7%	3%
Couple without children	Varied between 3-5%	8% (5% increase on last year)



**One quarter of all presentations reported they had no additional support needs to their homelessness.**

This accounted for nearly a **third of the women, a fifth of the men and over half of those aged 16-17 years.**

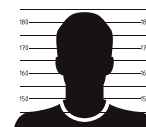
It may be for this group their needs in relation to their homelessness require practical solutions relating to largely external problems (for example loss of income/benefits) without compounding personal factors requiring specialist services.

Of those with support needs **mental ill-health was again overall the most commonly identified support need** (26% of all presentations and 35% of those identifying additional needs)

**For women the greatest support need was concerned with domestic violence**

(in line with all previous surveys), identified by 25% of all female presentations.

**The other main support need for women was mental ill-health (20%)**



**For men their offending history was the greatest support need**

and this has been the case in the previous seven years.

While there was a 5% decrease in the proportion of men identifying this need from last year, **this still represented nearly one third (32%) for whom it remains a support need.**

Other commonly identified support needs by men were, **mental ill-health (30%) and drug misuse (29%).**



Reported needs differed across the age groups

16-17 YEARS

Domestic Violence & Drug Abuse

11%

18-24 YEARS

Mental ill-health

20%

25-40 YEARS

Drug abuse

33%

Mental ill-health

31%

Ex-offender

31%

41-59 YEARS

Alcohol abuse

33%

Mental ill-health

31%

60+ YEARS

Physical health

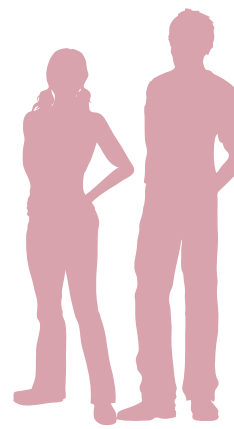
27%



For all respondents who identified having support needs **only 38% recorded receiving help with those needs.**

For women this rose to 50%, but just 36% of men.

Levels of reported support varied with the nature of the need.



**Only for drug abuse and 'other' needs was support reported in at least 50% of cases.**

Of the homeless people with **learning disabilities only 16% were getting help with this.**

IDENTIFIED NEED	PROPORTION RECEIVING SUPPORT
Drug Abuse	50%
Domestic Violence	47%
Physical Health	41%
Ex-offender	38%
Mental Health	34%
Alcohol Abuse	30%
Physically Disabled	17%
Learning Disability	16%



# Homelessness and mental ill-health

For the **third year** running mental ill-health has been **the most commonly reported support need**, and has increased again this year, identified by 26% of all respondents (134 people).

Needs may range from low mood or anxiety to psychosis or schizophrenia, but are not differentiated within the survey. **43% of those with mental ill-health also cited support needs with drug abuse** (compared to just 20% of general homeless population). This is echoed in the findings of the national homelessness health audit conducted in 2014<sup>3</sup>, in which some form of mental health issue (diagnosed and undiagnosed) was the most commonly reported health need, and nearly double that of the general population. 12% had a dual diagnosis of mental ill-health and drug/alcohol issues often restricting them from accessing support as services were unable or unwilling to provide support around mental health while still using drugs or alcohol.

Numbers identifying mental health needs have increased but **fewer are describing themselves as receiving support** (just 34% compared to 46% last year). Given the high proportion with additional needs with drug abuse, this may reflect the health audit findings concerning barriers to mental health services.

<sup>3</sup> The unhealthy state of homelessness (Homeless Link 2014)

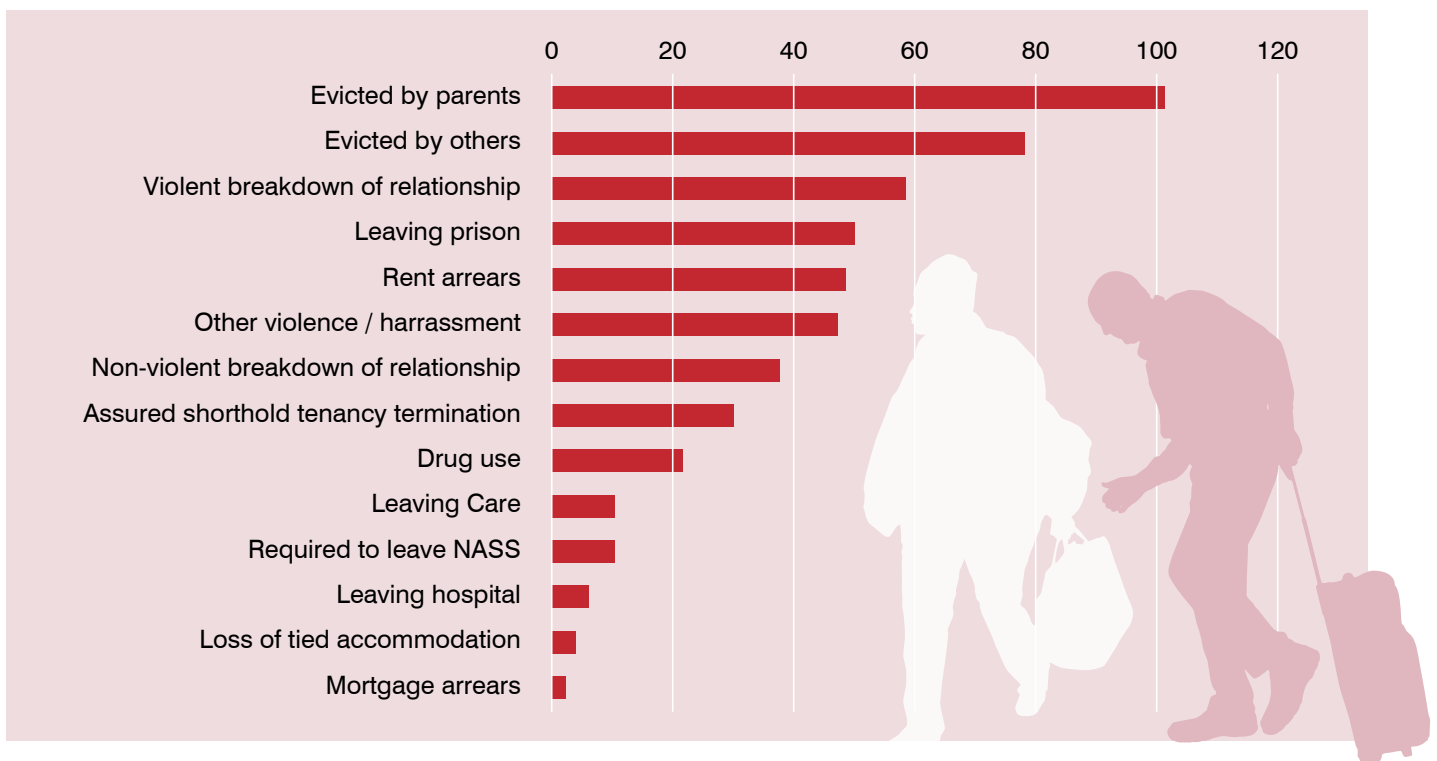
“Physical health and mental health are inextricably linked... while good mental health is a known protective factor (for physical conditions), poor physical health increases the risk of people developing mental health problems”

Physical Health and Mental Health (Mental Health Foundation 2011).





# Reasons for homelessness



‘Parents no longer willing to accommodate’ is the main reason given for homelessness, and has been every year of the survey.

In 2015 it was reported by 20% of all respondents (19% of males and 22% of females).

This is also the main reason given across the age groups

up to and including **25-40 year olds**. This may reflect the knock-on effect of reduced housing benefit eligibility for the under 35’s, increasing the numbers of older adult children remaining in the parental household, placing a strain on the home.

A further **22% of women** cited ‘violent breakdown of relationship with partner’

**Men** identified ‘Leaving prison/custody’ in 17% of cases.

## ‘Other reasons’

were noted in 99 responses and these included evictions due to behaviour, overcrowding, inappropriate housing on medical grounds, lack of local connection/housing rights, welfare reforms restricting benefit entitlement for EEA nationals and other immigration related issues.

“at a time when councils are struggling with diminishing resources and growing demands for services... welfare cuts and changes have left growing numbers of people struggling to keep a roof over their heads.”



# Migration and homelessness

This year's survey recorded **11 refugees, 5 asylum seekers and 34 economic migrants**.

This represents **an increase across all categories, and in particular for economic migrants (70% increase)**. These are the **highest numbers** recorded for migrants **for 4 years**.

The economic migrants were predominantly from **Poland (74%)**.

**Almost half of the economic migrants were sleeping rough**

West

East

There have been a number of significant changes to the benefit entitlement of EU migrants in the last 2 years with further restrictions of entitlement to income-based JSA and Housing Benefit for all EEA nationals imposed April 2014.

This survey does seem to reflect the impact, with loss of entitlement to benefit being specifically identified by economic migrants as the reason for homelessness in 9 cases. Other reasons relating to migration issues included, having no rights to housing, language difficulties and 2 instances of human trafficking.

**Half of the economic migrants presented in Rushcliffe**

## Rough sleepers

Despite an overall reduction in presentations this year, the number of households reporting they had slept rough the previous night **has**

**increased by nearly 50%** (from 108 to 158). This is the highest it has been since 2009, and represents nearly a third of the survey (31%).



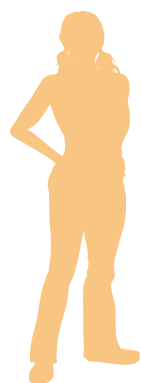
The proportion of rough sleepers has never been greater. These findings accord with the latest available national figures (2014) showing increasing levels of rough sleeping.

Rough Sleeping Statistics DCLG 2014 (2015 figures due for release Feb 2016)

However Homeless Watch Nottinghamshire surveys in 2013 and 2014 had seen decreasing numbers of those reporting rough sleeping, in contrast to the national trend for England which showed a year on year increase over the previous 4 years, (55% higher in 2014 than in 2010).

The rise in rough sleeping nationally has been attributed to reductions in housing benefit, welfare reforms, chronic shortage of affordable housing, and cuts to services that prevent and solve homelessness<sup>7</sup>.

Against this backdrop of a significant increase in rough sleeping numbers, the 2015 Nottinghamshire Homeless Watch survey findings do appear lower relative to the national levels, and may reflect the commitment of the local authorities to seek solutions and limit the damage to rough sleepers despite continued cuts to the council budgets.



Rough sleepers included 24 women (the largest number since 2008), which represents 13% of all female presentations and is the highest proportion for the Homeless Watch survey.

IDENTIFIED NEED	ROUGH SLEEPERS	HOMELESS POPULATION
Mental Ill-health	40%	26%
Drug Abuse	38%	20%
Ex-offender	34%	22%
Alcohol Abuse	26%	16%
Physical Health	22%	13%

Like the general homeless population rough sleepers were most likely to be

## given general advice or referred on to another agency

This has been true in all previous years.

## Just 10% of the rough sleepers secured accommodation

as an outcome (emergency, temporary or permanent) compared to 21% of the general homeless population. This was the lowest proportion recorded in the survey for rough sleepers. Earlier comments concerning those with dual needs of mental ill-health and drug or alcohol abuse facing barriers to support services, may appear even more pertinent for this group.

## Repeat homelessness

39% of rough sleepers had been homeless 3 or more times, compared to 21% of the general homeless population. For **28 households sleeping rough** (18%) this was their **first experience of homelessness** and for 30% of the general homeless population

## The most recorded reason

for homelessness for rough sleepers was leaving prison or custody (20%).

## 29% reported 'other reasons'

for their homelessness, which included grief, financial difficulties (bankruptcy, nil income and loss of benefits



including welfare reforms for EEA nationals), eviction due to their own or associated person's

behaviour, insecure tenancies and lack of rights to housing/local connection.

## The majority had spent between 1-6 months sleeping rough

a total of 45 (representing 28%). This was a significant increase on last year (25 households being 23% of the presentations). Those sleeping rough in excess of 6 months has also seen

## a rise from 11 in 2014 to 33 this year

(21% of rough sleepers).

<sup>7</sup> Rough Sleeping in England Rises Again (Crisis 2015)

## Presentations

While overall numbers may have fluctuated, the proportions of presentations of homeless households within the city and county districts has followed a largely similar pattern across the years of the survey.



## Ashfield

Ashfield saw the largest reduction in presentations from last year (a drop of 44%). Women accounted for just 26%, the lowest proportion recorded in Ashfield (previously ranged from 62%-36%). Men have presented in similar numbers across the years. Nearly half of those presenting in Ashfield (48%) were rough sleepers.

## Bassetlaw

Bassetlaw presentations were also down from last year, although the number of women slightly increased.

## Broxtowe

Broxtowe has a small proportion of the overall presentations and numbers have remained very consistent with 14 this year, including 3 rough sleepers and 1 economic migrant.

## Gedling

Gedling recorded 39 presentations with 34 dependent children, representing 22% of all associated children. Gedling alone recorded higher numbers of women than men (64%) and while 8% of these came from a women's specific service, the majority (90%) were returned by the Housing Needs Team. There have only been 3 years when men have outnumbered women in Gedling.

## Mansfield

Mansfield saw 50 presentations, representing 10% of all presentations (the lowest proportion recorded for Mansfield). 28 (56%) were rough sleeping and accounted for 18% of all rough sleepers

## Newark & Sherwood

Newark & Sherwood had 54 presentations, accounting for 11% of total presentations. This is the highest proportion ever seen in the district. 14% of all the dependent children were recorded in Newark & Sherwood

## Nottingham City

Nottingham City recorded 228 presentations. The 82 women seen in the city accounted for 51% of all female presentations, the highest proportion recorded by the survey. 71 rough sleepers were seen, representing 45% of the total rough sleeper count. All the asylum seekers (5) and refugees (11) were recorded in the city.

## Rushcliffe

Rushcliffe recorded an increase of 83% in its presentations (from 24 to 44), including 18 rough sleepers, 70% of the presentations in Rushcliffe were recorded by one drop in centre. While the number of homeless households presenting for advice and assistance in Rushcliffe has increased, this is not a reflection of increased homelessness in the borough as it was evident the households were not local. Only 32% had a local connection to Rushcliffe, 59% had a local connection to Nottingham City and 5% were from outside Nottinghamshire. 50% of all economic migrants presented in Rushcliffe, and this was the only district where 'White: British' was not the majority ethnicity (43% 'White: British' and 45% 'White: Other').



## Repeat Homelessness

The proportion of people who have experienced homelessness **3 or more times** has increased overall this year from 18% to 21%. Within the districts the total number of 3+ repeat homelessness and the percentage of presentations in the area were:

Ashfield		Bassetlaw		Broxtowe		Gedling		Mansfield		Newark & Sherwood		Nottingham City		Rushcliffe	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
7	33%	21	33%	1	7%	1	3%	46	48%	4	8%	37	17%	11	26%

## Support Needs

Most common identified support needs by area

Ashfield		Bassetlaw		Broxtowe		Gedling		Mansfield		Newark & Sherwood		Nottingham City		Rushcliffe	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
11	48%	25	42%	3	21%	8	21%	23	49%	7	13%	56	26%	12	27%
Ex-offender		Drug abuse		Mental ill-health Ex-offender Domestic violence		Domestic violence (28% indicated no additional support needs)		Drug abuse		Mental ill-health (41% indicated no additional support needs)		Mental ill-health (34% indicated no additional support needs)		Mental ill-health	

Number and % receiving support for the above

3	27%	20	80%	1	33%	4	50%	13	57%	0	0%	17	30%	1	8%
				3	100%										
				1	33%										

There may be varied reasons why households do not appear to be receiving support for their identified needs, including: the individual or family being unable or unwilling to access support (for example, not meeting the eligibility criteria for support, continued substance misuse or due to their chaotic circumstances); the unavailability or lack of capacity of specialist services locally.

## Outcomes

Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Broxtowe	Gedling	Mansfield	Newark & Sherwood	Nottingham City	Rushcliffe
General Advice							
65%	44%	50%	82%	68%	35%	47%	68%
Referral to Other Agency							
22%	21%	14%	10%	30%	22%	15%	25%
Permanent Accommodation							
4%	5%	36%	8%	2%	2%	9%	11%
Temporary Accommodation							
4%	8%	7%	5%	6%	2%	9%	7%
Emergency Accommodation							
4%	29%	0%	0%	0%	4%	5%	5%

The outcomes information is somewhat limited as it only relates to the two week period of the survey, and therefore does not indicate the potential future and final outcomes for the homeless households who presented.

# Further details

This report is only an overview of the findings of the 2015 Homeless Watch survey.

For further information, please see [www.hlg.org/homeless-watch](http://www.hlg.org/homeless-watch) or contact:

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linking people, services and organisations