



What is homelessness

FACTORS WHICH INCREASE RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

- institutionalisation**
 - time in local authority care
 - contact with the criminal justice system
 - previous service in the Armed Forces
- health**
 - alcohol and drug misuse
 - mental health problems, including mental illness and personality disorders
 - a combination of mental health, drug and alcohol problems
 - experience of physical or sexual abuse
- relationship breakdown**
 - disputes with parents or step-parents
 - marital or relationship breakdown
 - bereavement
 - lack of social support networks
- education and work**
 - learning difficulties and literacy problems
 - exclusion from school
 - lack of qualifications
 - unemployment
- housing**
 - housing shortage, in some areas
 - imbalance in supply and demand for housing
- others**
 - previous experience of homelessness
 - debts, especially rent or mortgage arrears
 - benefit problems

The average time between the triggers that lead to homelessness and when homelessness finally occurs is nine years (*Routes into Homelessness*, Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion, 2000).

'LEGAL' DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

Homeless households

- people with dependants (ie children) or vulnerable people (ie young or old or with some physical or mental health problem)
- local authorities have a duty to find them accommodation
- there were 108,872 homeless households in England in 1998/99 (Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, *Housing Investment Programme Returns*, 1999)

Single homeless people

- couples or individuals without dependants
- traditionally helped by Crisis
- no-one has to find them accommodation, except in specific cases
- There are around 380,000 single homeless people in Great Britain. This includes those staying in hostels, B&Bs, squats, on friends' floors and in overcrowded accommodation (Crisis, *How Many, How Much?*, 2003)
- About 504 people sleep outside around England *on any one night*, 267 of whom are in Greater London (against 596 and 321 respectively in June 2002) (ODPM, July 2003)



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