

Study shows almost one in ten people have been homeless in England

December 16 2013



Nine per cent of adults in England have experienced homelessness at some point in their life, new research from a team led by Heriot-Watt researchers has revealed.

The Homelessness Monitor; England 2013

The findings are from state-of-the nation report The Homelessness Monitor: England a five year study (2011-2015), funded by Crisis and

the Joseph Rowntree Foundation carried out by leading experts from Heriot-Watt University, the University of York and University of New South Wales. It analyses the impact on homelessness of economic and policy developments.

England has the highest rate of homelessness of all the UK countries with 9% of adults saying they have been [homeless](#) and 2.2% saying this happened in the last five years, new analysis for the study found.

Young adults, people of black or mixed ethnicities and those from deprived areas were more likely to have been homeless.

Shortage and high cost of housing

Homelessness has risen for three consecutive years. The research identifies a housing 'pressure cooker', particularly in London and the South East. A lack of supply and rising housing costs, cuts to benefits and to services are combining to leave people already struggling to keep their heads above water at increased risk of homelessness. Those already homeless are being left even further away from help.

The shortage and high cost of housing combined with the government's policies – particularly reforms and cuts to housing benefit – mean homelessness is predicted to continue to rise despite signs of a recovering economy.

Leslie Morphy, Chief Executive of Crisis, said, "We keep hearing that the economy is on the mend. Yet as we watch our GDP figures slowly rise, cuts to housing benefit and woefully inadequate house building will keep pushing up homelessness. Shamefully, it is the poorest and most vulnerable that are bearing the brunt.

"We need the government to address the chronic lack of affordable

housing, take real steps to improve the private rented sector and to urgently consider the impact its cuts to housing benefit are having, particularly in the capital."

Julia Unwin, Chief Executive of JRF, said, "Homelessness is the tragic consequence of failures in our housing system and carries enormous cost for both the people facing destitution and society as a whole. To avoid these figures going in the wrong direction, we need to address the underlying causes of homelessness urgently. That means building the affordable homes this country desperately needs and providing a proper safety net for when people are unfortunate enough to fall on hard times."

Heriot-Watt research team leader Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick, of the Institute for Housing, Urban and Real Estate Research at the School of the Built Environment, said, "Our latest Homelessness Monitor for 2013 shows that, despite tentative signs of economic recovery, homelessness is continuing to rise in England, particularly in London and the South where the housing market is under greatest pressure. We expect to see a further jump in homelessness as a result of welfare reform, particularly radical cuts to Housing Benefit. The Homelessness Monitor will continue to trace these national and regional trends until 2015."

Provided by Heriot-Watt University

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