

CHAIN ANNUAL BULLETIN

GREATER
LONDON
2024/25



CHAIN

SUPPORTED BY
MAYOR OF LONDON



This bulletin presents information about people seen rough sleeping by outreach teams in London between April 2024 and March 2025. Information in the bulletin 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 Homeless Link, represents the UK's most detailed and comprehensive source of information about rough sleeping.

Copies of the full CHAIN Greater London 2024/25 annual report can be obtained from the GLA Datastore at <http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>.

The data on which this report is based is also available in an accessible tabular format, aggregated to borough and Greater London level, in a separate CHAIN Annual Data Tables file. This can be downloaded from the GLA Datastore at <http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>. A suite of interactive charts and maps based on the data can be accessed via the CHAIN Annual Data Visualisations Tool at <https://bit.ly/chain-annual-vis-tool>.

Percentage figures in this report

Please note that, in some cases, percentage figures given in this report are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. This may mean that individual figures in tables and charts do not add up to a combined total of 100%, or that there could be small discrepancies between percentage figures in tables and corresponding charts or commentary.



HEADLINE FINDINGS



TOTAL ROUGH SLEEPERS

13,231 people were seen rough sleeping by outreach workers in London during 2024/25.

- This represents a 10% increase compared to the total of 11,993 people seen in 2023/24.
- The 2024/25 total is 63% higher than the total of 8,096 people seen rough sleeping ten years ago, in 2015/16.
- Outreach teams and other support services helped 5,177 (39%) of these people to access accommodation during the year.



NEW & LONGER-TERM ROUGH SLEEPERS

People who had also been seen rough sleeping during the previous year showed the greatest increase, compared to new and returning rough sleepers.

- 3,028 people seen rough sleeping in 2024/25 had also been seen rough sleeping in 2023/24. This group are also referred to in this bulletin using the term 'stock', and their number increased by 27% compared to 2023/24.
- 8,396 people were seen sleeping rough for the first time in London in 2024/25, with this group increasing by 5% compared to 2023/24.
- 1,807 people seen rough sleeping during 2024/25 were those who had returned to rough sleeping in London after at least a year away, which is 11% more than recorded in 2023/24.



HISTORY PRIOR TO ROUGH SLEEPING

18% of new rough sleepers in 2024/25 had arrived on the streets following departure from asylum support accommodation, continuing the trend from 2023/24.

- 58% of new rough sleepers reported their last settled base as being some form of long-term accommodation, compared to 43% of returning rough sleepers.
- 22% of new rough sleepers had left their last settled base after being asked to leave by someone they were staying with, while 23% were evicted.
- This compares to 12% of returning rough sleepers being asked to leave, while 28% were evicted.



NATIONALITY

The proportion of people seen rough sleeping who were from countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Australasia continued to be greater than the proportion of people from Europe (excluding the UK).

- 30% of people seen rough sleeping in 2024/25 were from Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Australasia, while 22% were from Europe (excluding the UK).
- 47% of people seen rough sleeping in 2024/25 were UK nationals.
- Despite a decline in numbers, Romanians continued to represent the single biggest non-UK nationality, comprising 7% of all people seen rough sleeping in the year.



DEMOGRAPHICS AND SUPPORT NEEDS

Mental health continued to be the support need most commonly experienced by people rough sleeping in London.

- 50% of people seen rough sleeping during 2024/25 had a support need relating to mental health, while 31% had a need relating to drugs, and 28% had a need relating to alcohol.
- 26% of people seen rough sleeping during the year had experience of spending time in prison.
- 83% of people seen rough sleeping in 2024/25 were men.
- 11% of people seen rough sleeping in 2024/25 were aged 25 or under.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SEEN ROUGH SLEEPING

13,231

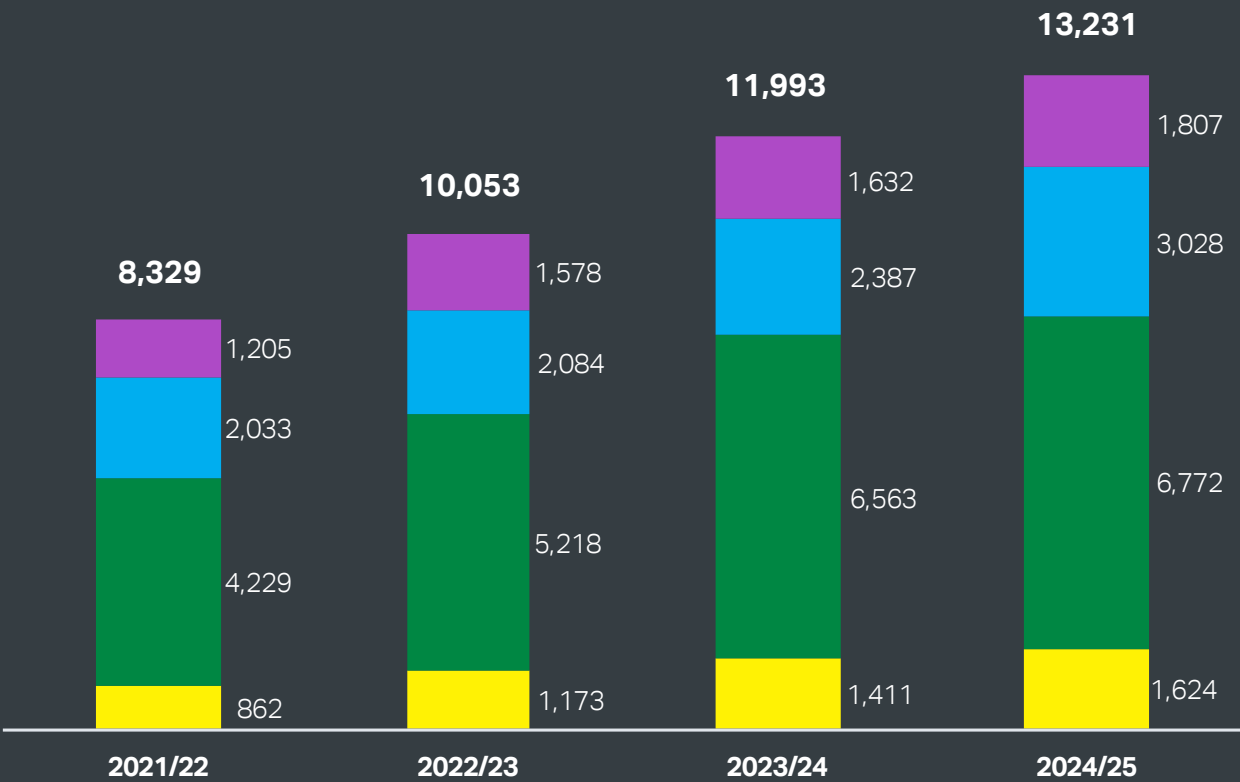
13,231 people were seen rough sleeping in London in 2024/25, which is a 10% increase compared to the total of 11,993 people seen in 2023/24.

8,396

8,396 people were seen rough sleeping for the first time this year (also referred to as flow), which is 63% of all people seen rough sleeping in the period. 3,028 (23%) of people seen rough sleeping in 2024/25 were also seen in the preceding year (stock group). 1,807 (14%) of people seen rough sleeping were in the returner group, meaning they had been seen rough sleeping in the past but not in 2023/24.

All three groups saw increases between 2023/24 and 2024/25. The stock group recorded the largest rise, both proportionately (27%) and numerically (641 people), and this has been the main driver in the overall total increase for the year. This marks the highest stock growth in a decade, surpassing the 15% increases in 2023/24 and 2015/16.

Chart 1: People seen rough sleeping, by flow, stock, returner breakdown, 2021/22 - 2024/25



Category	Description
Flow - unidentified	People who had never been seen rough sleeping prior to 2024/25 (i.e. new rough sleepers), who were recorded without a name, and with only one contact.
Flow - identified	People who had never been seen rough sleeping prior to 2024/25 (i.e. new rough sleepers), who were recorded with a name, and/or with more than one contact.
Stock	People who were also seen rough sleeping in 2023/24 (i.e. those seen across a minimum of two consecutive years).
Returner	People who were first seen rough sleeping prior to 2023/24, but were not seen during 2023/24 (i.e. those who have had a gap in their rough sleeping histories).

LONG RANGE TREND

Across the last ten years, the number of people recorded rough sleeping on CHAIN has risen year on year, with the exception of 2017/18, and 2021/22. The increase in 2024/25 is the fifth largest during the ten year period, both in terms of proportion (10%) and actual numbers (1,238 people). The 2024/25 total is the highest ever recorded on CHAIN, and is 63% higher than the total of 8,096 people seen rough sleeping ten years ago, in 2015/16.

It is likely that the reduction in the total number of people seen rough sleeping during 2021/22 was at least in part due to the additional resources that were put into addressing rough sleeping during the Covid-19 pandemic under the government’s Everyone In initiative.

Chart 2: People seen rough sleeping by year, 2015/16 - 2024/25

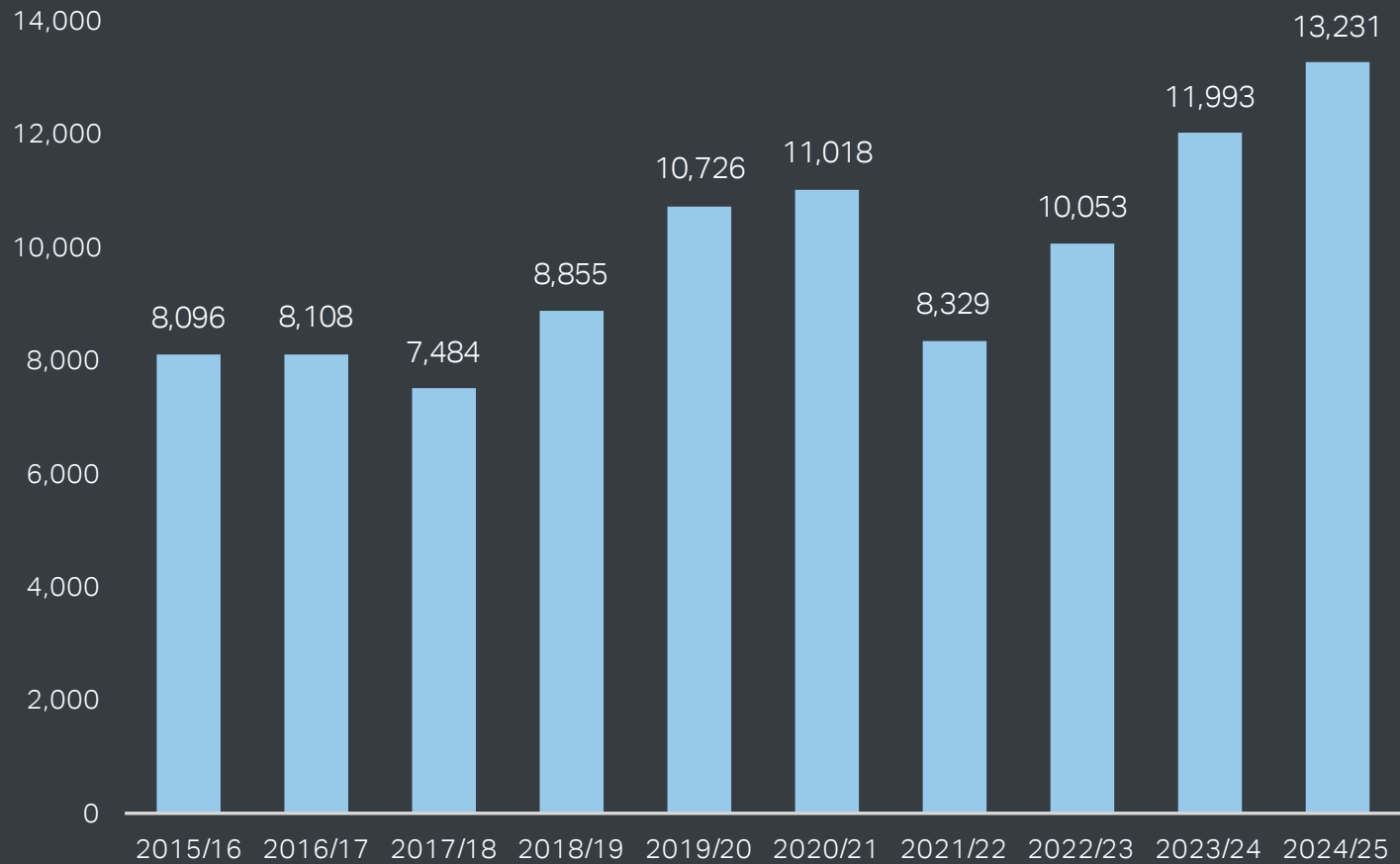
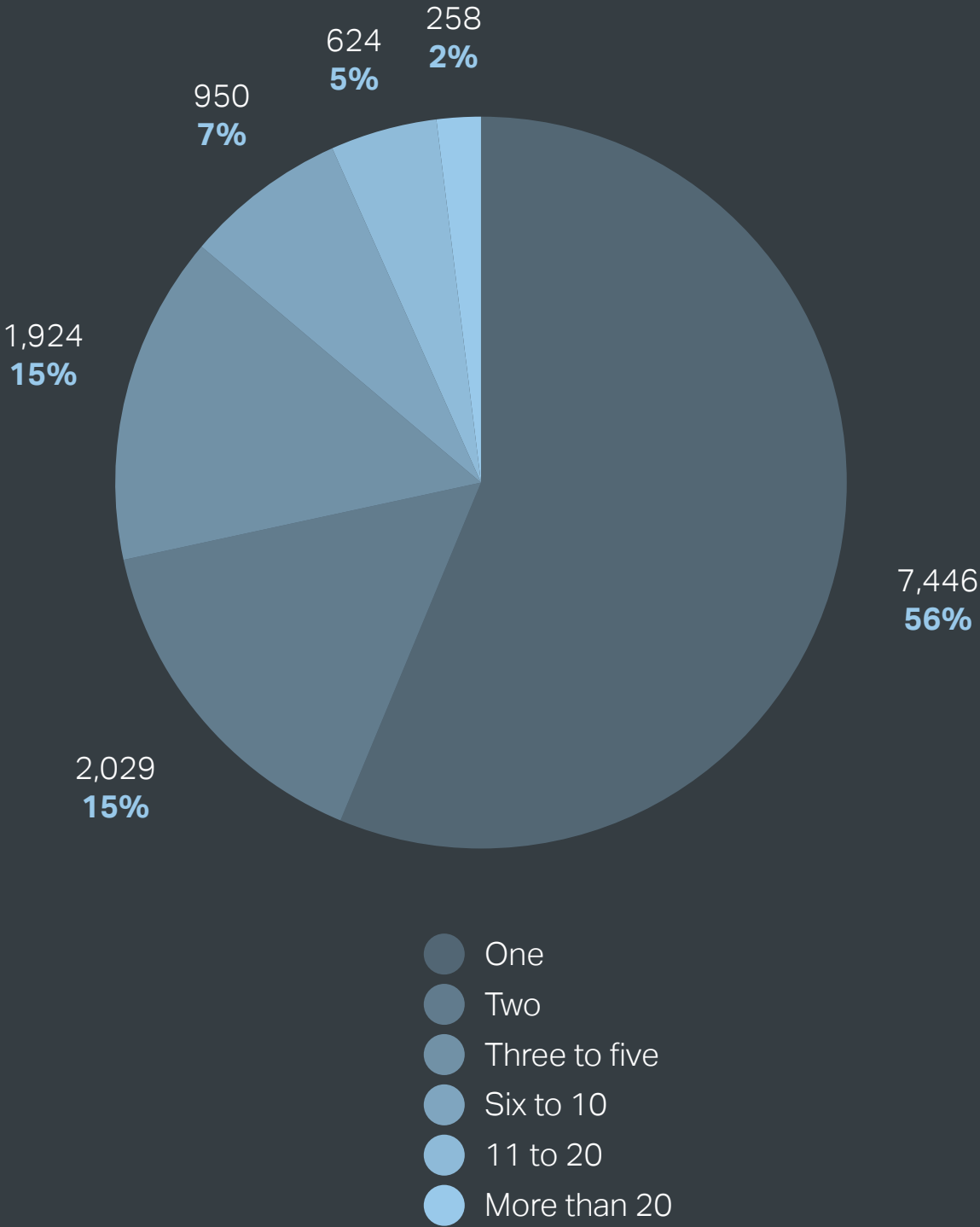


Chart 3: People seen rough sleeping in 2024/25, by number of times seen rough sleeping



Base: 13,231 people seen rough sleeping in 2024/25.

NUMBER OF TIMES SEEN ROUGH SLEEPING

7,446 (56%) people were seen rough sleeping only once in 2024/25, which compares to 6,956 (58%) seen rough sleeping just once in 2023/24.

882 (7%) people recorded rough sleeping in 2024/25 were seen more than ten times. 26 people were seen rough sleeping more than 50 times in the year, compared to 18 people with this many contacts in 2023/24, and 15 in 2022/23.

Outreach resources vary across boroughs, but even in places with extensive outreach coverage there may not be a shift every night. This will affect the frequency with which people may be recorded rough sleeping.

MONTHLY TREND

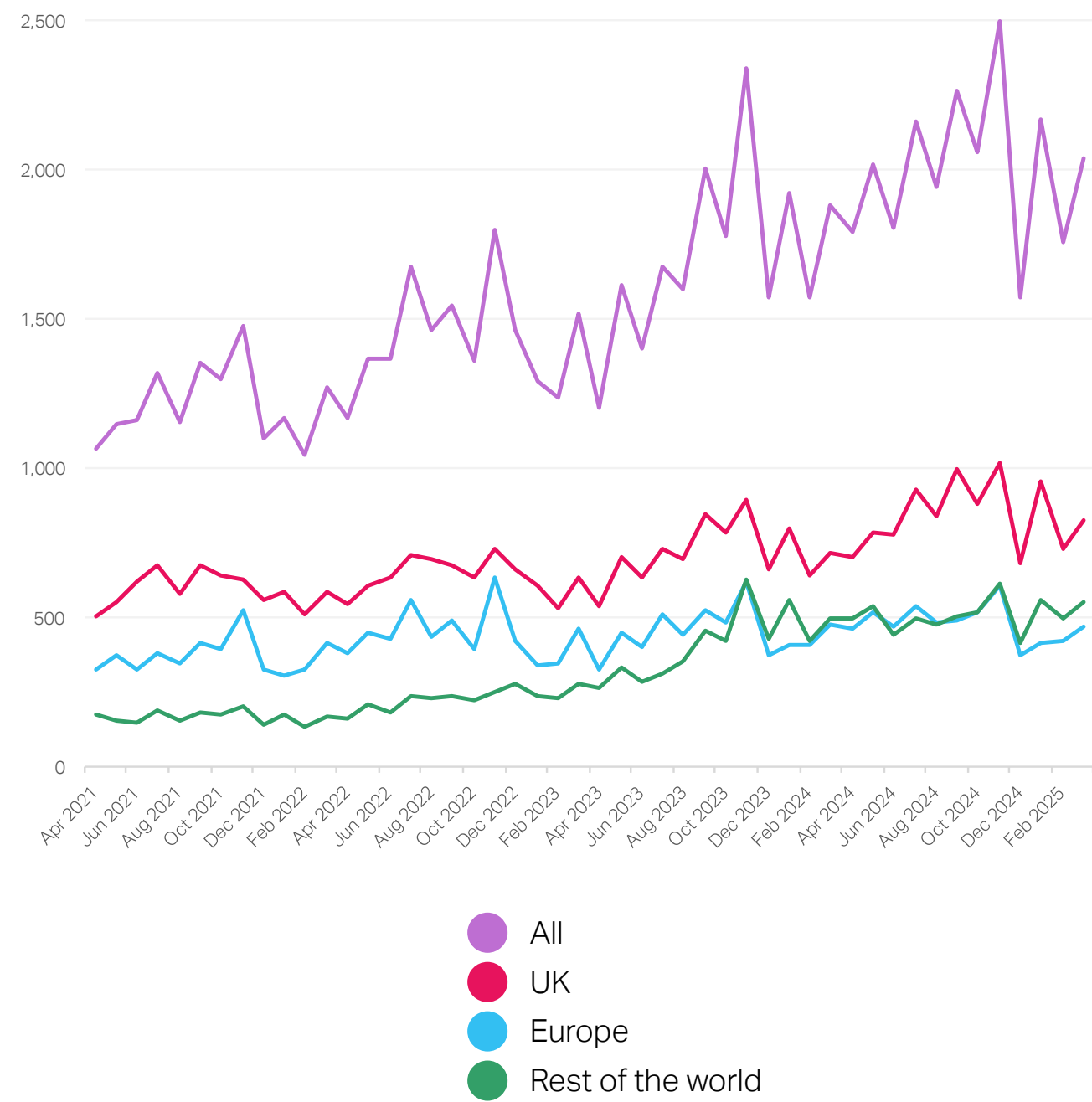
This chart shows the monthly trend in numbers of people seen rough sleeping over the last four years, broken down by nationality group.

The typical seasonal trend shows monthly totals increasing throughout the year from their lowest point during the December to February period, when winter shelters and other additional provision are in operation, and peaking in November, when the government’s annual street count takes place. It should be noted that even the lowest monthly totals of recent years are higher than the highest monthly totals in earlier years.

The highest ever monthly total was recorded in November 2024, when 2,500 people were seen rough sleeping. This was followed by the largest ever recorded month-to-month drop, with 1,575 people seen rough sleeping in December 2024 (925 fewer people), and then a large increase to the total of 2,166 people recorded in January 2025.

The nationality comparison confirms the trend first observed in 2023/24, with the numbers for the ‘Rest of the world’ group continuing to be mostly level with or higher than the numbers for people from Europe (excluding the UK). The higher numbers recorded for the ‘Rest of the world’ group are at least partially driven by the continuing phenomenon of people arriving on the streets following departure from asylum support accommodation.

Chart 4: Number of people seen rough sleeping per month, April 2021 - March 2025



SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

As in previous years, the borough in which the greatest number of people were seen rough sleeping was Westminster, with 2,612 people (20% of the overall London total).

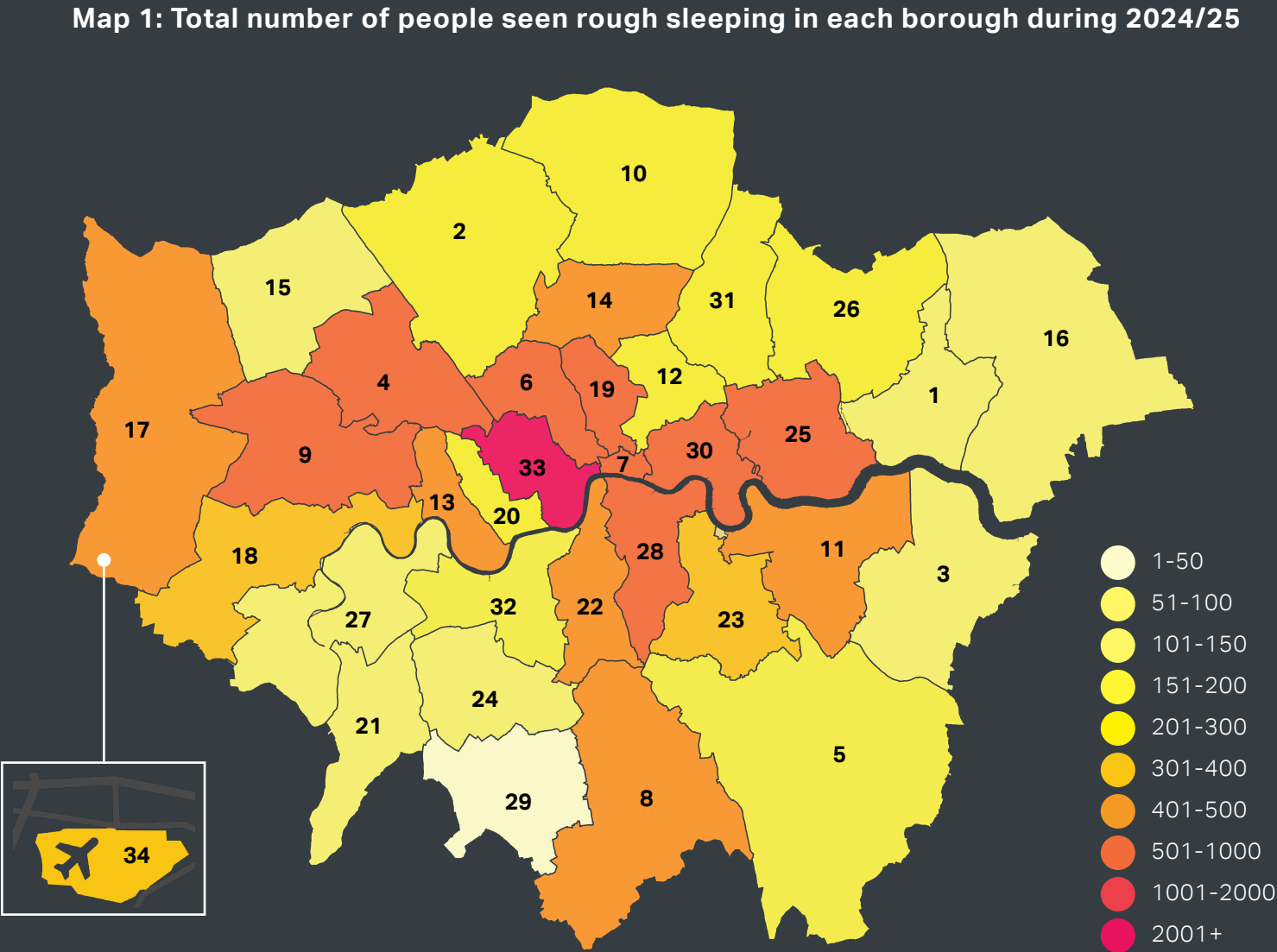
Nine boroughs recorded more than 500 rough sleepers during the year, and 24 of the 33 boroughs in London reported increases on the number of people seen rough sleeping in 2023/24. Lambeth has notably bucked the trend amongst the higher volume boroughs, by recording a 29% decrease.

A total of 301 people were seen rough sleeping at Heathrow airport, which is counted separately from Hillingdon, due to the specific rough sleeping issues found there.

During 2024/25, 86 people were recorded rough sleeping on buses, and five were recorded on the London Underground network.

Table 1: Boroughs in which the five highest totals of rough sleepers were recorded during 2024/25

Borough	2024/25	2023/24
Westminster	2,612	2,102
Camden	975	903
City of London	878	656
Ealing	723	710
Southwark	613	549



Key	Borough	Total	Key	Borough	Total
1	Barking & Dagenham	144	18	Hounslow	336
2	Barnet	204	19	Islington	546
3	Bexley	140	20	Kensington & Chelsea	218
4	Brent	551	21	Kingston upon Thames	135
5	Bromley	151	22	Lambeth	483
6	Camden	975	23	Lewisham	325
7	City of London	878	24	Merton	81
8	Croydon	469	25	Newham	545
9	Ealing	723	26	Redbridge	285
10	Enfield	253	27	Richmond	85
11	Greenwich	409	28	Southwark	613
12	Hackney	298	29	Sutton	43
13	Hammersmith & Fulham	439	30	Tower Hamlets	546
14	Haringey	410	31	Waltham Forest	239
15	Harrow	94	32	Wandsworth	178
16	Havering	67	33	Westminster	2612
17	Hillingdon	492	34	Heathrow	301

HISTORY PRIOR TO ROUGH SLEEPING

CHAIN records information about people’s circumstances prior to the start of a rough sleeping episode, including what type of accommodation they had been staying in, and the type and cause of departure from the accommodation. The information is collected for people who were seen rough sleeping for the first time ever, as well as for those who had returned to rough sleeping after a period away.

Of those new rough sleepers during 2024/25 with information recorded about their last settled base, 944 (18% of the total) reported that they had been staying in asylum support accommodation. 58% of new rough sleepers had come from some form of long-term accommodation, including 28% who had been living with family, friends or a partner, and 23% who had been tenants in private rented accommodation.

Among returning rough sleepers, 43% reported their last settled base as having been long-term accommodation, from which 20% were tenants in private rented accommodation, while 16% had been living with family, friends or a partner. 27% of returning rough sleepers had left short or medium-term accommodation (compared to 8% of new rough sleepers), of which 18% had been living in a hostel or other supported accommodation.

The definitions of new and returning rough sleepers used in the section are different to those used in the flow/stock/returner model referenced elsewhere in the bulletin, in order to enable reporting against the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) data-led framework to end rough sleeping. This means that the bases for new and returning rough sleepers on this page will differ from the totals for flow and returner given elsewhere.

Table 2: Last settled base of new and returning rough sleepers in 2024/25

Last settled base in the UK	New		Returning	
	No.	%	No.	%
Long-term accommodation				
Living with family/friends/partner	1,516	28.1%	286	16.2%
Private rented accommodation	1,226	22.7%	349	19.8%
Council tenancy (local authority accommodation)	188	3.5%	64	3.6%
Housing association/RSL accommodation	82	1.5%	32	1.8%
Sheltered housing/registered care accommodation	34	0.6%	25	1.4%
Employment-related accommodation (except armed forces)	34	0.6%	9	0.5%
Owner occupied accommodation	23	0.4%	3	0.2%
<i>Long-term accommodation subtotal</i>	<i>3,103</i>	<i>57.6%</i>	<i>768</i>	<i>43.5%</i>
Short or medium-term accommodation				
Hostel or other supported accommodation	234	4.3%	310	17.5%
Temporary accommodation (local authority)	146	2.7%	124	7.0%
B&B (not local authority TA)	22	0.4%	11	0.6%
Winter/night shelter	10	0.2%	17	1.0%
Clinic/Detox/Rehab	7	0.1%	4	0.2%
Squat	18	0.3%	13	0.7%
<i>Short or medium-term accommodation subtotal</i>	<i>437</i>	<i>8.1%</i>	<i>479</i>	<i>27.1%</i>
Institutional & armed forces accommodation				
Asylum support accommodation (NASS/other)	944	17.5%	28	1.6%
Care (local authority youth care)	11	0.2%	1	0.1%
Hospital	9	0.2%	16	0.9%
Prison	131	2.4%	112	6.3%
Probation accommodation	7	0.1%	7	0.4%
Armed forces accommodation	0	0.0%	1	0.1%
<i>Institutional & armed forces accommodation subtotal</i>	<i>1,102</i>	<i>20.4%</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>9.3%</i>
No settled base since arriving in UK	444	8.2%	242	13.7%
Other	132	2.4%	56	3.2%
Not known	172	3.2%	57	3.2%
Not recorded	3,502		1,242	
Total (excl. not recorded)	5,390	100.0%	1,767	100.0%
Total (incl. not recorded)	8,892		3,009	

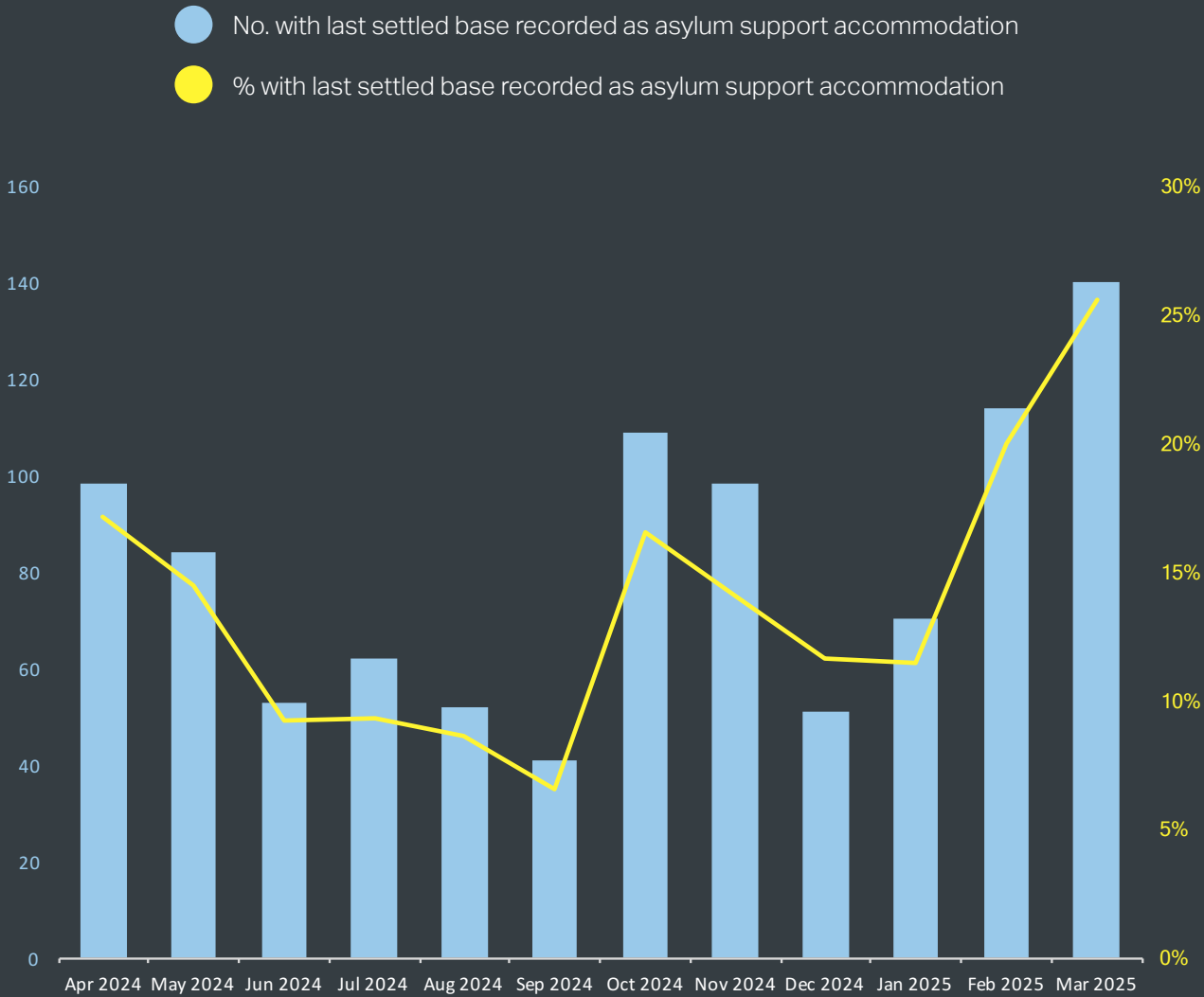
PEOPLE SEEN ROUGH SLEEPING AFTER LEAVING ASYLUM SUPPORT ACCOMMODATION

This chart provides a monthly breakdown of people who started a new rough sleeping episode during 2024/25, either as a new or returning rough sleeper, whose last settled base was recorded as asylum support accommodation. People included in this chart are also counted in Table 2 of this bulletin.

The chart shows that the number and proportion of people rough sleeping after leaving asylum support accommodation fluctuated throughout the year, albeit at similar overall levels to those recorded in 2023/24. It is likely that the decrease between April and July 2024 is related to a reduction in the pace of Home Office decision making on asylum applications, when there was a pause in the processing of claims made on or after 20 July 2023 for people who arrived in the UK without authorisation.

From July 2024, following a change in policy, the Home Office accelerated decision making on asylum claims, which correlates with increases in rough sleeping among people leaving asylum support accommodation between October 2024 and March 2025. The dip in December 2024 is likely to be related to a pause on evictions from asylum support accommodation over the Christmas period, as well as increased availability of winter night shelters for people experiencing homelessness.

Chart 5: New and returning rough sleepers during 2024/25 whose last settled base was recorded as asylum support accommodation, by month



Baseline for percentages is the total number of new and returning rough sleepers during the month who had information recorded about their last settled base (including that the last settled base was not known).

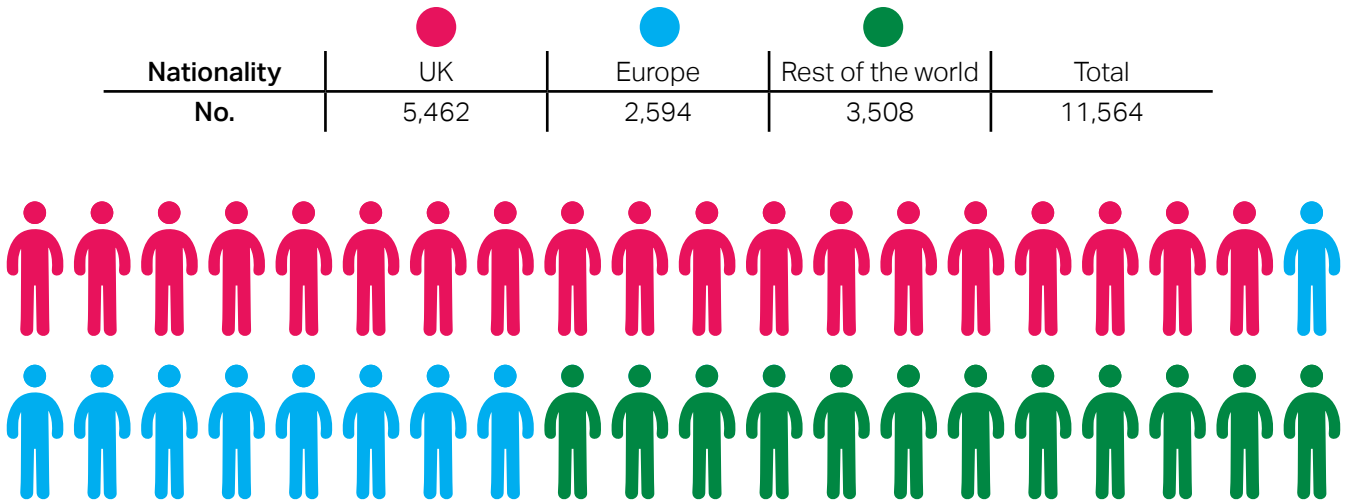
NATIONALITY

The nationality profile of people seen rough sleeping in London remains diverse, with a total of 139 different nationalities recorded during 2024/25. The proportion of people seen rough sleeping who were UK nationals was 47% (5,462 people), which is marginally higher than the proportion of 45% in 2023/24. The proportion of people from EEA countries was 21% (2,406 people), which is slightly lower than the proportion of 23% in 2023/24, and continues a declining trend across the last few years for this group.

For convenience of reporting, and due to specific implications around benefit entitlements and access to services, people from Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Australasia are sometimes grouped together under the overall heading of 'Rest of the world'. During 2024/25, the proportion of people seen rough sleeping from this 'Rest of the world' heading was 30%, which continues the trend first observed in 2023/24 for this group to account for a higher percentage than those from European countries (excluding the UK), who represented 22% of the total this year. Europeans were the only overall grouping which showed a decrease in numbers between 2023/24 and 2024/25, with 71 fewer people seen rough sleeping.

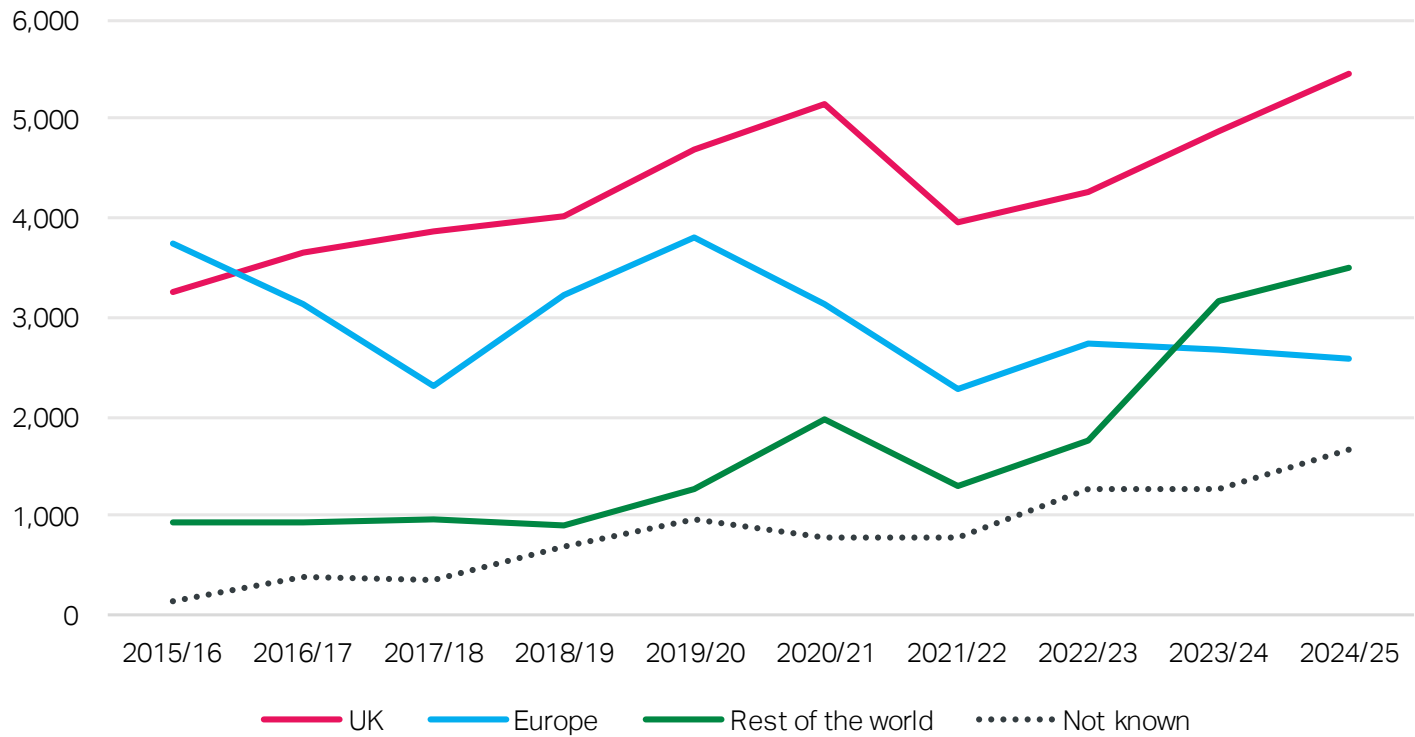
The most commonly recorded nationalities in 2024/25 have remained consistent with those in 2023/24, with Romanians (828, 7%) comprising the single largest non-UK nationality, while Eritreans (636, 5%) are the second most numerous. Poles (573, 5%) have continued to constitute the third most common non-UK nationality, while people from Sudan (452, 4%) and India (396, 3%) are the fourth and fifth most frequently seen. Although Romanians remain the most commonly recorded non-UK nationality, there has been a decrease in their numbers, while the totals for the other top five non-UK nationalities have shown less change compared to those for 2023/24. The total for UK nationals has increased by 593 people.

Chart 6: Nationality of people seen rough sleeping in 2024/25



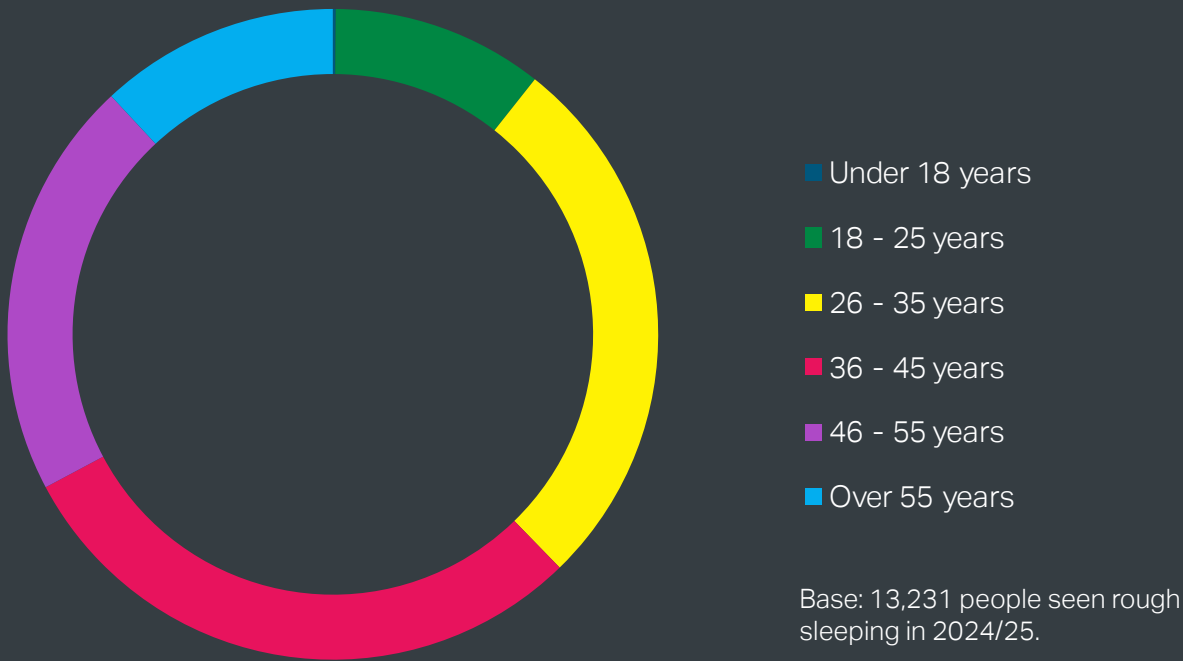
Base: 11,564 people seen rough sleeping during 2024/25 whose nationality was known.

Chart 7: Nationality of people seen rough sleeping, 2015/16 - 2024/25



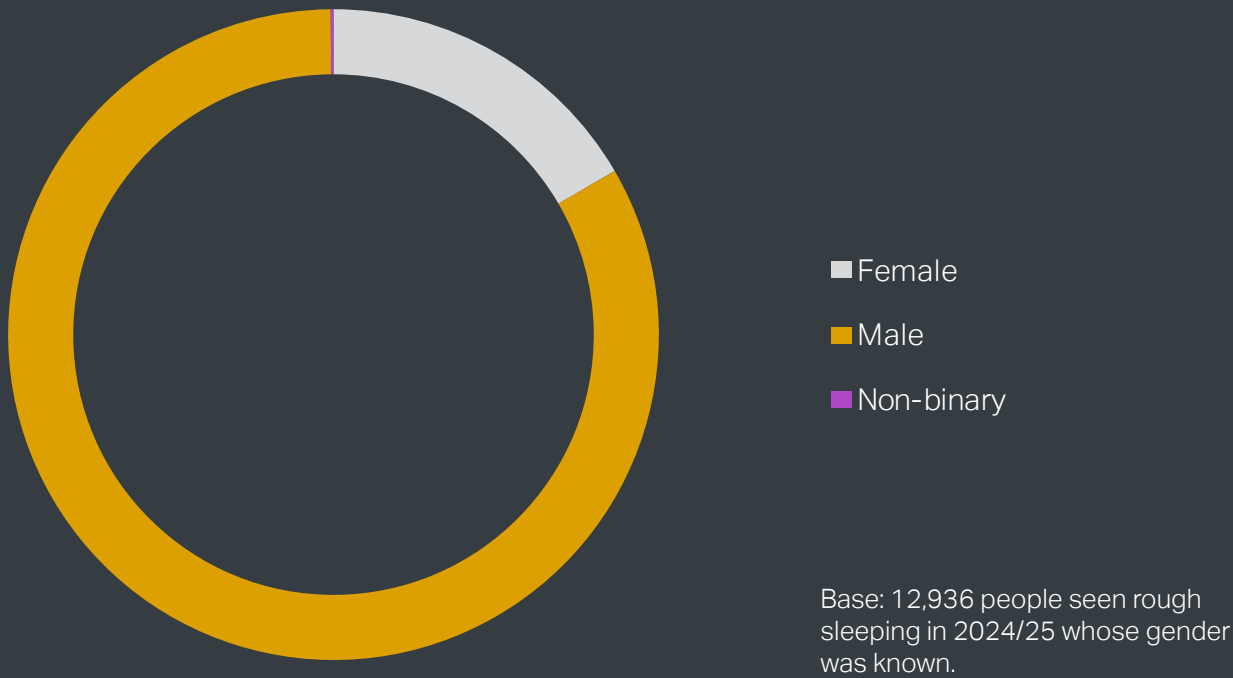
DEMOGRAPHICS

Chart 8: People seen rough sleeping in 2024/25, by age



Age	No.	%
Under 18 years	19	0%
18 - 25 years	1,392	11%
26 - 35 years	3,580	27%
36 - 45 years	3,902	29%
46 - 55 years	2,760	21%
Over 55 years	1,578	12%
Total	13,231	100%

Chart 9: People seen rough sleeping in 2024/25, by gender

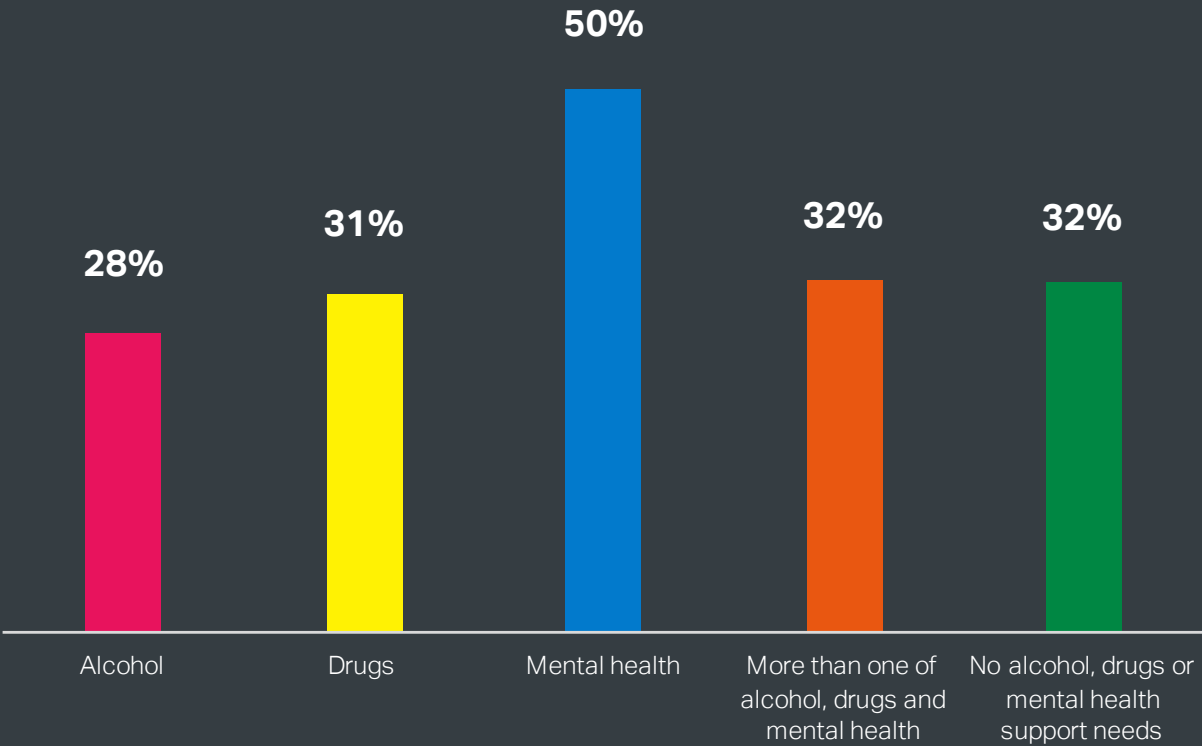


Gender	No.	%
Female	2,149	17%
Male	10,769	83%
Non-binary	18	0%
Total	12,936	100%

The gender and age profile of people seen rough sleeping in 2024/25 shows only minor variation from that of people seen in 2023/24. The majority of people seen rough sleeping were male (83%), and aged between 26 and 55 (77%). 11% of those seen rough sleeping in 2024/25 were aged 25 or under, compared to 10% in 2023/24. People in the over 55 age group represented 12% of the total in 2024/25, which is the same proportion as recorded in 2023/24.

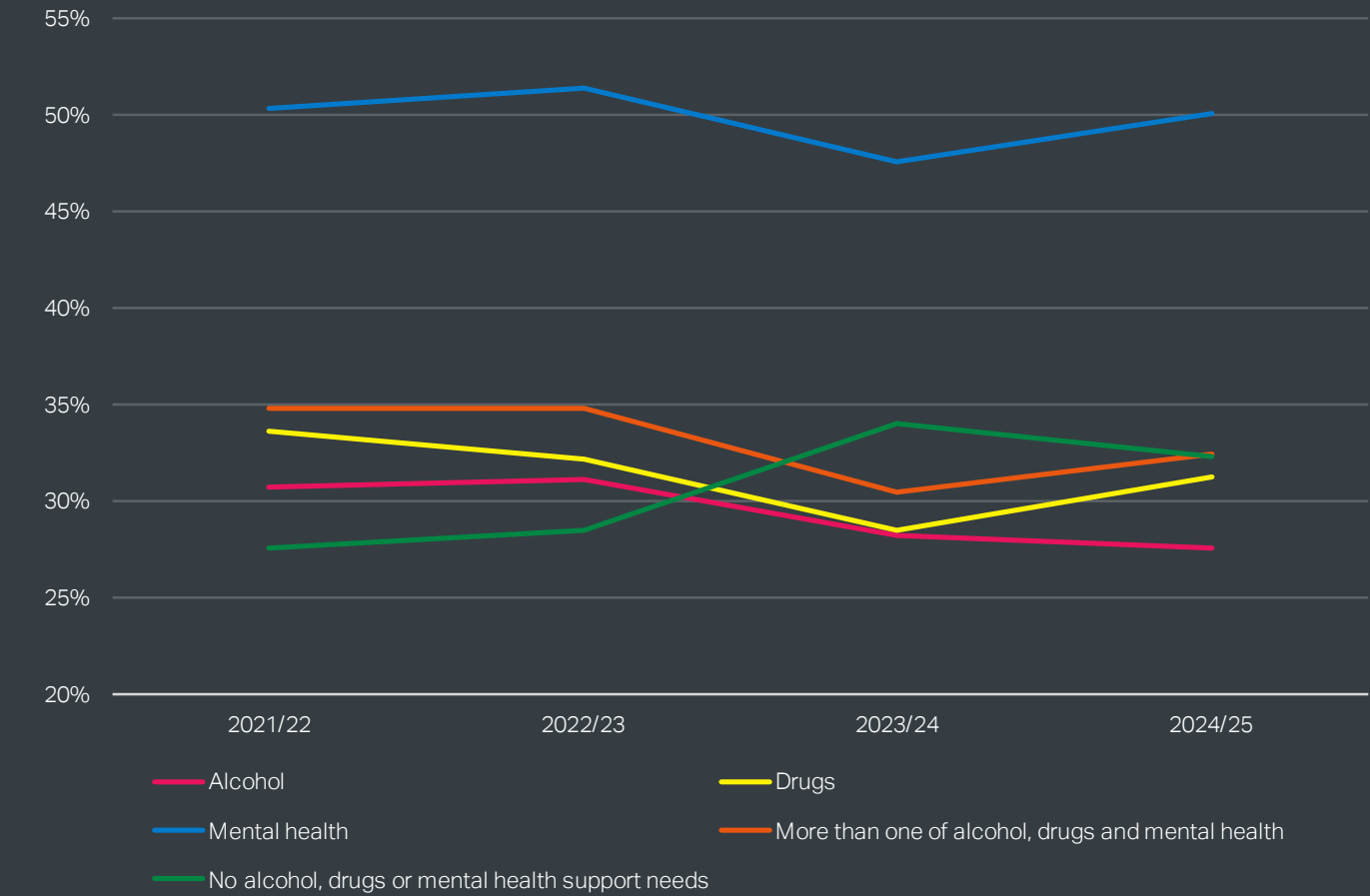
SUPPORT NEEDS

Chart 10: People seen rough sleeping in 2024/25, by support needs



Base: 9,611 people seen rough sleeping in 2024/25 who had been assessed for at least one of the three key support needs.

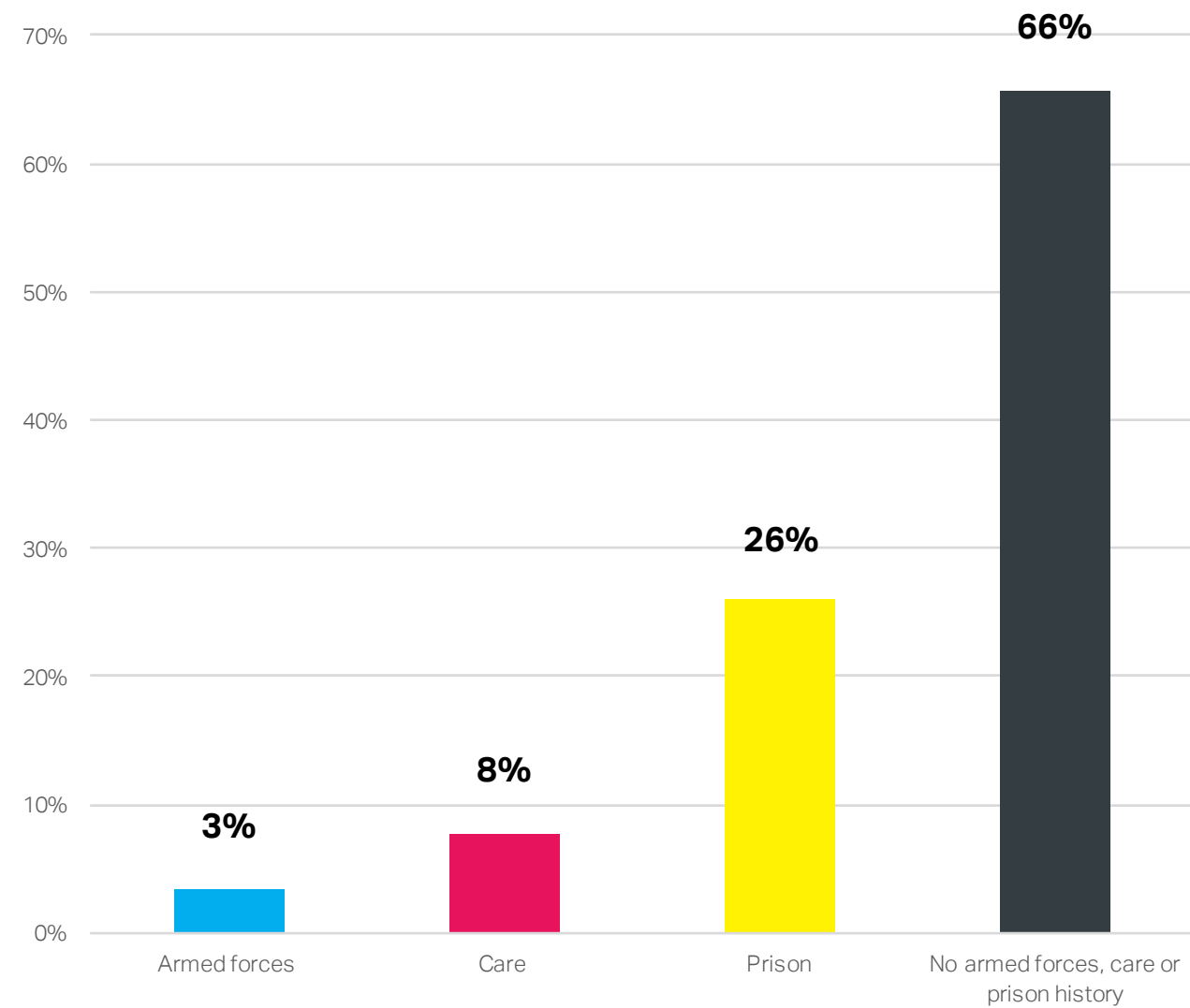
Chart 11: Support needs proportions for people seen rough sleeping, 2021/22 - 2024/25



The proportions of people seen rough sleeping with drugs or mental health support needs increased slightly in 2024/25, with 31% recorded as having a drugs support need, compared to 29% in 2023/24, and 50% recorded as having a mental health support need, compared to 48% in 2023/24. The proportion of people with a need relating to alcohol use remained steady, at 28% in 2024/25, compared to the same proportion in 2023/24.

32% of people seen rough sleeping in 2024/25 who had received an assessment had more than one of the three needs, compared to 30% in 2023/24, while 32% were found to have none of the three needs, compared to 34% in 2023/24.

Chart 12: People seen rough sleeping in 2024/25, by institutional and armed forces history



Base: 9,419 people seen rough sleeping in 2024/25 who were assessed for at least one of the three histories.

INSTITUTIONAL AND ARMED FORCES HISTORY

CHAIN records information about whether people seen rough sleeping have had experience of spending time in prison or in local authority care as a young person, or of serving in the armed forces. This information indicates whether individuals have ever spent time in one of these settings, and does not necessarily imply that this was recent. It can include time spent in one of these settings in any country, and does not necessarily imply that it was in the UK.

328 people seen rough sleeping in 2024/25 had experience of serving in the armed forces, of whom 125 were UK nationals. 721 people seen rough sleeping in 2024/25 had previous experience of living in care (compared to 639 in 2023/24), and 2,453 had experience of serving time in prison (compared to 2,175 in 2023/24). Of the 721 people with experience of living in care, 94 were aged 25 or under.

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