

The European **End Street Homelessness** Campaign



DETAILED SURVEY FINDINGS

Oct 2016

WESTMINSTER
HOMELESS
ACTION
TOGETHER (**WHAT**)

Overview

In July 2016 the Westminster Homeless Action Together partners and volunteers took part in a week of activity as part of the European End Street Homelessness Campaign.

An Executive summary of the findings and conclusions, are presented in **‘Learning, Findings and Next Steps; Executive summary’** including information about the background to the survey and the methodology deployed.

The survey findings are presented here in more detail in the following four sections of this report:

1. Survey participation and numbers [page 3](#)
2. Vulnerability Scores [page 4](#)
3. Demographic profile [page 5](#)
4. European End Street Homelessness Campaign (EESHHC) survey [page 8](#)
5. Westminster survey [page 13](#)

European End Street Homelessness Campaign

The EESHHC is a movement of cities that are working together to permanently house Europe's most vulnerable people and end chronic street homelessness by 2020. The campaign is coordinated and supported by the Building and Social Housing Foundation (bshf.org) which helps transfer outstanding housing practices across the globe, and is drawing on learning and expertise from the successful US 100,000 Homes campaign. BSHF has provided support to London and five other cities to test the processes used in the US 100,000 Homes campaign, and see how they can be adapted in a European context. FEANTSA (www.feantsa.org), the European umbrella body for homelessness organisations, has provided a platform for its promotion and development.

Communities participating in the 100,000 Homes campaign in the US were found to rehouse chronically homeless people at a faster rate than other places. Part of the success was attributed to a 'registry week' with its emphasis on engaging the community to conduct a survey, getting to know homeless people by name and a survey tool, which assessed and prioritised vulnerabilities. The survey has also been used to monitor the needs of homeless people over time via consistent data gathering. This process underpins a Housing First approach.

Running a campaign creates a sense of urgency. And the US campaign found that new resources, solutions and fresh thinking came about through mass engagement in delivering the survey and participating in a community debrief.

I Survey participation and numbers

446 people were encountered rough sleeping on the streets of Westminster as well as in parks and alongside canals, over three nights and on one morning between 6 and 9 July 2016.

Survey completion was high at nearly 56%.

Useful data is available from 250 survey participants (one duplicate was identified and two surveys had to be discounted as consent was not sufficiently clear).

218 people (88%) said that sleeping outdoors was where they slept most frequently.

NB Percentages throughout are calculated from a total that excludes those who declined to answer or for whom information was not recorded.

Reasons for non-participation in survey

Shift leaders of each survey team were asked to record the reasons why 194 people encountered did not participate in the survey.

Reason survey was not completed (general survey)	No.	%
Refused/did not engage	70	38.5%
Asleep/couldn't be woken	41	22.5%
Safety concerns	19	10.4%
Language barrier	18	9.9%
Tired/wanted to sleep	18	9.9%
Time constraints on interview team	9	4.9%
Person felt the survey wasn't relevant to them	4	2.2%
Refused – suspicious of interviewers	3	1.6%
Not recorded	12	
Total	194	

Volunteers were instructed not to be too assertive in waking people and 'sleeping' was the second most cited reason for non-participation. The main reason given in the case of 70 people encountered (16% of the total number encountered) was people opting out. Other reasons included safety (of volunteers), people wanting to sleep and a language barrier, although this was recorded for only 18 people (around 4% of the total).

Comment on numbers and definition of rough sleeping

Taking into consideration the 194 people who were encountered but didn't participate in the survey and the fact that some who did may have places to stay, the numbers seen align broadly with street count and CHAIN* data. A new strategy would benefit from a review of the existing verification process and resources expended on street counts.

- The count took place over three nights and one morning so it is not surprising that the number of people encountered – 446 – was higher than that identified by monthly street counts as sleeping rough on a nightly basis – around 300.
- The current 'No Second Night Out' (NSNO)* framework of service delivery utilised by the Greater London Authority (GLA) and many individual London boroughs, including Westminster in their approach to commissioning services, defines rough sleepers eligible for inputting onto CHAIN and specific services as those who have been identified by outreach workers 'bedding down'.
- WHAT relied on self-definition and the judgement of volunteers to define rough sleeping.
- 88% of respondents – 218 people – said that outdoors was where they slept most frequently. Potentially this suggests a significant cohort of people who are on and off the streets with somewhere else to stay ranging from sofa surfing and tents to nightshelters and hostels. It may be useful to know more about this group.
- Questions of definition are important in terms of potentially incentivising perverse behaviours and/or excluding groups in need, for example, people have to bed down to receive a service and yet some people, women in particular may who fear bedding down openly. On the other hand, a broader more universal definition could dilute the focus of an initiative.

CHAIN – The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) is a multi-agency database recording information about rough sleepers and the wider street population in London. CHAIN, which is commissioned and funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA) and managed by St Mungo's, represents the UK's most detailed and comprehensive source of information about rough sleeping.

NSNO – No Second Night Out is a service and an approach to assess and support people sleeping rough for the first time to move away from the streets quickly. This prevents them becoming long term rough sleepers, and ideally not returning – "flowing" – back to the street.

2 Vulnerability scores – All respondents’ recommendations for advice, assessment, housing and support services

A key principle of the EESHCH is the utilisation of data to end homelessness. The survey is intended as a tool, initially for gathering baseline data so as to understand and prioritise needs, and subsequently to maintain up to date information and track progress. It is not simply for research purposes.

For pan London purposes the score recommendations were adapted to agree categories which align with the London context. (Figure 1)

Only a relatively small proportion of respondents – 36 people – scored in the lowest needs category with the bulk scoring 4-7 and identified as requiring temporary supported accommodation or a hostel.

67 people – just over a quarter of respondents – were in the high needs category.

Overall score recommendation	No.	%
Score 0-3 – Assessment and Advice/ signposting e.g. single service offer or No Second Night Out	36	14.4%
Score: 4-7 – Temporary supported accommodation/Hostel	147	58.8%
8+ – Longer term supported accommodation, e.g. Permanent supported housing/housing first	67	26.8%
Total	250	

The proportions were similar for both men and women in the highest needs category but less women were in the low needs category and 68% in the 4-7 bracket as opposed to around 59% of men.

In terms of age, higher proportions of need were identified in the 26-35 year old group (nearly 32%) and those aged 60+ (44%) or 4 people as compared with 13% of 18 to 25 year olds, 26% of 36 to 45 year olds, 28% of 46-59 year olds.

The biggest demographic differential identified is amongst migrants with over 64% of those scoring 8+ being of UK origin as compared with 10.8% of Central and East European (CEE) nationals – 7 people.

8 people – over a third (35%) of non EU rough sleepers scored 8+.

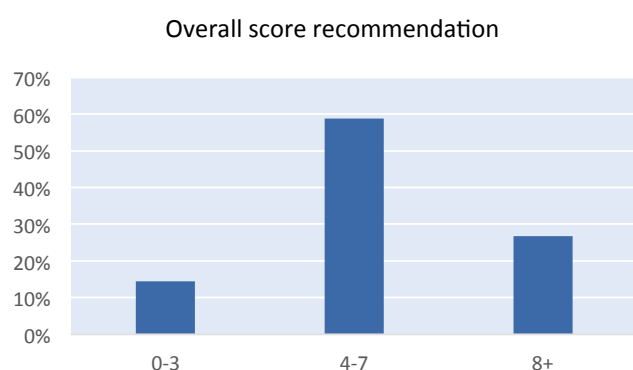
8 people originating from non CEE EU countries scored 8+ (29% of this group).

Comment on the vulnerability scores

Services are geared up to provide a single service offer, or No Second Night Out and this may be why so few people surveyed were in the low needs category. This mirrors the success in diverting 66% of people away from the streets after one night sleeping rough. But the findings highlight that 86% of people surveyed need more than a basic offer.

Services also report that the number of people sleeping rough in Westminster who they would expect to be in the 8+ category and with whom they are in touch is higher than 67 people. The Compass team working with people sleeping rough with multiple and complex needs has a case load of over 70 people.

Figure 1



3 Demographic profile of respondents

The EECHC survey included some demographic questions but the pan London survey expanded these to include other important and relevant factors including sexuality and experience of the care system.

Age (Figure 2)

114 survey participants (46.7%) were 35 years old or younger. This is slightly higher than the CHAIN figures for 2015-16. According to the CHAIN 2015-16 annual report for Westminster 40% of people were 35 or under.

Only 9 people aged 60+ were interviewed but they were more likely to have been on the streets for longer periods. The other group overrepresented amongst this category were 26-35 year olds.

Gender (Figure 3)

87.3% of people surveyed – 213 – were male and 11.5% were female – 28.

One person identified as transgender and two as 'other', further self-defining as "both male and female".

17% of rough sleepers in Westminster recorded during 2015/16 on CHAIN were female

39% of female participants said their current period of homelessness had been caused by a traumatic experience as compared to 21.5% of men. This was also the case for the only transgender participant to answer this question.

Country of origin (Figure 4)

108 participants (44.4%) said that their country of origin was the UK. According to the CHAIN data only 32.9% of rough sleepers recorded during 2015/16 in Westminster originated from the UK, although the proportion from the UK recorded during April-June 2016 was higher at 40%.

The next biggest group of participants were people whose country of origin was Romania – 52 people (21.4%). During 2015/16 Rumanians were 32% of rough sleepers recorded on CHAIN although the proportion dropped to 23% in the period between April to June 2016 and services report that this trend continues.

Figure 2

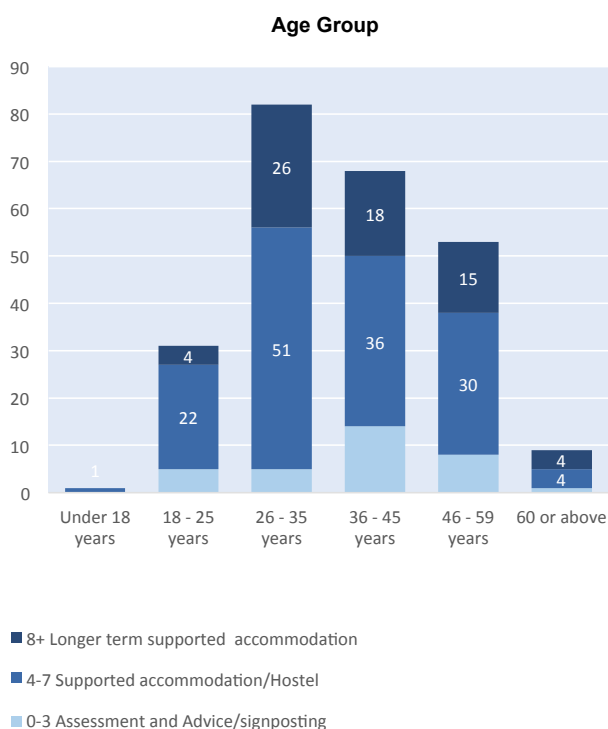


Figure 3

27. What gender do you identify with?

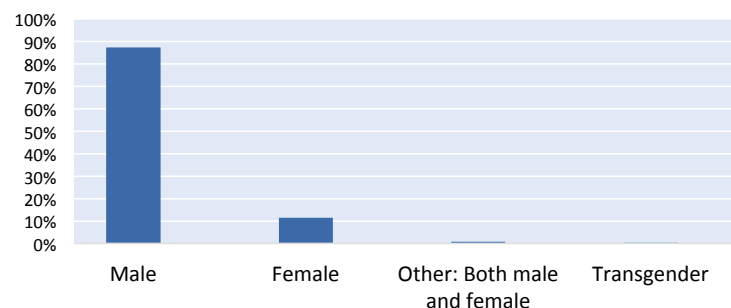
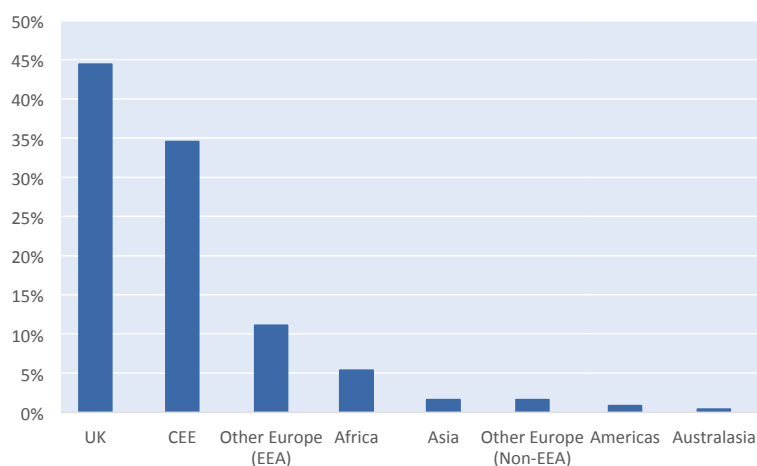


Figure 4

Country of origin



Over 45% were from EU member countries other than the UK, including just over 34% from CEE – the highest numbers from other EU countries include 4.9% from Poland and 3.7% from Ireland. The proportion of CEE rough sleepers recorded on CHAIN during 2015/16 was higher – 47.3%

9.5% – or 21 people – were not EU citizens which is broadly similar to the 10% recorded on CHAIN during 2015/16. Most of this group were from African or Asian countries.

A high number of respondents were not recorded or declined to answer this question or said that they didn't know.

Length of time in UK by country of origin

102 people (44.5%) identified as a recent immigrant to this country and of those 53% had been in the UK for a year or less, and 68% for two years or less; 10% – 10 people – had migrated to the UK over 10 years ago. The majority of recent migrants were from EU countries, mainly CEE countries. There are however some technical issues relating to the inputting and analysis of this question that mean that the proportion of those who identified as a recent immigrant is unreliable and migrants who did not identify as a recent immigrant may not have been picked up in the questions about length of time in the UK.

A cross-referencing by country of origin of the length of time in the UK responses reveals that of those who responded that they are recent migrants, over 90% who came to the UK within the last year are from CEE countries but non EU born citizens are more likely to have been here longer with 30% arriving within the last 3-5 years and 30% within the last 10-20 years.

English language proficiency by country of origin

Most participants reported being comfortable communicating in English but language barriers present a challenge for a significant proportion of people – one third in our survey – and some people encountered did not participate due to a language barrier.

Sexuality

Response rates to the question on sexuality were relatively high. 95% identifying as heterosexual is slightly higher but roughly similar to the 93/94% within the general population, but a higher proportion identified as gay, lesbian or bi-sexual – nearly 4%.

Q1. How would you define your sexuality?	No.	%
Heterosexual	227	95.0%
Bi-sexual	7	2.9%
Gay/lesbian	2	0.8%
Don't know	3	1.3%
Answer not recorded	6	
Declined to answer	5	
Total	250	

Custody

Nearly one fifth of participants – 43 people – said they had recently spent time in custody in the last 6 months. Yet responses to the relevant question (4f) in the risks section of the survey – see below – identifies nearly a quarter of respondents had spent one or more nights in prison or police

Former armed forces personnel

45 people (19%) reported being members of the armed forces but only 24.4% of this group – 11 people – or 4.4% of the total surveyed, were from the UK. The majority of people who had served in the armed forces were from former Soviet Bloc – 25 people – and other countries where armed service is compulsory.

According to CHAIN data, 10% of rough sleepers recorded in 2015/16 in Westminster had experience of serving in the armed forces, 60 of those (3% of the total number of rough sleepers) were UK nationals.

Moved to London within the past year

Over 42% of people said they had moved to London in the past year. We do not know if Westminster was their first port of call in the UK.

The large number of people reporting having moved to London in the past year is not surprising given the numbers of recent migrants on the streets, a large proportion who reported having come to the UK within the last year. 49 people who have migrated to the UK said they had lived in another EU country before coming to the UK.

There was no question specifically about 'local connection' and we did not ask a question about this, partly because services doubt people know they are actually in the borough of Westminster. Services also report that a small proportion of people sleeping rough in central London originate from the Capital and this is an even smaller proportion in Westminster. 37.2% of rough sleepers are recorded as having left their last settled base because they are seeking work, 27.1% from outside the UK and 10.1 from within. Of the 18.5% of people identified on CHAIN as newly arrived in the UK only 4.9% report being homeless in their 'home' country.

Local authority care (Figure 5)

45 people (19%) had been in local authority care which compares with 12% identified as care leavers in Westminster during 2015/16 on CHAIN.

33% of people in the 8+ group – 21 people – had been in care compared to 19.1% for all respondents.

Comment on demography of surveyed population

The surveyed population differed from the demographic profile on CHAIN in some key respects.

Women were underrepresented and it is hard to draw valid findings from such a small number of female participants. Outreach workers believe women hide away more carefully when they do sleep out. A parallel survey was conducted with women known to be sleeping rough and using day centres, churches and transport hubs in which to rest because of fears for their safety in bedding down outside at night. Responses from this exercise are not included in these findings because of the different methodology used. It is noteworthy that two women interviewed as part of the women's survey said they had seen but not been approached by the WHAT survey teams who were highly visible in EESHC blue jackets. Presumably this is because they were well hidden.

CHAIN data suggests women sleeping rough are more likely than men to need support with mental health. In London, according to CHAIN data for 2014/15 60 per cent of the women sleeping rough who had their needs assessed had a mental health need.

The high proportion of people sleeping rough under 35 poses challenges given restrictions on the Housing Benefit room rate for under 35s

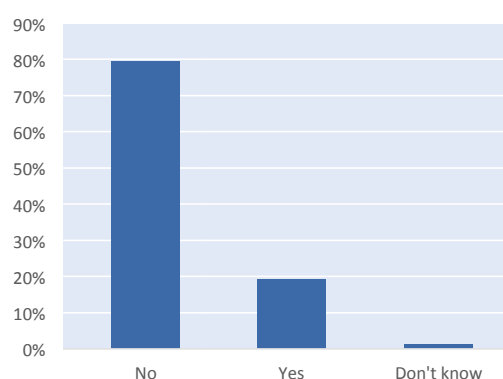
The survey population includes a lower proportion of CEE migrants, in particular fewer Rumanians than had been identified in CHAIN data for the previous year. However, numbers were beginning to fall and the last quarter's CHAIN data and latest street counts confirm this trend. This fall may have been affected by Home Office enforcement activity. It is also possible that a higher number of non-responders were from CEE countries.

The proportion of participants who have experience of being in custody, the armed forces and in care is high and broadly in line with existing data although potentially on the low side overall. 32% of rough sleepers were recorded by CHAIN during 2015/16 as having a history of time in prison. This indicates that there are a high number of missed opportunities to prevent rough sleeping with the right support upon leaving prison.

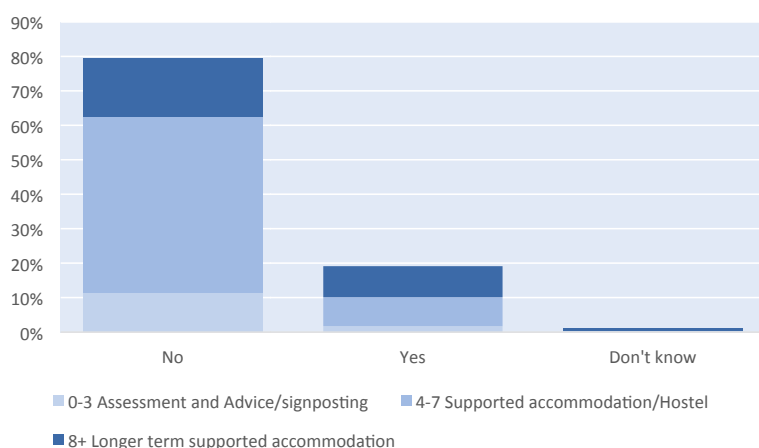
The high number of people who have been in care is a worrying finding. There have been several improvements over the years to the statutory protections that apply to care leavers. The Care Leavers Charter from 2012 states, 'we (the government) **promise** to find you a home.' Despite this high proportions who not only end up sleeping rough but are also such a significant proportion of the long term, chronic homeless population.

Figure 5

Q5. Have you ever been in Local Authority Care?



5. Experience of local authority care and vulnerability score



4 European End Street Homelessness Campaign (EESHK) survey findings

The focus of the survey was designed to be on people sleeping rough and the vast majority – 218 people – reported sleeping most frequently outdoors in a public or external space. (Figure 6)

We do not know if the 32 people who did not report mainly to be rough sleeping were for some reason sleeping rough that night due to lack of access to the places they stayed usually, such as with friends/ and/or 'sofa-surfing', in caravans, churches, day centres etc.

Alternatively, Westminster provides lucrative begging territory, particularly when tourist numbers are high. It is also experiencing an unprecedented sale and use of drugs – mainly what were legal but are now illegal highs, in particular 'spice'. Some people engage with 'street life' to beg or access drugs and might have appeared to be rough sleeping when approached by volunteers.

3.1. Length of time homeless

A quarter of participants (24.5%) had been without permanent stable housing for three years or more.

A similar number (23.2% of participants) had only been without permanent stable housing for one month or less.

59 people hadn't had stable accommodation for over 3 and up to 30 years: 42 from the UK, 4 from CEE countries, 9 from other EEA countries, and 3 from Africa (and one other where country of origin not recorded).

There was little difference in responses by gender to these questions about length of time without stable housing.

Older people, however, were more likely to be represented in the longer periods of homelessness, and although people originating from the UK were not the only group reporting long term homelessness, a high proportion had experienced between 3 to 10 years of homelessness and they accounted for all people who experienced 11-20 years – 7 people, 21-30 years – 3 people – and all but one of those who had experienced 30 years plus – 4 people. (Figure 7)

Frequency of sleeping rough in the last year

Over 76% of people reported that they had been homeless (or rough sleeping) once in the last year but there was some inconsistency in how this question was answered.

Where '365' or 'all year' was recorded on the survey form this has been recorded on the Googleform as '1' for one period of continuous rough sleeping during the year. For some of the higher end responses it may be that the person has been sleeping rough for 60 nights, rather than having 60 separate periods of rough sleeping during the year.

Comment on length of time homeless

There is a direct correlation between length of time sleeping rough and higher levels of need as a result of poorer health and well-being. Chronic homelessness is associated with multiple and complex needs and it is therefore unsurprising that survey respondents who scored 8+ – the highest category of need – had been homeless for longest.

Figure 6

Q1. Where do you sleep most frequently?

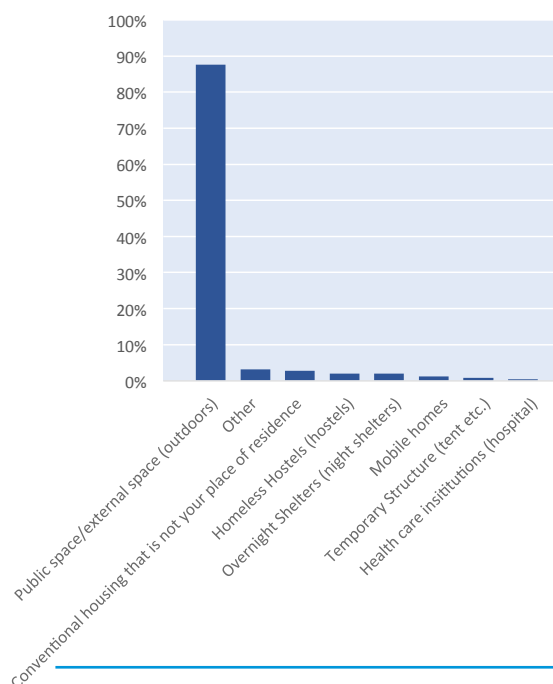
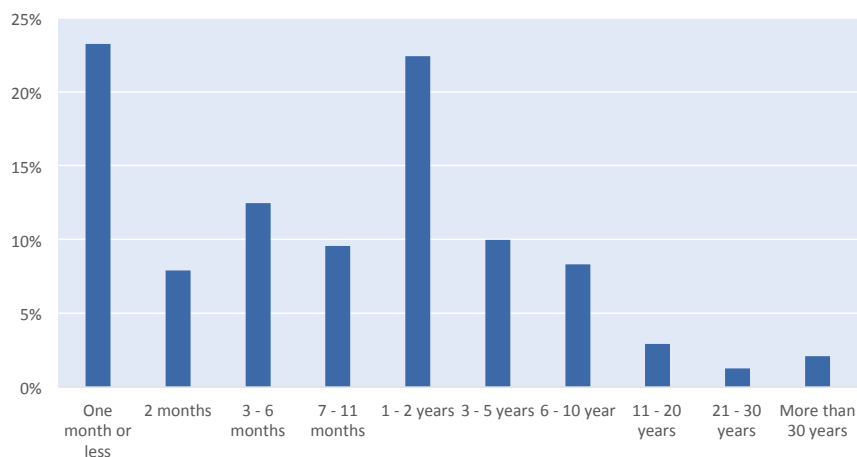


Figure 7

Q2. How long has it been since you lived in permanent stable housing?



3.2. Risks

People were asked if they had used A&E one or more time in the last six months. (Figure 8 – 4a)

166 people (nearly 69%) are recorded as not having used A&E in the last six months but 14.5% – 35 people – once and 8.7% – 21 people – twice.

There is no significantly higher use amongst women or older or younger people but UK born people are recorded as using A&E more frequently – 57.7%.

N.B. The surveyors should have ticked one of a list of number of times i.e. once, twice etc but all questions in this section (questions 4(a) to 4(f)) were most frequently completed incorrectly. Rather than recording the number of times in the past year many interviewers recorded 'yes' or 'no'. All 'yes' responses were recorded as 1 on the Googleform, all responses of 'a few' 'many times' and 'several' were recorded as 2. The actual number of times for many participants may have been much higher. 'No' responses were recorded as '0'.

Nearly 15% – 37 people – had been taken to hospital by ambulance at least once and 7.4% – 16 people – more than once. (Figure 8 – 4b)

34 people (13.5%) had been a hospital inpatient at least once in the last six months and 12 people (4.9%) more than once (Figure 8 – 4c)

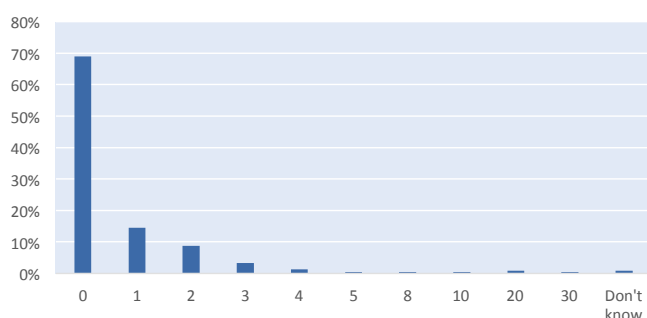
17.4% (42 people) and 6.6% (16 people) had received a service at least once or more than once respectively because of crisis or violent event such as domestic violence or a mental health problem. (Figure 8 – 4d)

48 people (19.7%) had talked to the police at least once because they were either the victim or perpetrator of a crime or had been asked to 'move on' and 13.5% – 35 people – more than once. (Figure 8 – 4e)

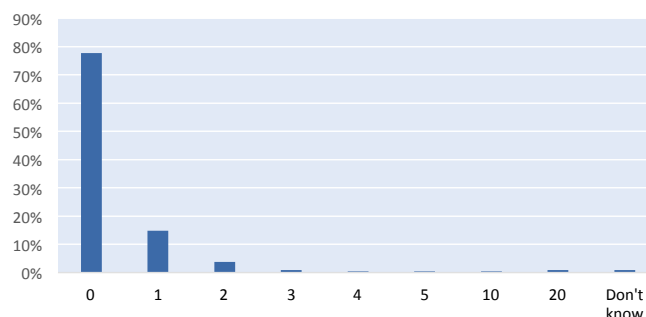
About a quarter reported having spent at least one or more nights in police custody or prison. (Figure 8 – 4f)

Figure 8

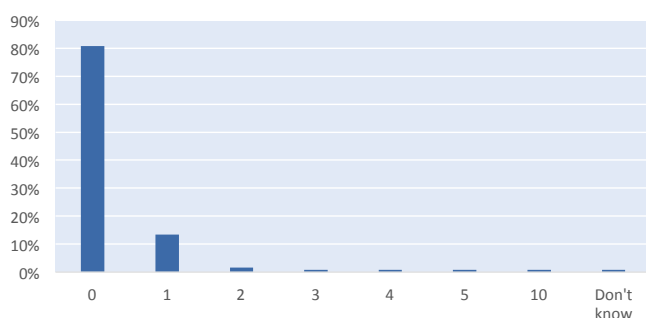
4a. In the past six months, how many times have you attended Accident and Emergency Dept. (A & E) ?



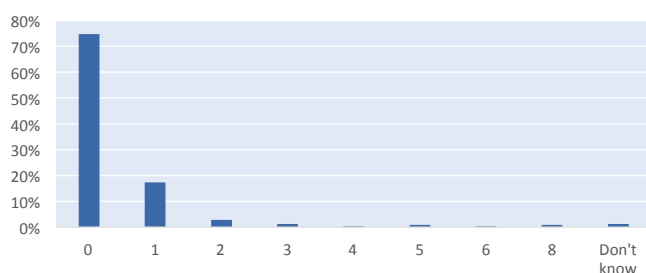
4b. In the past six months, how many times have you taken an ambulance to the hospital?



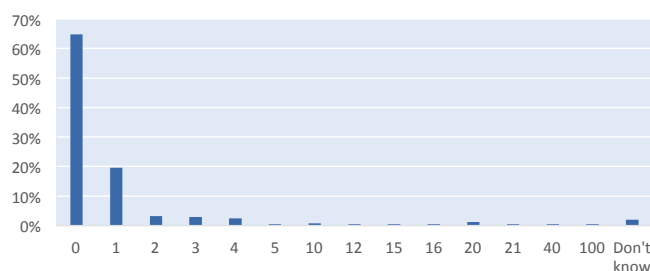
4c. In the past six months, how many times have you been in hospital as an inpatient?



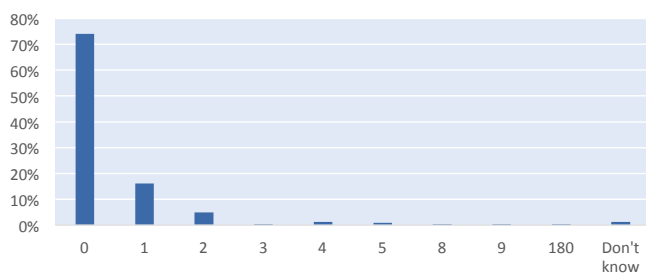
4d. In the past six months, how many times have you received a service because of a crisis in your life or violent incident? e.g. Mental Health, Domestic violence, felt suicidal



4e. In the past six months, how many times have you talked to police because you witnessed a crime, were the victim of a crime or the alleged perpetrator of a crime or because the police told you that you must move along?



4f. In the past six months, how many times have you stayed one or more nights in a police custody or prison, whether that was a short-term stay, a longer stay for a more serious offence, or anything in between?



One third of participants – 84 people – said they had been attacked or beaten up since they started rough sleeping. This applied to 44% of women. (Figure 9)

18.4% – 45 people – said they had threatened or tried to harm themselves, or someone else, in the last year. This was true for only 11% of women compared to 18% of men. Self-harm is higher amongst women so is it because the question also includes the possibility of harm to someone else which may have confused some women?

15.6% – 38 people – said they had outstanding legal issues or owed money that could result in them being locked up, having to pay fines or make it more difficult to rent a place.

9.4% – 23 people – said they had been forced or pressured to do things they did not want to do. (Figure 10)

12.5% – 30 people – said they did things considered to be risky such as exchanging sex for money, running drugs or sharing needles. This was true for 18% of women compared to 13% of men.

Comment on risks

The risks involved in sleeping rough are very serious. These are not common experiences for the general population.

Use of emergency services such as A&E and ambulances also incurs significant costs.

For women many of these risks are significantly higher. Although the number of women interviewed was small, services report that the vast majority of women have experienced violence either before or during their experience of homelessness.

3.3. Socialisation and daily functioning

Nearly 19% – 46 people – reported that there were people and/or organisations that thought the survey participant owed them money e.g. landlord, Government department. (Figure 11)

149 people (60.6%) reported receiving no benefits or income from work or employment. This applied to 54% of UK nationals – 50 people – but 72% – 96 non UK nationals. For non EU nationals the proportion not in receipt of benefits or earnings the proportion was 79% – 19 of 24 people.

Almost two thirds (65.7%) – 161 people – said they were not involved in any activities beyond just surviving. (Figure 12)

Figure 9

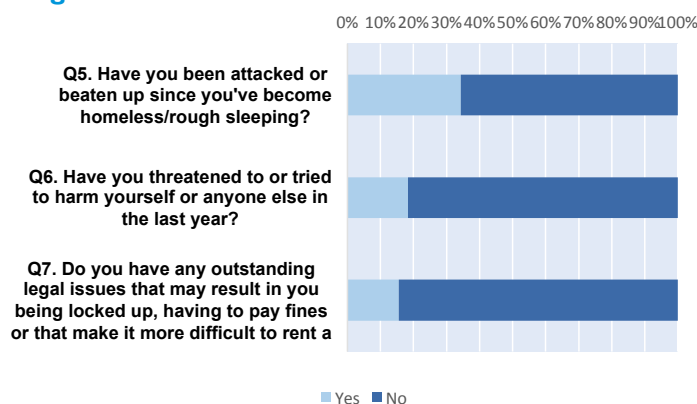


Figure 11

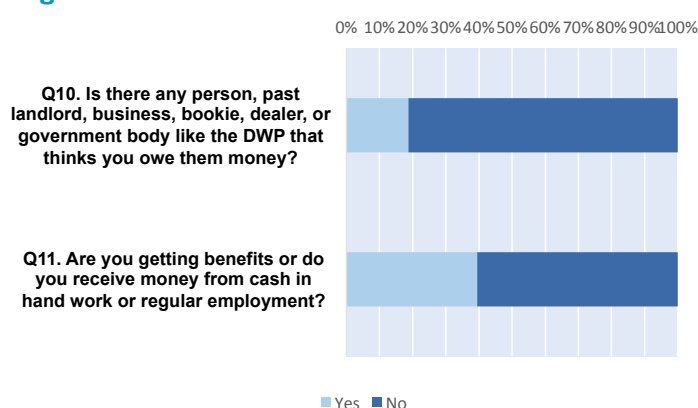


Figure 10

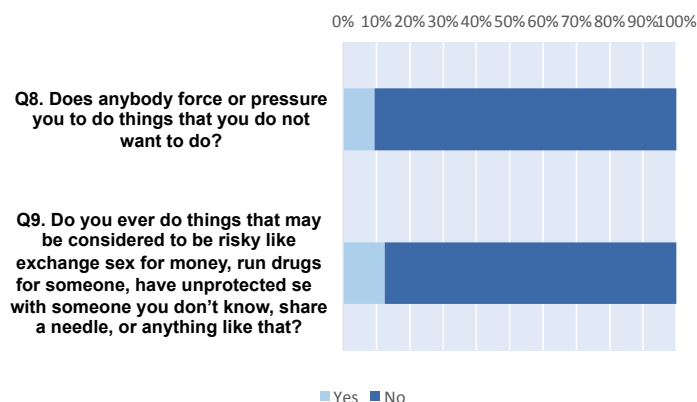
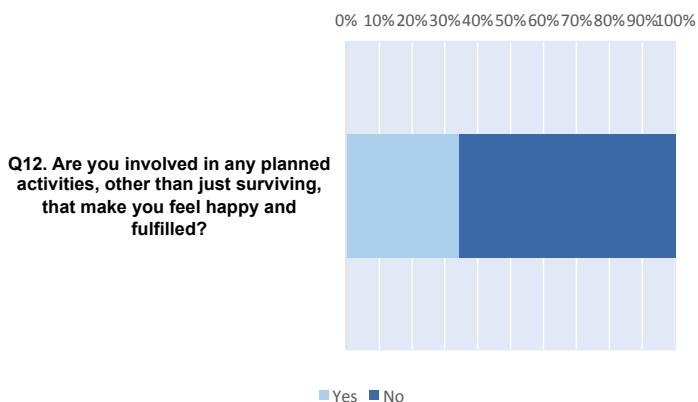


Figure 12



28.2% – 70 people – said they were unable to take care of basic needs like bathing and getting food. (Figure 13)

Nearly 42% – 101 people – said their current period of homelessness had been caused by a relationship that had broken down, an unhealthy or abusive relationship, or because family or friends caused their eviction. This applied to 77% of those scoring 8+, was broadly reflective of the age range of respondents but applied to more men (43%) than women (32%). (Figure 14)

Comment on socialisation and daily functioning

There was a very high proportion of people reporting being without any income. This is due partly to migrants' lack of entitlement to benefits but also affects a significant number of UK citizens. A 2001 Government survey of rough sleepers identified that one in five were not claiming benefits and led to a widespread take-up campaign backed by the Benefits Agency. It seems ironic that energies in 2016 are devoted to discouraging begging.

The high proportion of the non EU cohort with an income reflects differences in eligibility with many non EU nationals being destitute as a result of their undocumented status with no recourse to public funds and possibly also no right to work.

In spite of networks of feeding and bathing facilities organised by day centres, faith based and activist groups over a quarter of people reported being unable to take care of these basic needs.

The high proportion of people – two thirds – who said they are not involved in any activities beyond just surviving is a stark reflection of the extreme and absolute nature of the poverty experienced by people sleeping rough.

3.4. Health and well-being

Chronic health issues – 25.4% – 62 participants – said they had chronic health issues with their major organs. (Figure 15)

Physical health – 14% – 34 participants – had to leave a place they were staying because of physical health problems.

Physical disabilities – 14% had physical disabilities which would limit the type of housing they could access or make it hard to live independently because help would be needed.

Seeking medical help – Almost half (47.1%) of participants – 114 people – said they avoid seeking help when they are not feeling well. (Figure 16)

Pregnancy – one female respondent was pregnant.

Figure 13

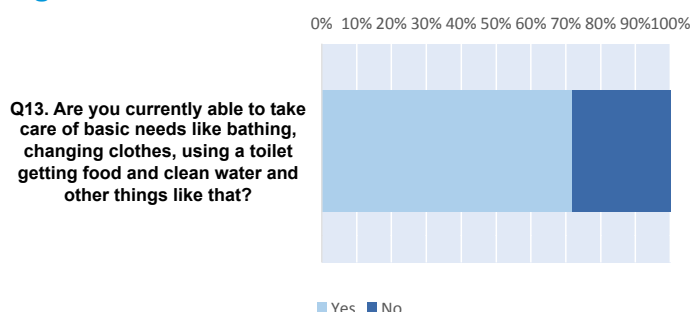


Figure 14

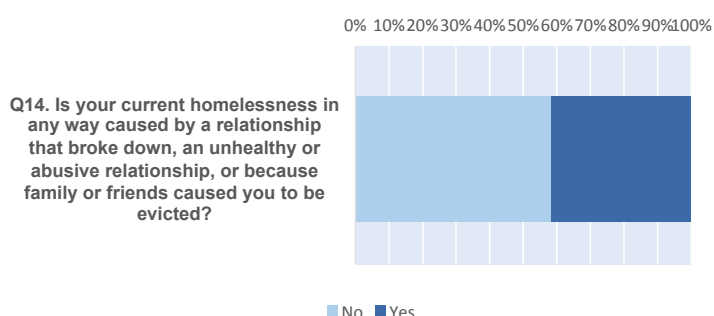


Figure 15

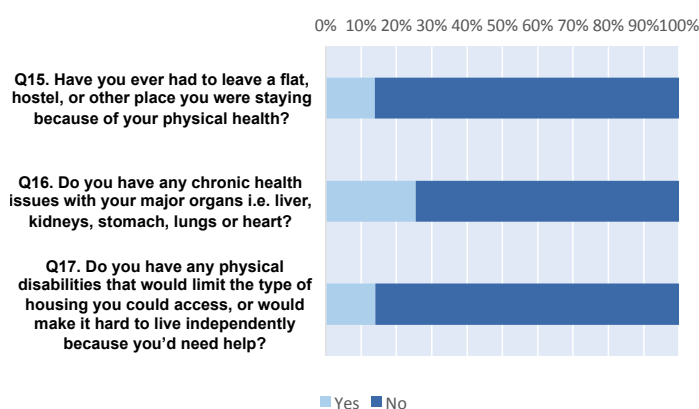
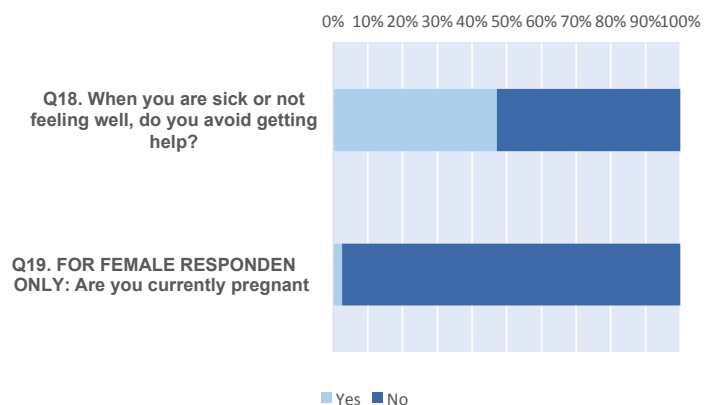


Figure 16



Drinking or drug use – 33 people (13.5% of participants) had been evicted from a hostel or other previous accommodation because of drug use and 36 people said they believe it would be difficult to stay housed or afford housing because of their drug use. (Figure 17)

45 people (over 18% of participants) were not taking medication that the doctor said they should have been. (Figure 18)

35 people (just over 14%) were not taking medication they'd been prescribed in the way they should have been or were selling it.

Just over a quarter of participants – 61 people – said that their current period of homelessness been caused by a traumatic experience e.g. domestic violence or some other kind of physical or emotional abuse. The proportion of women affected was 39%, compared to 21.5% of male respondents – 11 women and in addition those who identified as transgender (1) or 'both male and female' (2). (Figure 19)

Tri-morbidity

Tri-morbidity relates to those who present with a mental health, physical health, and substance misuse issue concurrently. (Figure 20)

This is a key indicator, as the more complex someone's needs, the more complicated their presentation, and the more difficult to find a housing solution that will fit their need.

Over 11% presented with all three needs and are classified as tri-morbid, in comparison with 3% of the street population in Barcelona, and 4% in Valencia but 17% of the 42 people surveyed in Croydon six weeks after the Westminster survey was conducted.

Comments on health and well-being

Homelessness is a cause of poor health but these survey findings reveal that health problems can also result in homelessness. Issues with poor health and substance use were reported by participants as making it difficult to maintain their housing and in some cases had resulted in eviction.

In 2015/16 people working with rough sleepers identified the following proportions of support-related needs amongst the Westminster rough sleeping population: alcohol 36%; drugs 27%; mental health 47%. CHAIN does not report physical health needs. 38% of people recorded on CHAIN were not deemed to have a support need.

11.6% of respondents report having three key health-related problems i.e. mental and physical health problems as well as substance misuse.

The need for supported housing to help people keep a roof over their head and receive support with their health needs is clear from the responses to this section of the survey. On the other hand if housing is conditional on abstinence or behavioural expectations, those with an addiction and some mental health conditions are likely to remain homeless.

Figure 17

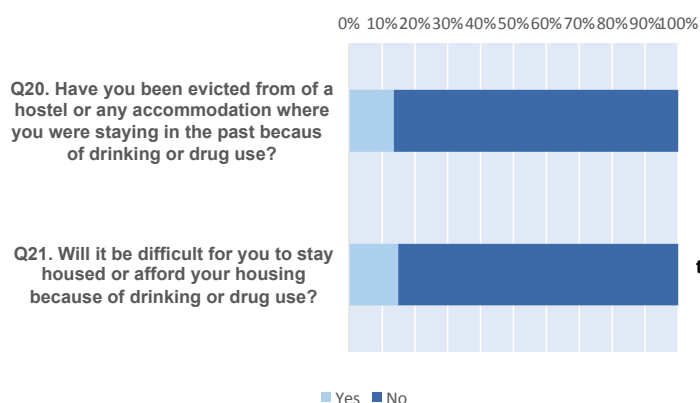


Figure 18

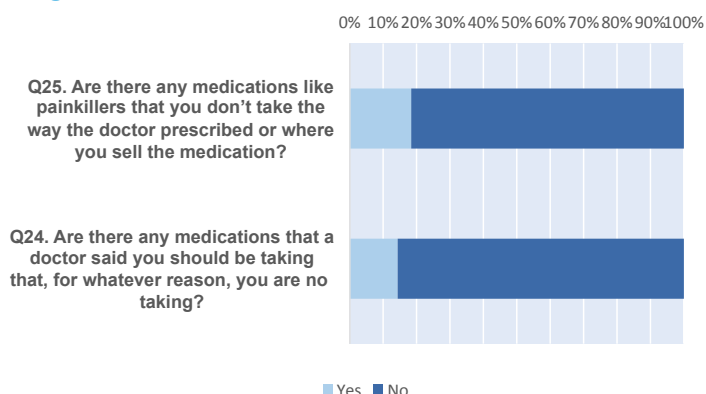


Figure 19

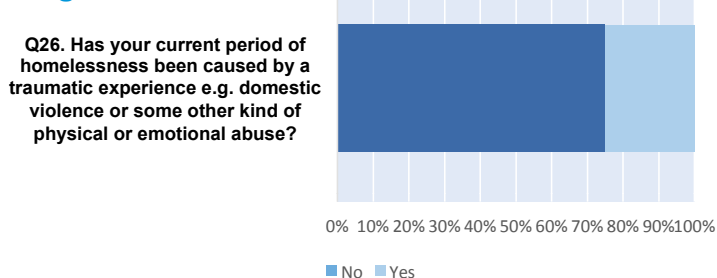
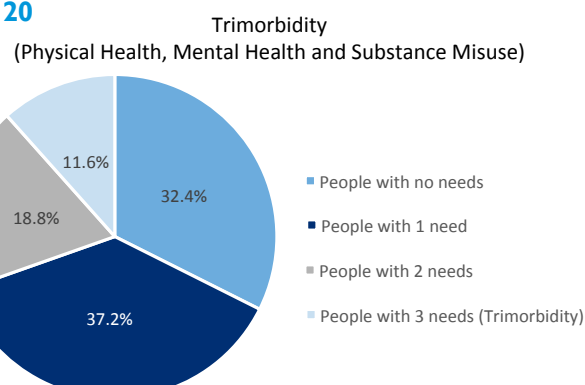


Figure 20



5 Westminster survey findings

The previous section reports on findings from responses to the European Ending Street Homelessness Survey questions which have been used in most EESHG cities and are designed to assess levels of vulnerability, as well as rehousing and related support needs.

WHAT wanted to make sure that conducting the survey was adding to the knowledge already held on CHAIN. Additional Questions were agreed by WHAT partner organisations to find out more about specific features and current challenges in supporting people off the streets of Westminster.

Reasons for sleeping rough in Westminster

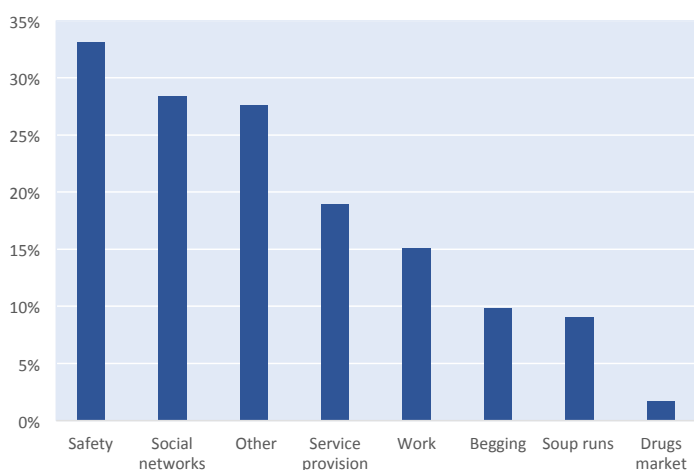
Participants were able to give more than one answer to this question. 'Local area' was asked about because front line workers warned that most people sleeping rough in Westminster are not aware of borough boundaries; (Figure 21)

Safety was the reason most often cited by 33.2% of participants. Social networks came a close second at 28.4%.

For those who gave an 'other' response that did not fit into one of the main categories, 7 people mentioned local amenities such as supermarkets and transport, or the central location. 12 people described something to do with the spot where they were sleeping rough; that it was comfortable, sheltered from the rain, quiet, or out of the way. 14 people mentioned that they liked the area, that it was somewhere they were familiar with, or they thought of the area as 'home'. 12 people said they were either passing through, or that they didn't really know why they were there; one person in this group said they were sleeping

Figure 21

Q6. Why are you sleeping rough in this local area?



there because they 'can't walk any further' and one person said that they had 'only just arrived'. Other 'other' answers included health and mental health reasons, the kindness of people in the local area and because the person wanted to be close to Downing Street for political protest.

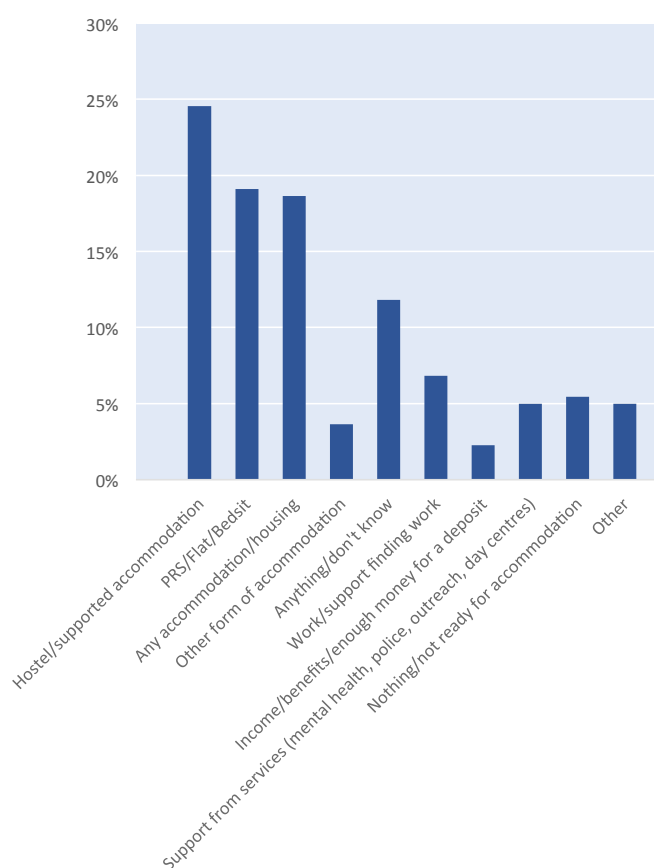
What would stop people sleeping rough

Some participants gave more than one response (for example some said that both a flat and a hostel could have stopped them having to sleep rough) so answers do not total to 250. (Figure 22)

Six people who responded to this question 'any accommodation/housing' or 'PRS/Flat/Bedsit' specified that they needed to be in accommodation with a partner. Six people specified that they would not want to be in a hostel, one of these raised concerns about drug use in hostels and one of these said hostels were too expensive. One person raised concerns over conditions in the private rented sector and said that they'd paid a deposit on a flat which turned out not to be in a liveable condition. Another person said that 'being treated like a real person' by the council would have stopped them having to sleep rough.

Figure 22

Q7. What support or type of accommodation would have stopped you having to sleep rough?



Employment

23 people (9.6% of participants) reported working. Employment status is not monitored by CHAIN but services have reported an increase in rough sleepers who are working and that they believe the proportion doing so is higher than 10%.

The types of work mentioned are mainly casual and/or manual and in several cases providing essential local services such as street cleaning and working within parks grounds.

70% of those working are non UK born with work highest amongst people from other EU countries. (Figure 23)

Reasons for coming to London

Economic reasons, in particular the likelihood of getting work, remain the main driver for coming to London for almost half of respondents. (Figure 24)

The majority who gave work/economic reasons for coming to London were non UK born with only just over 12% of those giving this answer from the UK. Over 43% were Romanian; in fact, 49 of the 52 people of Romanian origin interviewed during the survey answered 'work/economic' to this question (94.2%).

Whether people regarded themselves as from Westminster, or from London and how long they had lived in the capital should have been asked. Note however that 37 people (16%) said they were born and/or raised in London and a further 19% gave responses which indicate a specific connection with London (family and health). Those who gave an 'other' reason reported some interesting ones such as 'refugee', 'no choice', 'to stay out of trouble' and 'walk around'.

Q9. Why did you want to come to London? Other responses	No.
Likes London/Familiar with London	8
By chance/felt like it	8
Change of scenery/to get away from previous place/running away	8
London nightlife/sight seeing/history	8
Place of opportunity	4
Handouts/easier to survive	3
Improve English	3
Study	2
Relationship breakdown	1
Homeless community	1
Services	1
Domestic violence	1
Prostitution	1
Came with partner – didn't work out	1
No choice	1
To stay out of trouble	1
Transport/logistics	1
Visa difficulties in the US	1
Walk around	1
Refugee	1
Total other responses	56

Current contact with services

Figure 23

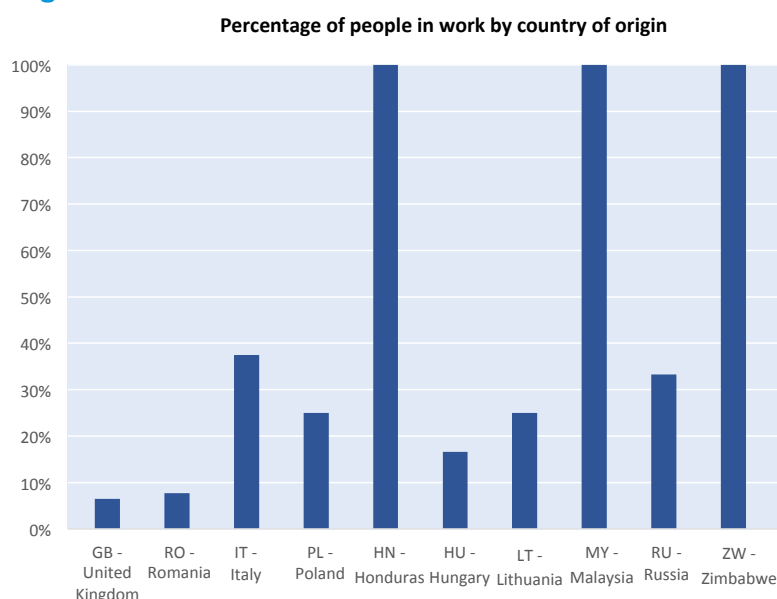
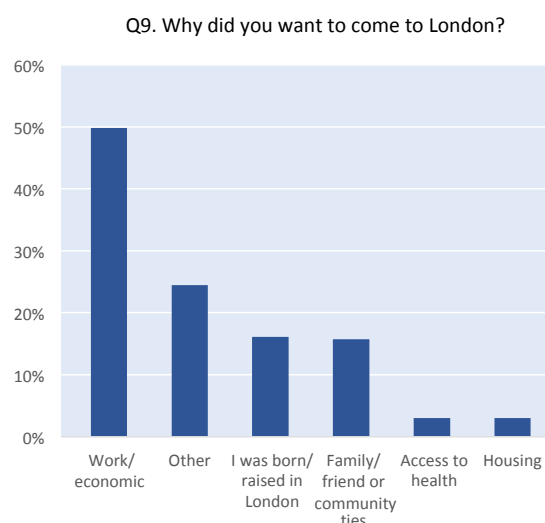


Figure 24



159 people (65% of respondents) reported being in contact with services such as a day centre, outreach or doctors, but just over one third – 83 people said they are not. (Figure 25)

124 of those already in contact with services said they wished to remain in contact with them but 17 people – 11% – said they did not.

Of the 83 people not in contact with services 48 said they would like to be but 17 not; and there were high levels (19 in total) of non-recording (15), ‘don’t knows’ and ‘declined to answer’ responses.

Where help was sought to get off the streets

Significant numbers had sought help from key services targeted at people sleeping rough. These included day centres (over half) and outreach workers (nearly one third). Nearly one fifth had approached ‘the Council/ Homeless Person’s Unit/Housing Options’ although we do not know if this was in Westminster or elsewhere. Interestingly a significant number of people – 25 (over 11%) – had sought help about getting off the streets from their doctor although we do not know if this was via one of the specialist homelessness services or not. (Figure 26)

The range of ‘other’ reasons is interesting including a mix of statutory and faith based and informal organisations such as churches. Help was sought from family and community in over 11% of cases. These findings are a reminder that many rough sleepers retain family, friends and other informal networks.

A significant number of people – 39 – said they hadn’t sought help (almost 18%) and there were quite high levels of non-recording – 22 people – and ‘declined to answer’ – 10 people – responses.

Q12. Have you tried to seek help from somewhere in getting off the streets and if so where? Other responses	No.
Churches	8
Jobcentre	2
Other non-statutory services (Caritas, Shelter, Hub, Samaritans etc.)	4
Governments/politicians/secret services/intelligent service	2
Other Roma	1
Prison/probation service	3
Social services	1
Rehab	1
Volunteers	1
“Given up”	1
“Not sure who he was”	1
“Madison”	1
Total other responses	26

Figure 25

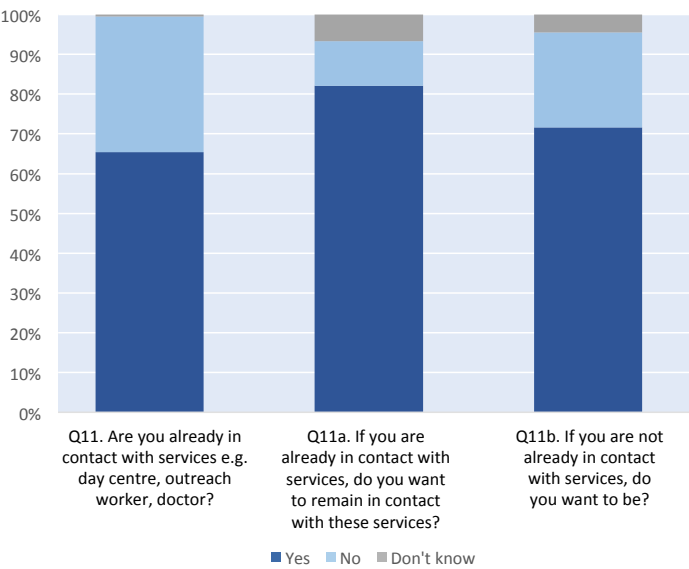
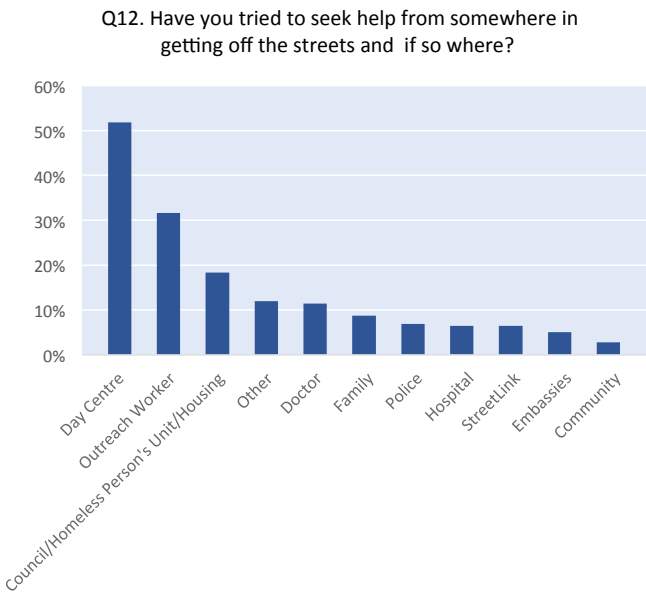


Figure 26



People returning to the streets

Over half of respondents – 129 people – had been rehoused from the streets but ended up sleeping rough again. (Figure 27)

An open question was asked about why this housing had ended. In some cases, the response has been split into two or more categories so the total number of responses does not equal the total number of people who answered 'yes' to this question.

Eviction, abandonment and employment/financial reasons predominate. Other reasons include relationship breakdown, mental health and drug problems, being victims of violence and abuse. (Figure 28)

For the six people abandoning hostels, participants cited reasons for leaving as drug use in the project, organisational behaviour, too many rules, and being fed up of other residents.

Nearly 60% of women were affected by being rehoused from but ending up back on the streets compared to just under half of men.

Over 60% of people aged 46 to 59 years were affected but young people and people and those over 60 were not disproportionately affected.

A high proportion of those in the higher needs 8+ category had been previously rehoused off the streets – 50 of the 67 people in this category.

Over 70% of UK nationals were affected compared to around a quarter of nationals of CEE countries.

People were not asked when they had left previous housing and about length of time it had lasted. This also means that this data is not comparable with the CHAIN 'returners' data which is monitored only within a specific time frame.

The following are quotes from some of the responses to this (open) question. Note that some of these suggest that the arrangements people had left – usually not through

choice – may not have been linked to arrangements made by homelessness agencies. The high levels of people coming back on to the streets and the reasons given for leaving previous accommodation all reinforce the need for adequate support to sustain tenancies.

“Abandoned the housing after council broke into his house. Director of council was contacted – waiting for it to be dealt with for the past 3 months.”

“Bad payment keeping on behalf of housing benefit and disagreements with landlords.”

“Described it as a ‘trap house’ because ‘supported’ housing – safe house for a black man is Tottenham”

“Didn’t feel that hostel felt comfortable, was too full of rules. I was more unsettled and had ‘itchy feet’.”

“Street life felt more suitable at the time, I had more freedom”

“Every time I see someone from homeless housing, they feed me, give me numbers but never been given a proper place to stay yet”

“Financial trouble”

“...evicted from illegal sublets by the legal owners”

“Hit someone in a hostel and was evicted”

“Monday – Thursday i sleep rough because of work. have accommodation in Stockton on Tees.”

Figure 27

Q13. Have you slept rough before, then been housed, but ended up back on the streets?

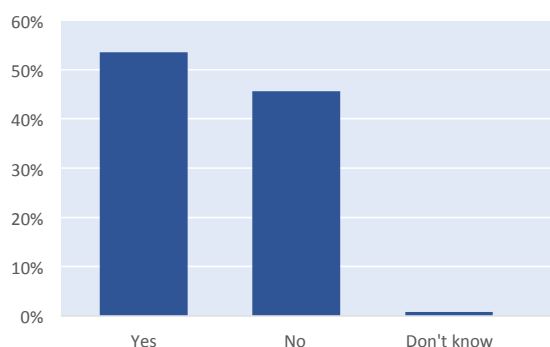
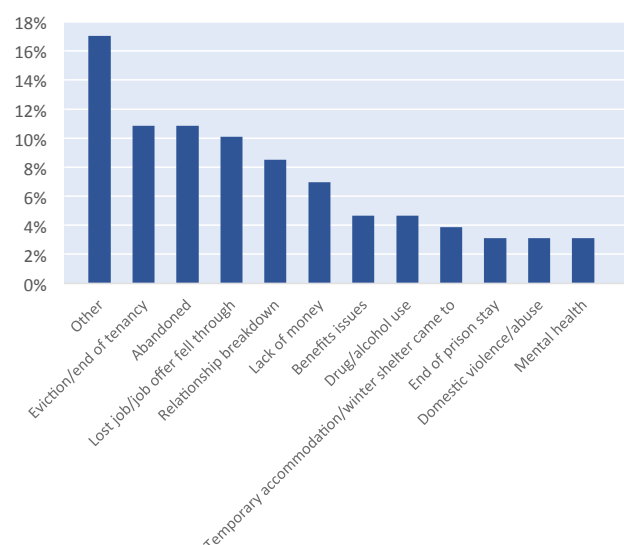


Figure 28

If yes, why did this housing come to an end?



If yes, why did this housing come to an end?	No	%
Eviction/end of tenancy	14	13.0%
Eviction – rent arrears	6	5.6%
Eviction – assault	1	0.9%
Eviction – other	4	3.7%
End of tenancy	3	2.8%
Abandoned	14	13.0%
Abandoned – other	1	0.9%
Abandoned – hostel	6	5.6%
Abandoned – difficulties with other residents/neighbours	5	4.6%
Abandoned – wanted to return to rough sleeping/street life	2	1.9%
Lost job/job offer fell through	13	12.0%
Relationship breakdown	11	10.2%
Other	10	9.3%
Lack of money	9	8.3%
Benefits issues	6	5.6%
Benefits sanction	2	1.9%
Housing benefit wasn't paid	2	1.9%
No longer eligible for housing benefit	2	1.9%
Drug/alcohol use	6	5.6%
Temporary accommodation/winter shelter came to an end	5	4.6%
End of prison stay	4	3.7%
Domestic violence/abuse	4	3.7%
Mental health	4	3.7%
Bullying/attacks from extremists	3	2.8%
Family conflict/dispute	3	2.8%
Asked to leave	2	1.9%
Unsuitable accommodation/overcrowding	2	1.9%
Arguments	1	0.9%
Health	1	0.9%
Answer not recorded	16	
Declined to answer	5	
Total answering yes to Q.13	129	

What help would get people off the streets now

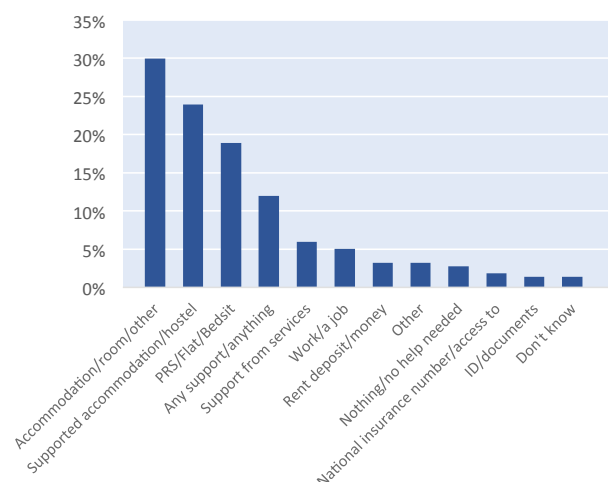
This was another open question so in some cases responses have been split into two or more categories and the total number of responses does not equal the total number of people responding to this question. (Figure 29)

65% specified some kind of accommodation and in some cases they added specific requirements given their circumstances, for example, housing suitable for couples, pets and accommodation that is accessible. In some cases, specific types of housing were specified but mostly not. Support was mentioned by some people, and access to benefits, ID, national insurance numbers by a small number of people.

Q14. What support or type of accommodation would help you come off the streets now? Other responses	No.
A bank account	1
Embassy assistance	1
Legal support	1
Internet access	1
Return to home country	1
Gave up on it, doesn't trust it, not long-term – doesn't want the disruption of short-term stays / makes you "soft" (likes the regularity and stability)	1
"Myself. People have patience in me and believe."	1
Total other responses	7

Figure 29

Q14. What support or type of accommodation would help you come off the streets now?



One person in the 'accommodation,/' 'any accommodation/' housing' category answered that he wished he was white and felt if he was he would have had the opportunities to move on. Another person in this category answered "give us a foundation that we build on for ourselves. All we ever ask for is a key to a door."

In the 'other' category one person answered to say that they had given up on any help – that they didn't trust it, it wasn't ever long term, and that the disruption of short term stays in accommodation makes you 'soft'. Another person in this category answered that help would have to come from 'myself' but also that they wanted people to 'have patience in me and believe'.

Mobile phone access

A prospective volunteer who has put time into considering the potential for mobile phone apps to help and advise homeless people requested that we ask about access to and use of mobiles phones.

88 people (over 37% of respondents) said that they had a mobile phone which they had used to make a phone call or send a text in the last month.

60 people, just over a quarter of respondents said that they had a smartphone, a mobile phone with internet access or tablet that they had used to make or receive calls or text messages, or access the internet in the last month.

Comment on the Westminster specific findings

The EESH survey findings demonstrate starkly the level of risk that all people sleeping rough experience and the poor health, destitution and vulnerability they face. The exercise has also put the current outreach model under the spotlight and indicates that although it is more successful in helping those who have been on the streets for a short period but does not sufficiently meet the needs of the chronically homeless population.

The additional findings from the Westminster part of the survey take the learning beyond levels of vulnerability and enhance our knowledge about the current approach to tackling rough sleeping.

There are substantial numbers of people – around a third – not in touch with services; most want to be but it is worrying that a small but significant proportion say they do not want to make contact with services.

A big concern is that over half of respondents had been rehoused from the streets in the past but their housing arrangement had broken down. Eviction, financial, employment-related and benefit reasons for

loss of a home predominate indicating that to end homelessness greater attention needs to be paid and more resources targeted at tenancy sustainment.

In terms of what would get people off the streets, the biggest proportion of people mentioned accommodation but also many referred to support needs.

Some aspects of the profile of people sleeping rough are changing. For example, 10% of survey respondents said they were working but services believe that the proportion of rough sleepers who are working is higher than this and on the increase. On the other hand reasons given for coming to London – and central London in particular – seem fairly constant with 'finding work' high on the list.

The key drivers in asking additional questions were to build on existing CHAIN data and find out more about homeless people's experiences and preferences in relation to services. The findings to date are illuminating and point firmly to a need to learn more, understand better and explore how systems need to respond and change accordingly.

The European **End Street Homelessness** Campaign



Westminster Homeless Action Together is organised by



With support from



City of Westminster

www.westminsterhomelessactiontogether.org