CHAIN ANNUAL BULLETIN GREATER LONDON 2015/16

This bulletin presents information about people seen rough sleeping by outreach teams in London between April 2015 and March 2016. Information in the report is derived from the Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN), 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.

Headline findings

Overall

8,096 people were seen rough sleeping by outreach workers in 2015/16.

- This represents an increase of 7% compared to 2014/15. This is lower than the previous increase of 16% between 2013/14 and 2014/15, but higher than the increase of 1% between 2012/13 and 2013/14.

New rough sleepers

5,276 people (65% of the total) were seen sleeping rough for the first time in London in 2015/16.

- 64% of new rough sleepers were only seen once in the year, compared to 67% in 2014/15 and 70% in 2013/14.
- 25% of new rough sleepers attended No Second Night Out (NSNO) and 1,153 (87%) of these people were not seen rough sleeping again in the year.

Longer term rough sleepers

23% of rough sleepers in 2015/16 had also been seen in 2014/15, while 12% had returned to the streets after a period of at least one year when they had not been seen rough sleeping.

- The stock group (i.e. people who have been seen in consecutive years) have shown the greatest proportional increase over 2014/15, at 15% (compared to 3% for new rough sleepers, and 13% for people who returned after a period away).
- Two thirds of returners (662 people) were seen just once or twice, suggesting they didn't return to long term rough sleeping.
- 225 (3% of the total) rough sleepers were seen in all four quarters of 2015/16. This figure remains low, but this group is of particular concern because these people are more likely than others to be 'living on the streets'.

Borough profile

35% of those seen rough sleeping were contacted in Westminster (2,857 people).

- The number of people seen rough sleeping in Westminster has risen by 287 (an 11% increase).
- Five other boroughs recorded more than 300 rough sleepers in the year (Camden: 641; Lambeth: 445; City of London: 440; Tower Hamlets: 395; and Southwark: 372).
- Of the ten boroughs with the highest numbers of rough sleepers, Lambeth, Heathrow and Southwark (marginally) have shown decreased numbers on 2014/15.

Nationality

Two fifths (41%) of those seen rough sleeping were of UK nationality.

- The proportion of UK nationality rough sleepers has continued to fall over the last two years (43% in 2014/15 and 46% in 2013/14).
- 37% of those seen rough sleeping in 2015/16 were from Central and Eastern Europe* and 10% were from other European countries.
- Romanians were the single biggest non-UK nationality group, comprising 20% of all people seen rough sleeping in the year.

Age and gender

Those who slept rough were predominantly male (85%). One in ten were aged under 26.

- 15% (1,216 people) of those seen rough sleeping were female.
- The proportion of women has risen slightly over the last two years (14% in 2014/15 and 13% in 2013/14).
- 10% (830 people) of those seen rough sleeping were aged under 26, of whom just four people were under 18 years old.
- 11% of those seen were over 55.

Last settled base

2,792 new rough sleepers had information recorded about their last longer term or settled accommodation before rough sleeping.

- 57% reported their last settled base as being some form of long term accommodation, including 39% coming from private rented accommodation.
- 5% had been living in a hostel before first being seen rough sleeping.
- 3% reported their last settled base as prison or hospital.

Reason for leaving last settled base

2,771 new rough sleepers had information recorded about why they had left their last longer term or settled accommodation.

- 29% left their last settled accommodation after being asked to leave by the person they were staying with, or following eviction.
- 11% left their last settled home due to a relationship breakdown.
- 28% left to seek work or following the loss of a job.
- 804 people had sought help and advice from a Local Authority Housing Options service during the 12 months before they were first seen sleeping rough.

Moves off the street

Outreach teams and NSNO helped 2,450 (30%) of the people seen rough sleeping into accommodation or to return to their home area.

- A total of 2,867 bookings into accommodation were made for people seen rough sleeping during 2015/16.
- 44% of the 1,067 reconnections for rough sleepers in 2015/16 were to destinations outside the UK.
- 37% of departures from hostels and other temporary accommodation in 2015/16 were moves to medium to long term accommodation, compared to 39% in 2014/15.

* EU expansion in 2004 and 2007 enabled people from the following countries to come to the UK to work: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. These are referred to as Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries in this report.

Number of people seen rough sleeping

8,096 people were seen rough sleeping by outreach teams in 2015/16. Overall rough sleeping figures increased by 7% from 2014/15, compared to an increase of 16% between 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Figure (a) Profile of the number of people seen rough sleeping 2012/13 – 2015/16 using flow, stock returner model
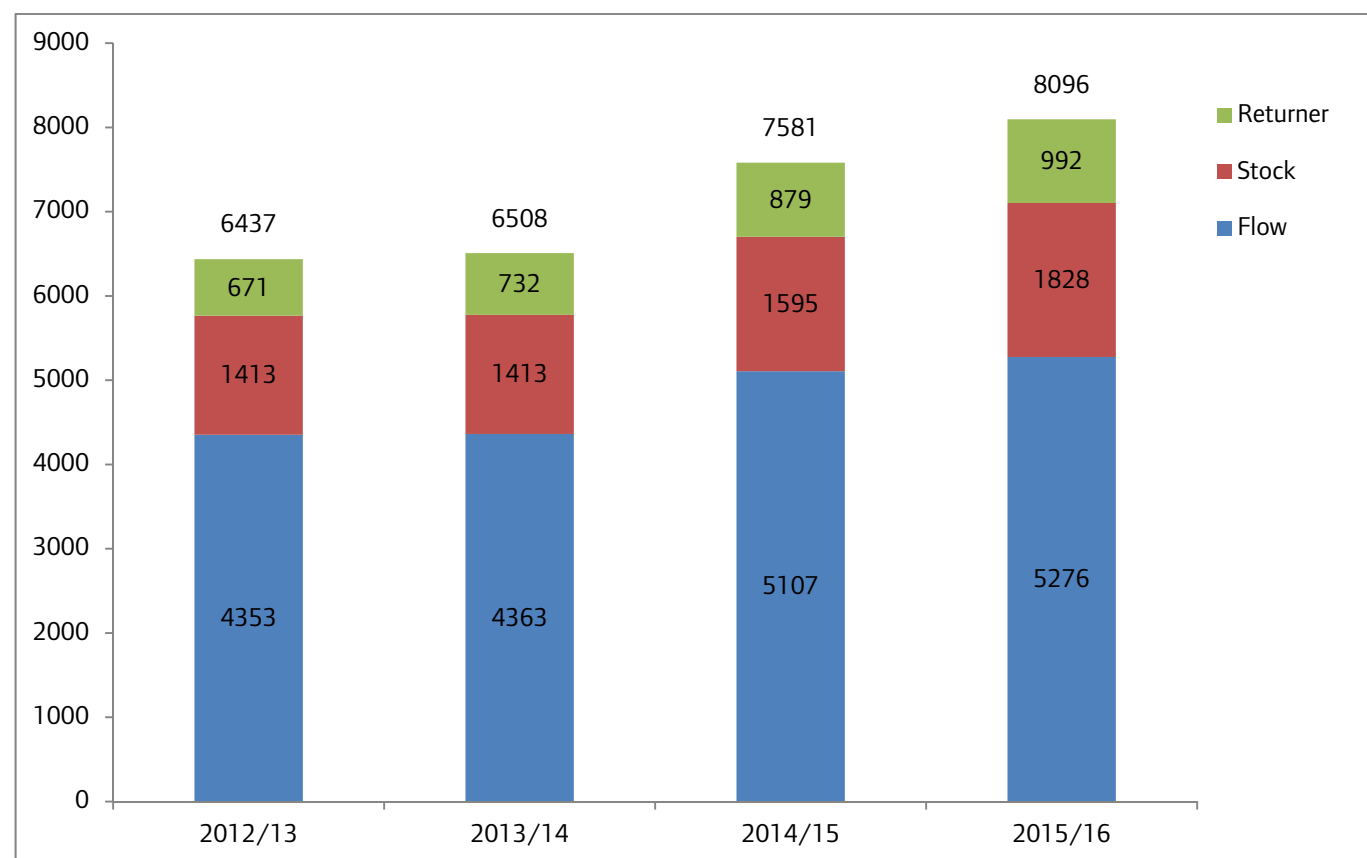
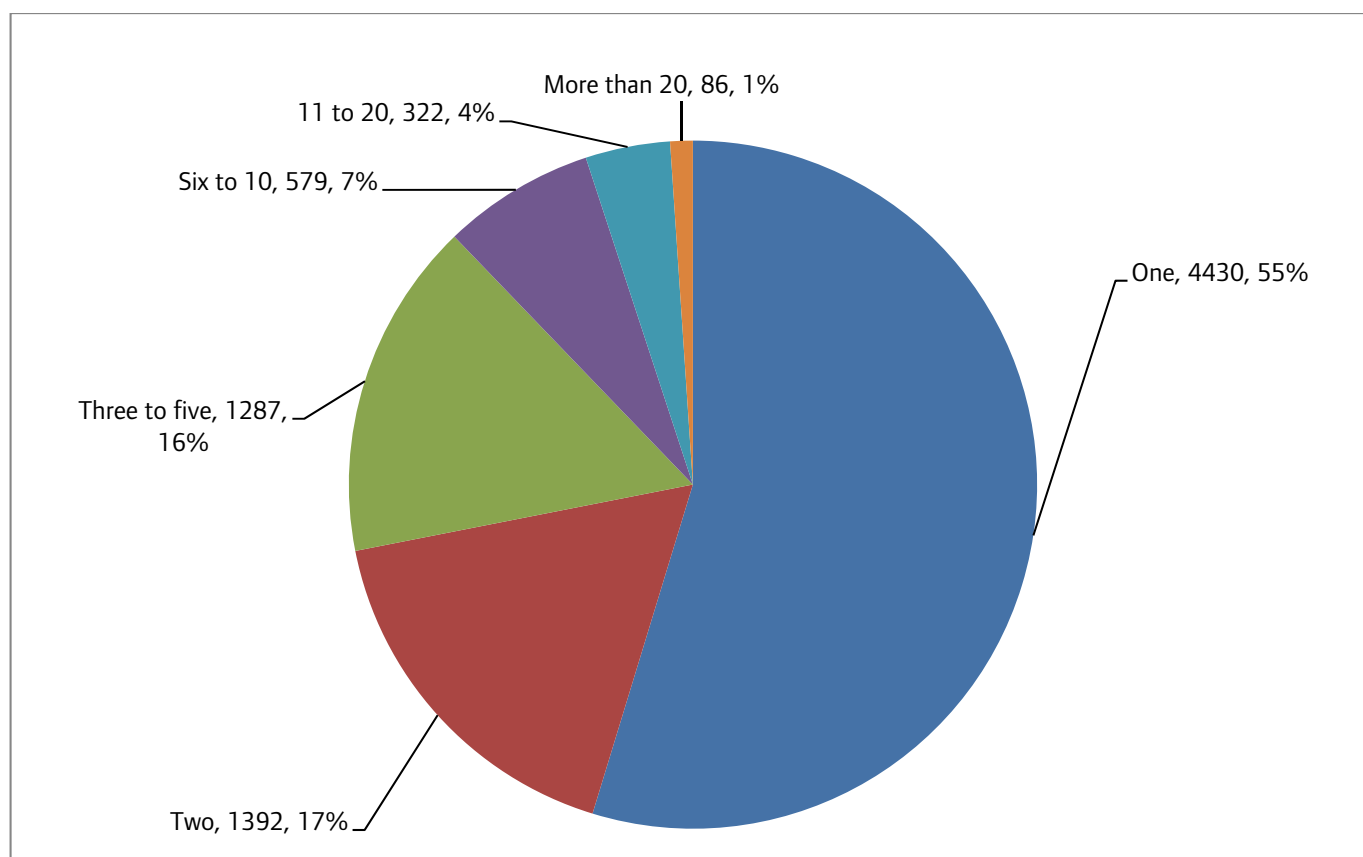Bases: 2012/13: 6,437, 2013/14: 6,508, 2014/15: 7,581, 2015/16: 8,096.

The flow, stock, returner model categorises people seen rough sleeping in the year according to whether they have also been seen rough sleeping in previous periods. Definitions of the categories are as follows:

Category	Description
Flow	People who had never been seen rough sleeping prior to 2015/16 (i.e. new rough sleepers).
Stock	People who were also seen rough sleeping in 2014/15 (i.e. those seen across a minimum of two consecutive years).
Returner	People who were first seen rough sleeping prior to 2014/15, but were not seen during 2014/15 (i.e. those who have had a gap in their rough sleeping histories).

5,276 people were seen rough sleeping for the first time in London in 2015/16 (flow group), which is 65% of all people seen rough sleeping in the period. Just under two thirds (64%) of new rough sleepers were only seen once, compared to 67% in 2014/15 and 70% in 2013/14. Nearly a quarter (23%) of people seen rough sleeping in 2015/16 were also seen in the preceding year (stock group). Just over one in ten (12%) of people seen rough sleeping were in the returner group, meaning they had been seen rough sleeping in the past but not in 2014/15. The proportion of people in each group is largely consistent with last year.

Volume and regularity of rough sleeping

Figure (b) Number of times seen rough sleeping

More than 20, 86, 1%
11 to 20, 322, 4%
Six to 10, 579, 7%
Three to five, 1287, 16%
Two, 1392, 17%
One, 4430, 55%

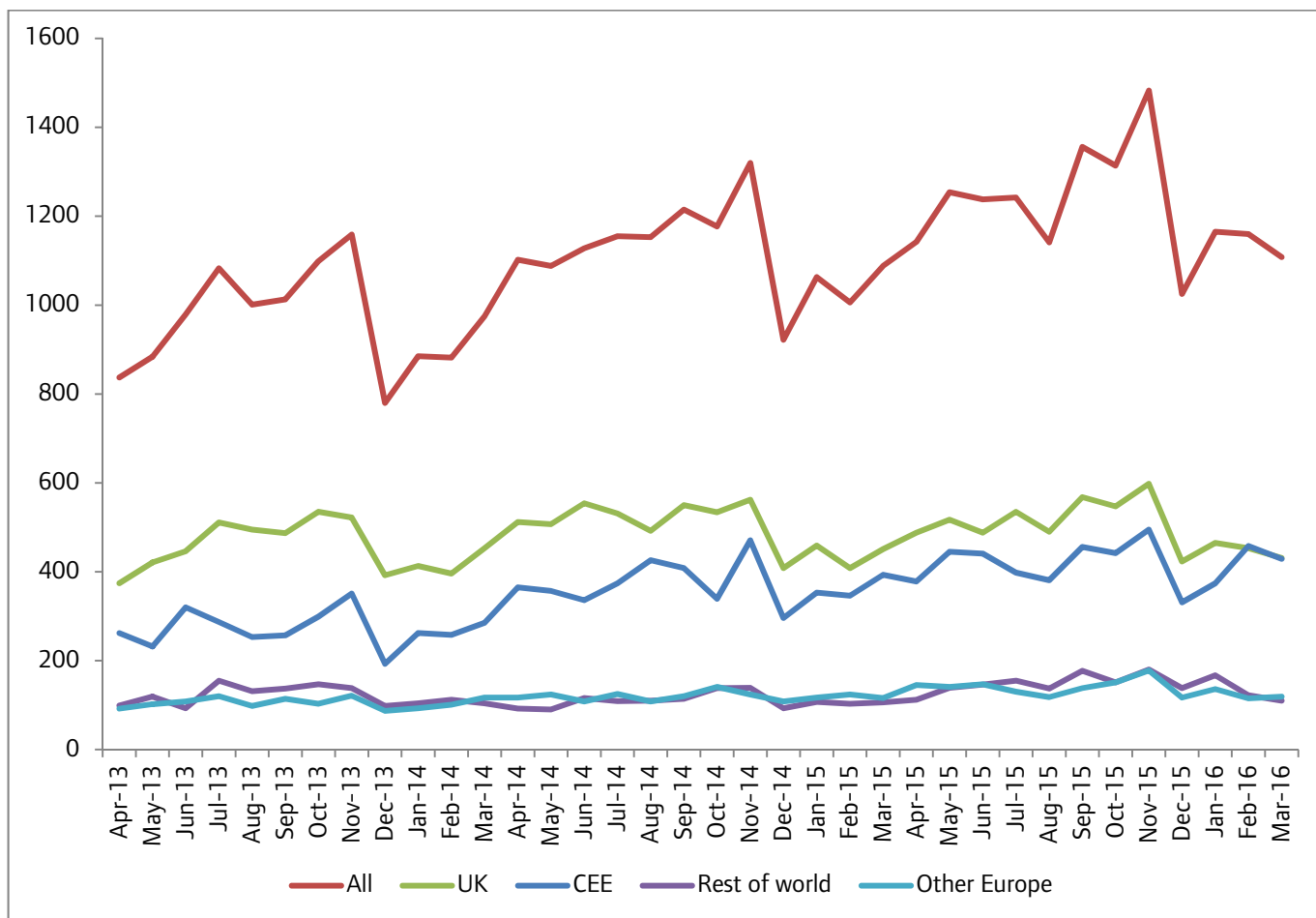Base: 8,096 people seen rough sleeping in 2015/16.

The majority (55%) of people seen rough sleeping in 2015/16 were seen only once. 72% were only seen once or twice. One in 20 people (5%) were seen rough sleeping more than 10 times. No one was seen rough sleeping more than 50 times in the year, compared to six people seen more than 50 times in 2014/15 and 24 in 2013/14.

Figure (c) Number of quarters of the year within which rough sleepers were seen

Number of quarters of the year within which rough sleepers were seen	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
	No. rough sleepers	% rough sleepers	No. rough sleepers	% rough sleepers	No. rough sleepers	% rough sleepers
One	5033	77%	5843	77%	6083	75%
Two	965	15%	1140	15%	1293	16%
Three	346	5%	415	5%	495	6%
Four	164	3%	183	2%	225	3%
Total	**6508**	**100%**	**7581**	**100%**	**8096**	**100%**

Figure (c) above shows how many people were seen in one, two, three or all four quarters of the years 2013/14 to 2015/16. It is important to be aware that the figures for each year are limited to the year in question, and people may have also been seen in previous or subsequent years. Three in four (75%) of those seen rough sleeping in 2015/16 were only seen in one quarter of the year. 3% of those seen rough sleeping in 2015/16 were seen bedded down in all four quarters of the year, suggesting that their rough sleeping is an ongoing issue and was not successfully resolved. These proportions are almost the same as those observed in 2014/15.

Figure (d) Number of people seen rough sleeping month by month, April 2013 - March 2016

The graph above shows the monthly trend in numbers of people seen rough sleeping over the last three years, broken down by nationality group.
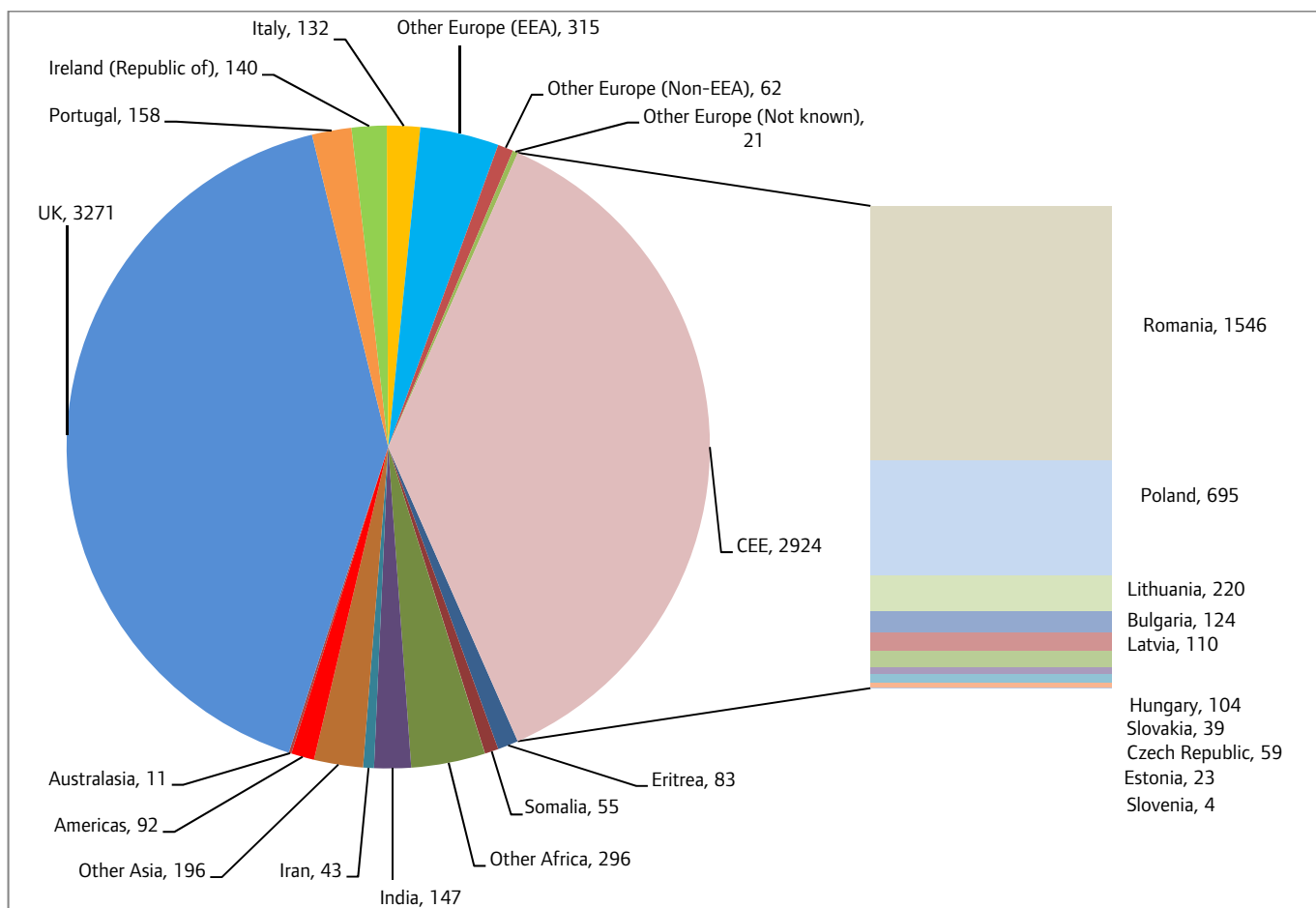
During 2015/16, the month in which the highest number of people were seen rough sleeping was November 2015 (1,483 people), while the lowest number were seen in December 2015 (1,025 people). This follows a pattern consistent with previous years.

There typically tend to be seasonal variations in rough sleeping, with the highest numbers seen in summer and autumn, and the lowest numbers in the winter months of December to February, when winter shelters are usually in operation.

The nationality comparison indicates that trends amongst particular nationality groupings have generally remained consistent with the overall trend. CEE numbers reached parity with UK nationals for the first time in February 2016.

Nationality profile of people seen rough sleeping

Figure (f) Nationality of people seen rough sleeping in 2015/16

Italy, 132
Other Europe (EEA), 315
Ireland (Republic of), 140
Other Europe (Non-EEA), 62
Portugal, 158
Other Europe (Not known), 21
UK, 3271
CEE, 2924
Romania, 1546
Poland, 695
Lithuania, 220
Bulgaria, 124
Latvia, 110
Hungary, 104
Slovakia, 39
Czech Republic, 59
Estonia, 23
Slovenia, 4
Australasia, 11
Americas, 92
Other Asia, 196
Iran, 43
India, 147
Other Africa, 296
Somalia, 55
Eritrea, 83

Base: 7,946 people seen rough sleeping in 2015/16 whose nationality was known.

The nationality profile of rough sleepers in London remains very diverse. 41% of people seen rough sleeping in 2015/16 were from the UK – a slight decrease from the figure of 43% in 2014/15 and continuing an ongoing downward trend. The proportion of rough sleepers from CEE countries was 37%, which is virtually unchanged from the figure of 36% in 2014/15. Romanians (1,546, 20%) constitute the predominant non-UK nationality by some distance, with Poles (695, 9%) making up the second largest non-UK nationality group.

There were a significant number of rough sleepers from non-CEE European countries, mostly those in the European Economic Area, with Portugal (158), the Republic of Ireland (140) and Italy (132) continuing to be the most heavily represented. 434 (6%) people seen rough sleeping in the year were from African countries, and 386 (5%) were of Asian nationality.

Nationality figures do not allow us to reliably surmise how long people have been in the UK, or whether they have access to public funds. Immigration data on CHAIN is not comprehensive, but the most commonly recorded immigration status for those from non-European countries is Indefinite Leave to Remain (299 people), followed by overstayer (96 people) and Limited Leave to Remain (56 people).

# Age and gender profile of people seen rough sleeping

The age and gender profiles of those seen rough sleeping have remained broadly stable over recent years:

- 15% of people seen rough sleeping were women.
- The proportion of women has risen slightly over the last two years (14% in 2014/15 and 13% in 2013/14).
- Most of those seen rough sleeping (57%) are in the 26 - 45 age group.
- One in 10 were under 26 years old.
- Four people were aged under 18.
- Just over one in 10 (11%) were over 55.

Support needs profile of people seen rough sleeping

Support needs data in CHAIN is derived from assessments made by those working with rough sleepers in the homelessness sector. It should be noted that almost a third (32%) of rough sleepers in 2015/16 did not have a support needs assessment recorded, the majority of these (82%) being people who had only been seen rough sleeping once or twice.

Figure (g) Support needs profile of those seen rough sleeping in 2015/16
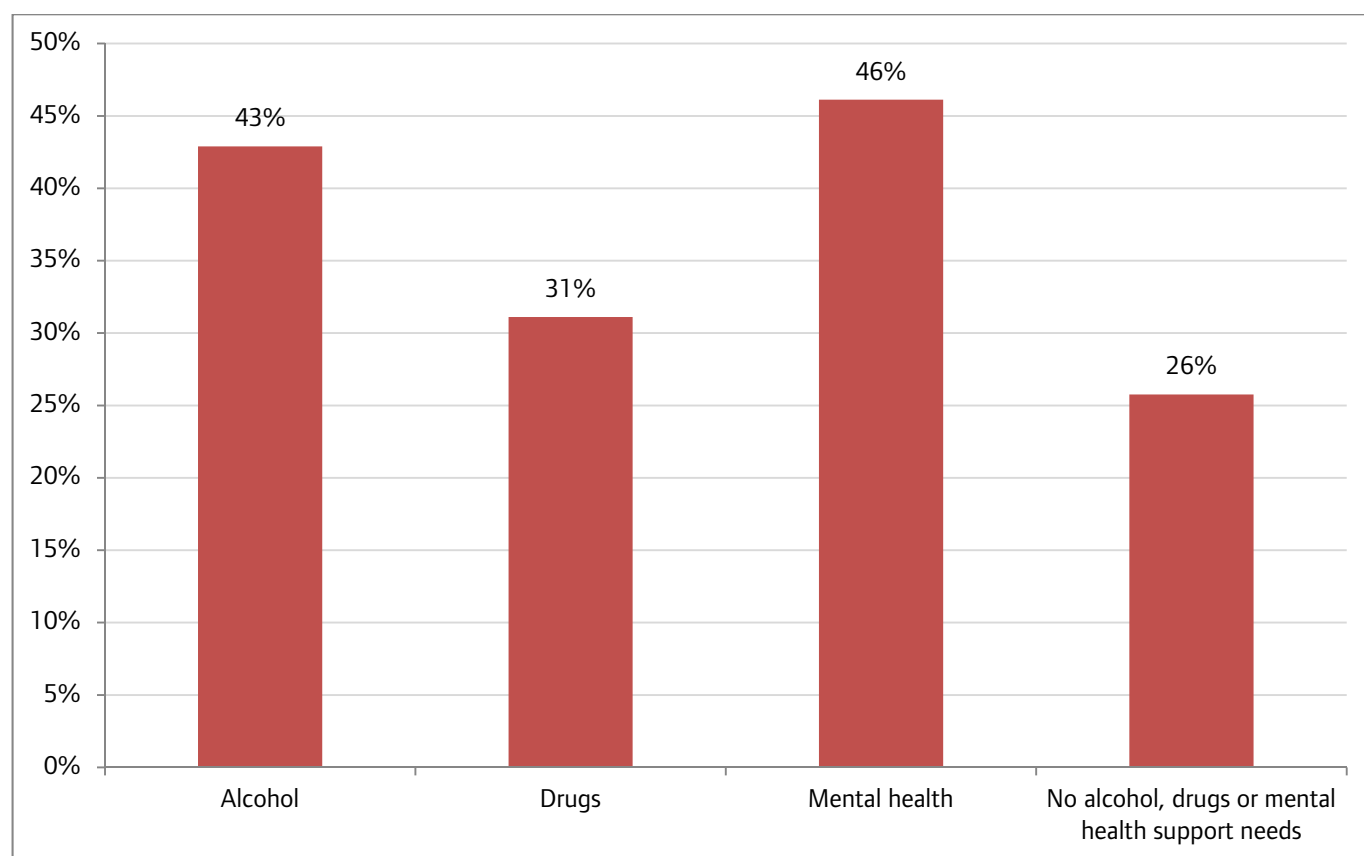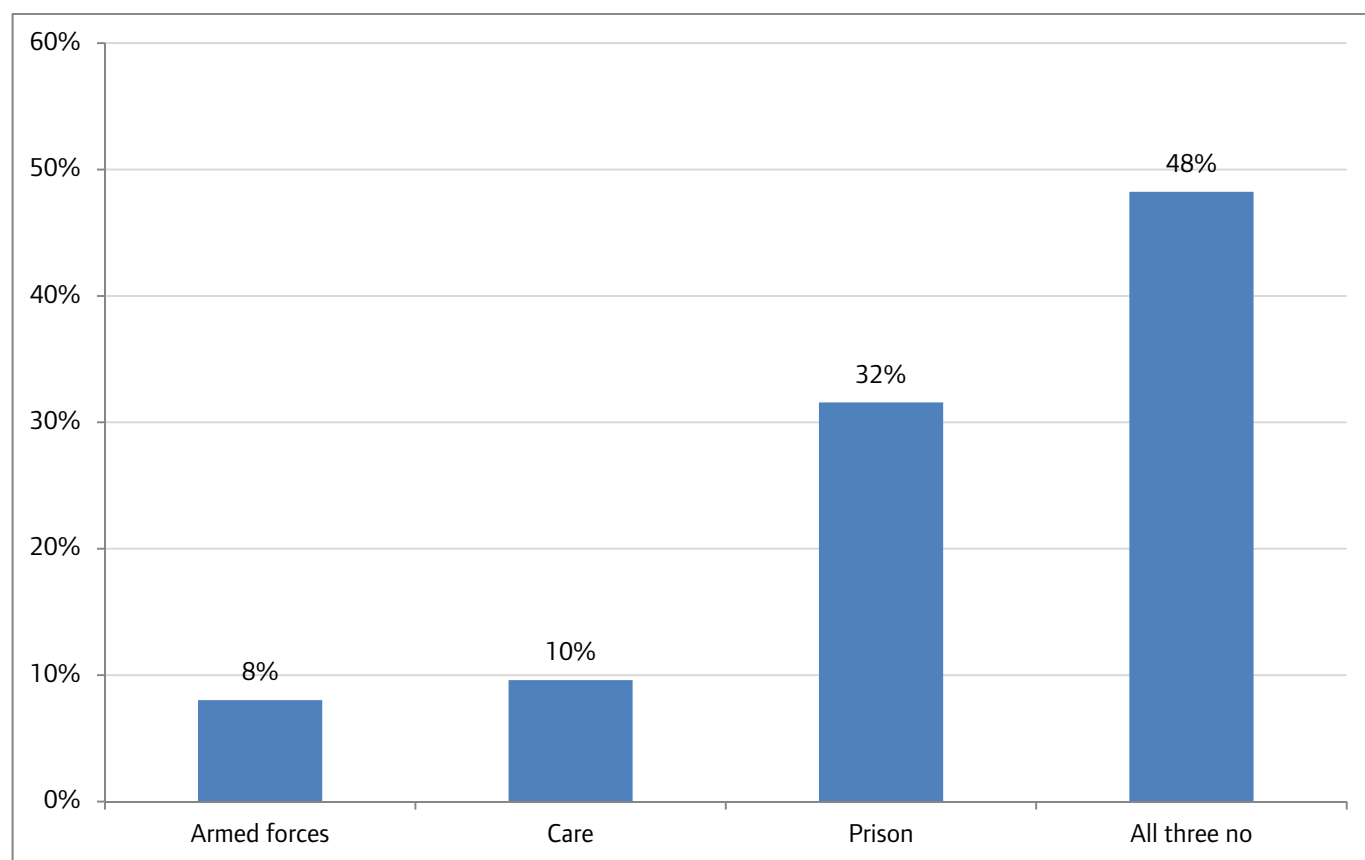

Base: 5,481 people seen rough sleeping in 2015/16 who had been assessed for at least one of the three key support needs.

The most frequently reported support need amongst rough sleepers in 2015/16 who had received an assessment was mental health, at 46% (compared to 45% in 2014/15). Alcohol was the second most prevalent support need, at 43% (compared to 41% in 2014/15). Just over three in ten (31%) people assessed had a drugs support need, which is unchanged compared to the figure in the previous year. Just over a quarter (26%) of those assessed had no support needs identified, compared to 28% in 2014/15.

Armed forces and institutional history profile of people seen rough sleeping

CHAIN records whether a person has spent time in prison, the armed forces or Local Authority care at any time in their lives.

Figure (h) Experience of serving in the armed forces, and spending time in prison or in Local Authority care, among people seen rough sleeping in 2015/16

Base: 5,635 people seen rough sleeping in 2015/16 for whom one or more institutional history was recorded.

A third (32%) of people seen rough sleeping in 2015/16 had experience of serving time in prison, while 10% had experience of the care system.

Overall, 8% of people seen rough sleeping in 2015/16 had served in the armed forces at some point in their lives. Looking at this in more detail, 3% (142) of people seen rough sleeping in the year were UK nationals who have served in the armed forces.

Proportions of people with experience of the armed forces, care or prison are consistent with 2014/15.

Helping people off the streets

## Accommodation and moves to other areas

Outreach teams and other services, including No Second Night Out (NSNO), work to help rough sleepers into a range of accommodation types, most commonly hostels but also the private rented sector and residential treatment centres. Services also help people to reconnect to their home area or country, where they are more likely to find a solution to their homelessness, for example through appropriate support networks, entitlement to accommodation or access to an alcohol treatment centre.

In 2015/16, outreach teams and NSNO booked 2,148 (27%) people seen rough sleeping in the year into accommodation; of these 635 were booked into long-term accommodation. 983 (12%) people who had been seen rough sleeping were reconnected by outreach teams or NSNO. Overall, 2,450 (30%) of the people seen rough sleeping in 2015/16 were helped into accommodation or to reconnect to an area with appropriate support or networks.

Reasons for moving out of hostel and other short term accommodation

Hostels and other short term accommodation providers record information about those arriving and departing from their services. In 2015/16, accommodation projects recorded departures for 1,094 people who had previously been seen rough sleeping at some point in their history (but who had not necessarily been seen rough sleeping in 2015/16).

Figure (i) Reasons for moves out of hostels and other short term accommodation
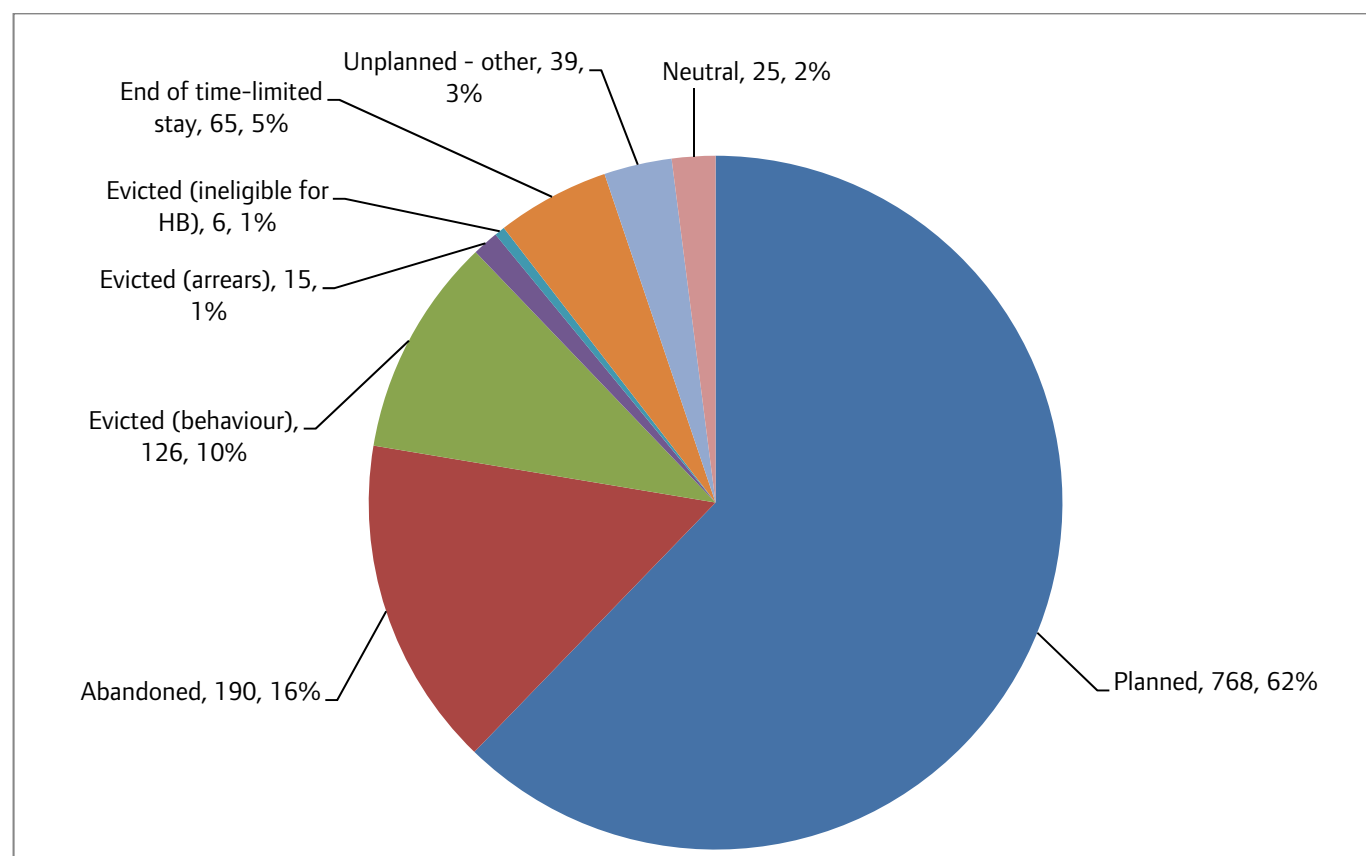
Base: 1,234 departures by verified rough sleepers from accommodation projects which report to CHAIN. Some people may have had more than one accommodation departure during the year.

In 2015/16, 30% of departures from temporary accommodation were for evictions, abandonments and unplanned departures, which is slightly higher than the figure of 26% in 2014/15. The proportion of planned moves has decreased slightly, at 62% compared to 65% in 2014/15.