



CHAIN ANNUAL BULLETIN

GREATER
LONDON
2022/23



CHAIN

SUPPORTED BY

MAYOR OF LONDON

This bulletin presents information about people seen rough sleeping by outreach teams in London between April 2022 and March 2023. 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 2022/23 annual report can be obtained from the GLA Datastore at <http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>.

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

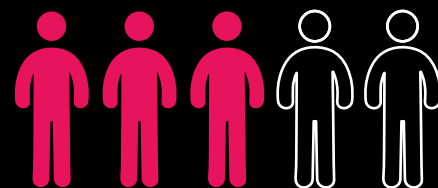
10,053 people were seen rough sleeping by outreach workers in London during 2022/23.



- This represents a 21% increase compared to the total of 8,329 people seen in 2021/22.
- 58% of people recorded rough sleeping during 2022/23 were seen bedded down only once during the year.
- Outreach teams and other support services helped 4,292 (43%) of these people to access accommodation or return to their home area.

NEW & LONGER-TERM ROUGH SLEEPERS

6,391 people (64% of the total) were seen sleeping rough for the first time in London in 2022/23.



- 2,084 people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 had also been seen in 2021/22 (21% of the total). This group are also referred to in the report as 'stock'.
- 1,578 people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 were those who had returned to rough sleeping after at least a year away (16% of the total).
- The returner group has increased by the largest proportion (31%, compared to 26% for new rough sleepers, and 3% for the stock group), although new rough sleepers accounted for the greatest increase in actual numbers.

HISTORY PRIOR TO ROUGH SLEEPING

In October 2022, CHAIN introduced new methodology for recording people’s history prior to rough sleeping.



- 64% of new rough sleepers reported their last settled base as being some form of long-term accommodation, compared to 46% 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 20% were evicted.
- This compares to 9% of returning rough sleepers being asked to leave, while 20% were evicted.

NATIONALITY

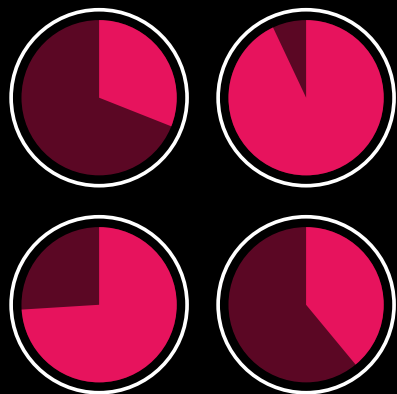
People from 140 different countries were seen rough sleeping in London in 2022/23.



- Just under half (49%) of people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 were from the UK, while slightly under a third (30%) were from countries in the European Economic Area (EEA).
- People from non-European countries accounted for 20% of all those seen rough sleeping. This is slightly higher than the proportion of 17% in 2021/22, and continues a trend of a greater presence for this group.
- Romanians continued to represent the single biggest non-UK nationality group, comprising 12% of all people seen rough sleeping in the year.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND SUPPORT NEEDS

Just over half (51%) of the people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 had a support need relating to mental health.



- 32% had a drugs support need, while 31% had an alcohol support need. Just over one third (35%) had more than one support need relating to alcohol, drugs, or mental health.
- 83% of people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 were men.
- 9% of people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 were aged 25 or under.
- 29% of people seen rough sleeping during the period have experience of spending time in prison.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SEEN ROUGH SLEEPING

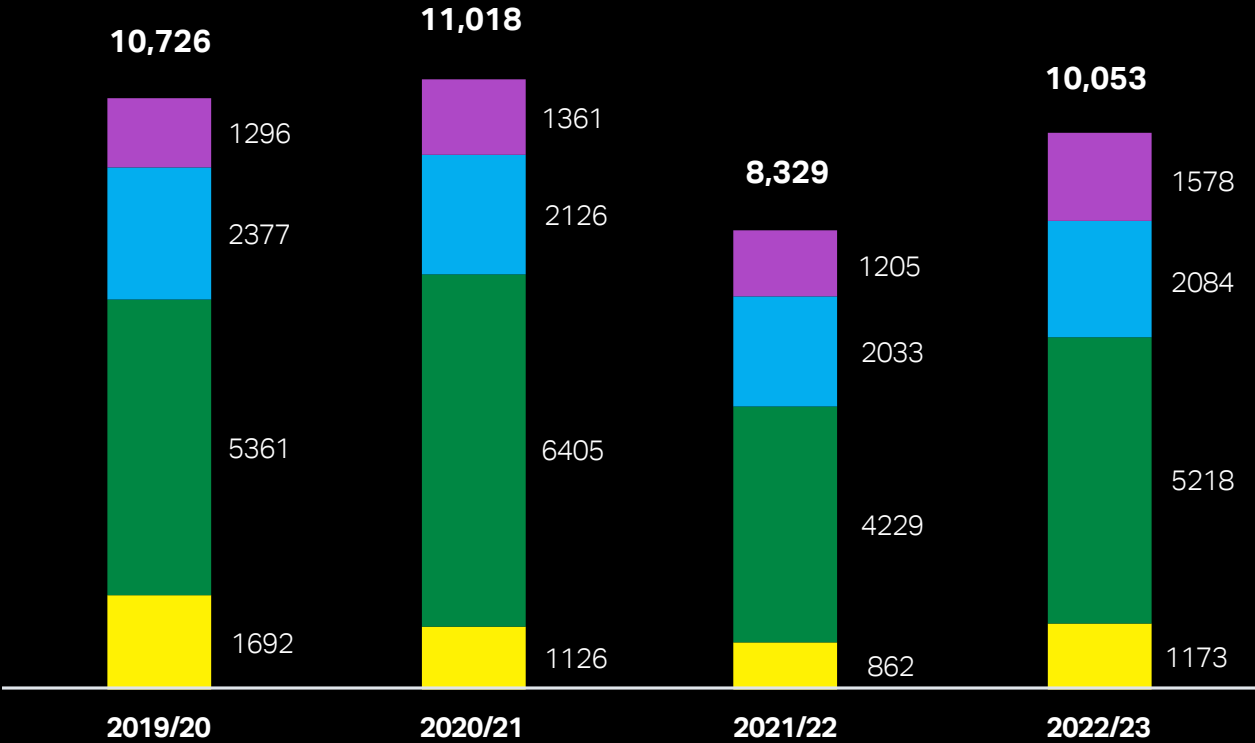
10,053

people were seen rough sleeping in London in 2022/23, which is a 21% increase compared to the total of 8,329 people seen in 2021/22. This compares to a 24% decrease between 2020/21 and 2021/22, and a 3% increase between 2019/20 and 2020/21.

6,391

people were seen rough sleeping for the first time this year (also referred to as flow), which is 64% of all people seen rough sleeping in the period. Of this group, 71% were only seen once, and 18% were categorised as 'unidentified'. Just over one fifth (21%) of people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 were also seen in the preceding year (stock group). Around one sixth (16%) of people seen rough sleeping were in the returner group, meaning they had been seen rough sleeping in the past but not in 2021/22. All three groups have shown increases in their numbers between 2021/22 and 2022/23. The returner group increased by the largest proportion, although the greatest increase in actual numbers was in the flow group.

Chart 1: People seen rough sleeping, by flow, stock, returner breakdown, 2019/20 - 2022/23



Category	Description
<div></div> Flow - unidentified	People who had never been seen rough sleeping prior to 2022/23 (i.e. new rough sleepers), who were recorded without a name, and with only one contact.
<div></div> Flow - identified	People who had never been seen rough sleeping prior to 2022/23 (i.e. new rough sleepers), who were recorded with a name, and/or with more than one contact.
<div></div> Stock	People who were also seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 (i.e. those seen across a minimum of two consecutive years).
<div></div> Returner	People who were first seen rough sleeping prior to 2021/22, but were not seen during 2020/21 (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 21% increase in 2022/23 is the equal highest proportionate increase during the ten year period, matching the 21% increase seen in 2019/20. The 2022/23 total is 54% higher than the total of 6,508 people seen rough sleeping ten years ago, in 2013/14.

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. Although this initiative started in March 2020, the impact was masked in the 2020/21 CHAIN total by the high starting point at the beginning of that year. The higher total in 2022/23 is likely to be a reflection of increases in the cost of living, and the winding down of Covid-19 emergency provisions.

Chart 2: People seen rough sleeping by year, 2013/14 - 2022/23

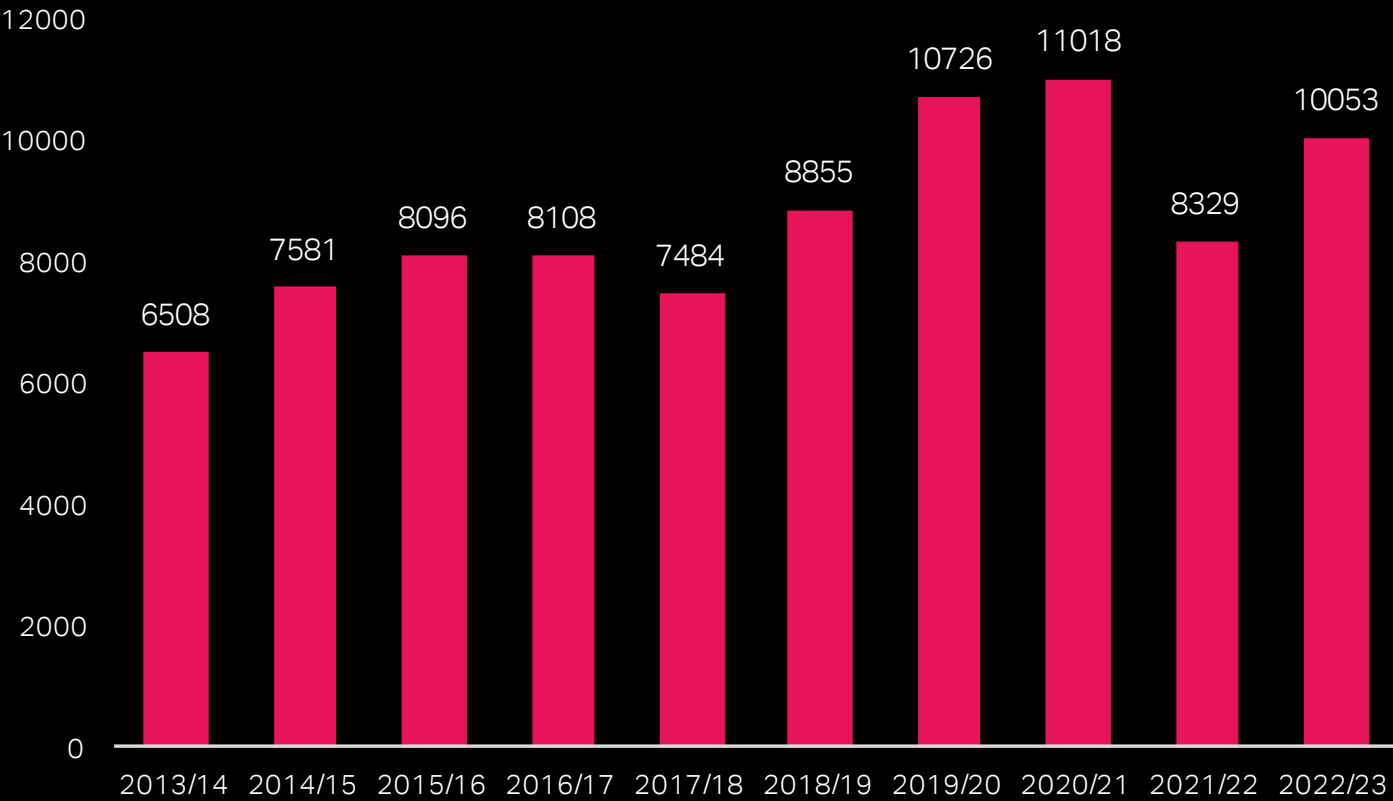
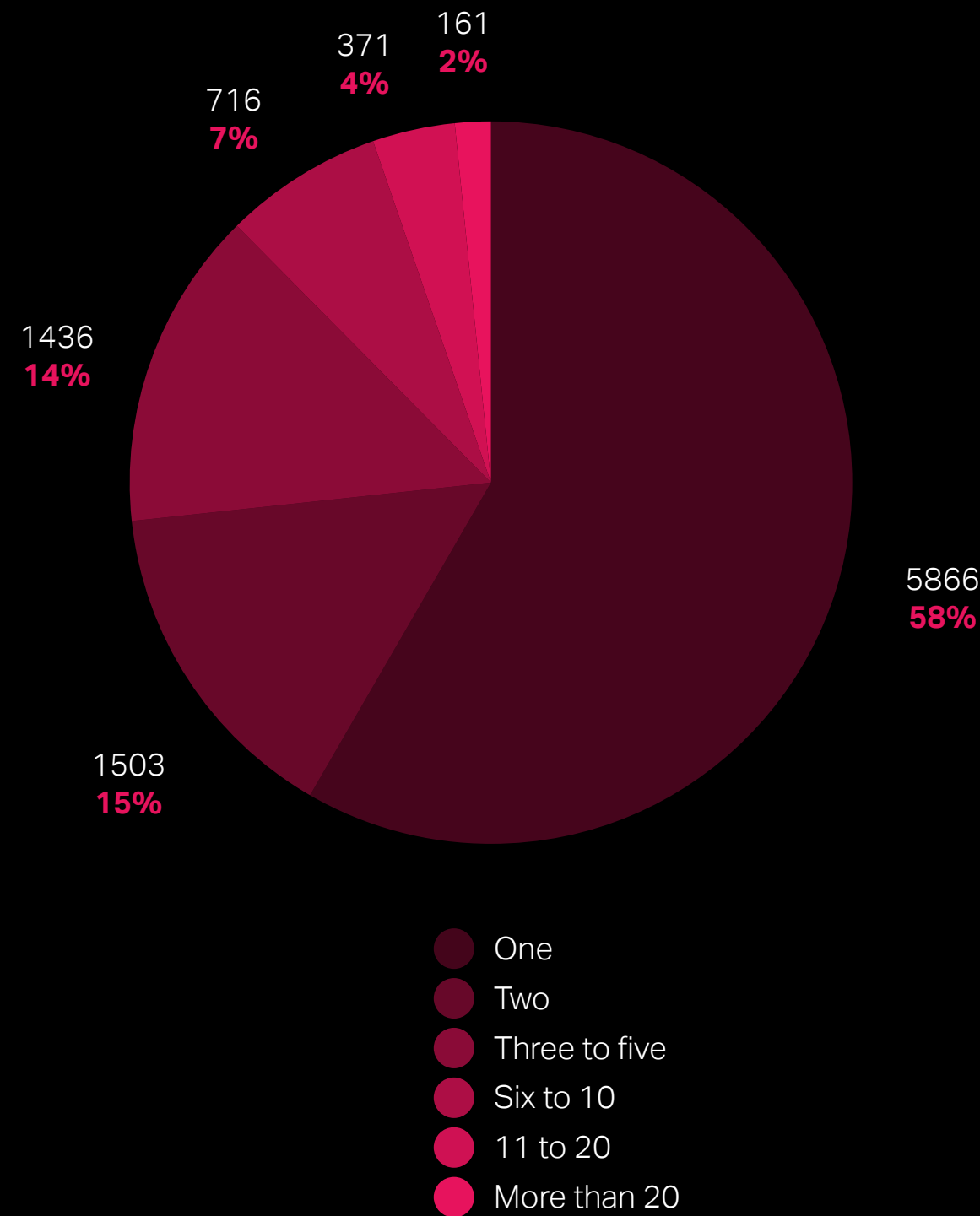


Chart 3: People seen rough sleeping in 2022/23, by number of times seen rough sleeping



Base: 10,053 people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23

NUMBER OF TIMES SEEN ROUGH SLEEPING

5,866 (58%) people were seen rough sleeping only once in 2022/23, which compares to 4,751 (57%) seen rough sleeping just once in 2021/22, and 6,870 (62%) seen rough sleeping just once in 2020/21.

1 in 20 (5%) people recorded rough sleeping in 2022/23 were seen more than ten times. 15 people were seen rough sleeping more than 50 times in the year, compared to 19 people with this many contacts in 2021/22, and 13 in 2020/21.

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

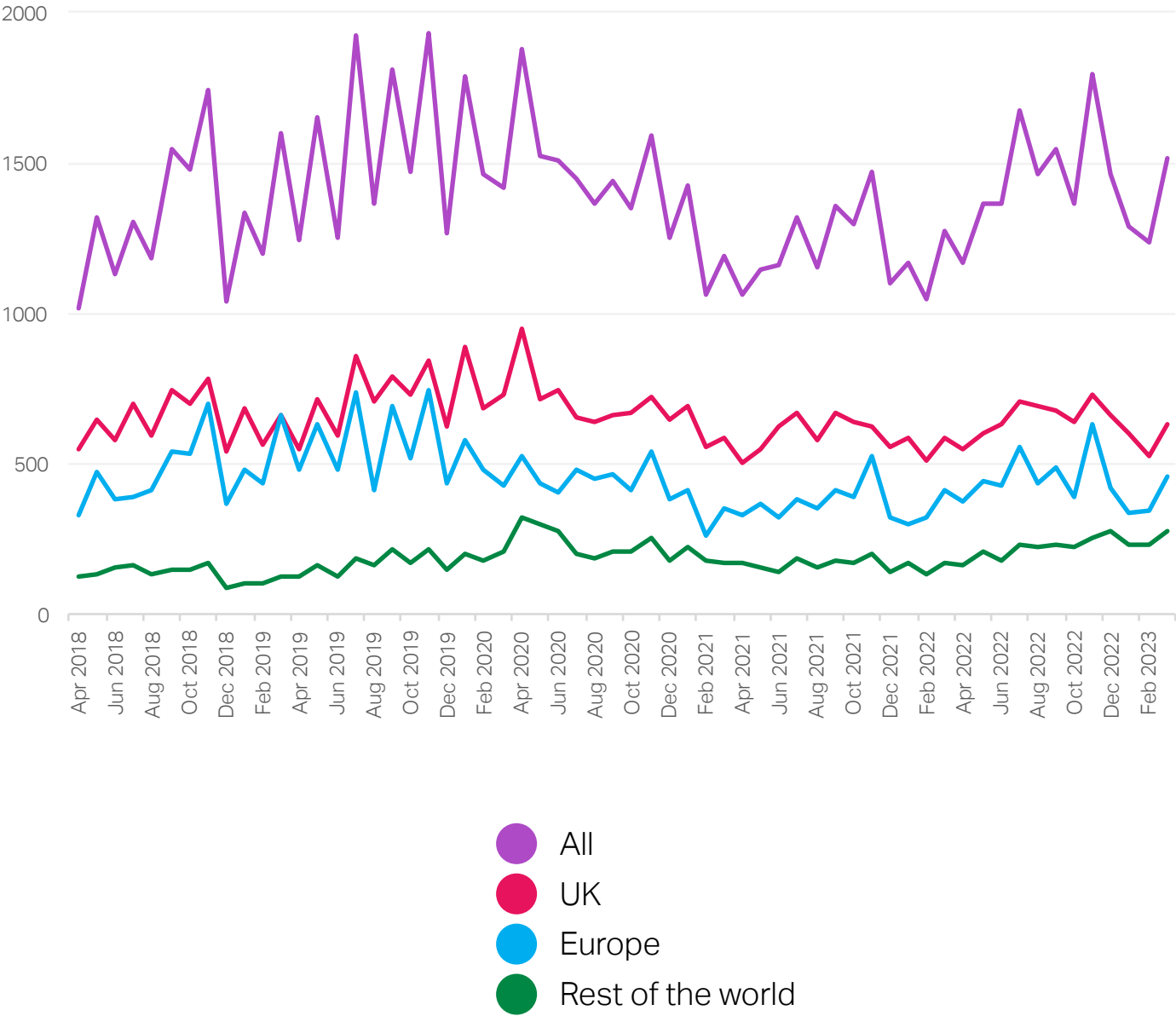
The chart shows the monthly trend in numbers of people seen rough sleeping over the last five years, broken down by nationality group.

The All line shows overall numbers seen rough sleeping per month. Historically (including periods prior to that shown in this chart), the typical trend shows rough sleeping numbers at their highest throughout the summer, then starting to decline in the autumn, albeit with a peak in November, coinciding with the Government’s annual street count. Numbers continue at a lower level during the winter months, as winter shelters and other additional provision come into operation, before picking up again in the spring.

Peaks and troughs became much more frequent between late 2018 and early 2020, during which time bimonthly street counts were introduced as part of the Government’s Rough Sleeping Initiative, supplementing the traditional annual count in November. The pattern during the Covid-19 pandemic period shows a variation from previous periods, with a peak in April 2020 relating to the start of the pandemic and the associated lockdown. Following that early peak, the ongoing trend throughout the rest of 2020/21 was a decline in numbers seen rough sleeping, which coincided with the Government’s Everyone In initiative. As emergency Covid-19 provisions wind down, the trend is returning to pre-pandemic levels, although slightly less pronounced.

The lowest monthly total during 2022/23 was recorded in April 2022, when 1,172 people were seen rough sleeping. The highest monthly total was in November 2022, when 1,799 people were seen.

Chart 4: Number of people seen rough sleeping per month, April 2018 - March 2023



SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

As in previous years, the borough in which the greatest number of people were seen rough sleeping was Westminster, with 2,050 people (20% of the overall London total). However, this is the second lowest annual total for Westminster since 2010/11.

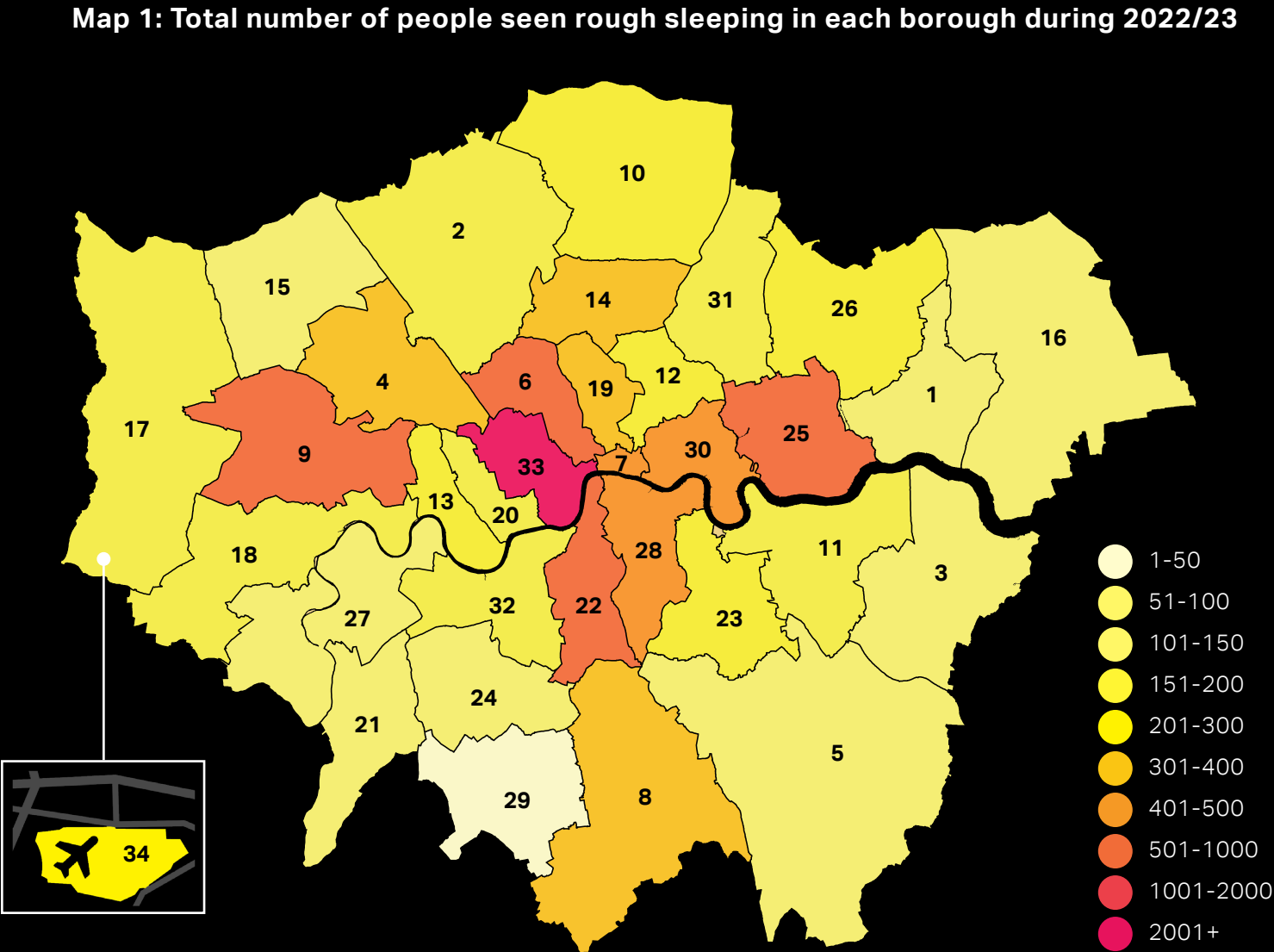
Five boroughs recorded more than 500 rough sleepers during the year. All but three of the 33 boroughs in London reported increases on the number of people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22.

A total of 233 people were seen rough sleeping at Heathrow airport, which is counted separately from Hillingdon, due to the specific rough sleeping issues found there.

During 2022/23, 142 people were recorded rough sleeping on buses, and 36 were recorded on the London Underground network.

Table 1: Boroughs in which the five highest totals of rough sleepers were recorded during 2022/23

Borough	2022/23	2021/22
Westminster	2050	1698
Camden	719	666
Lambeth	623	438
Ealing	563	448
Newham	503	428



Key	Borough	Total	Key	Borough	Total
1	Barking & Dagenham	139	18	Hounslow	196
2	Barnet	166	19	Islington	337
3	Bexley	92	20	Kensington & Chelsea	199
4	Brent	373	21	Kingston upon Thames	120
5	Bromley	92	22	Lambeth	623
6	Camden	719	23	Lewisham	296
7	City of London	482	24	Merton	63
8	Croydon	373	25	Newham	503
9	Ealing	563	26	Redbridge	248
10	Enfield	219	27	Richmond	86
11	Greenwich	196	28	Southwark	435
12	Hackney	246	29	Sutton	30
13	Hammersmith & Fulham	238	30	Tower Hamlets	460
14	Haringey	304	31	Waltham Forest	186
15	Harrow	96	32	Wandsworth	173
16	Havering	79	33	Westminster	2050
17	Hillingdon	167	34	Heathrow	233

NATIONALITY

The nationality profile of rough sleepers in London remains diverse, with a total of 140 different nationalities recorded during 2022/23. The proportion of people seen rough sleeping who were UK nationals was 49%, which is only slightly changed from the proportions of 52% in 2021/22, and 50% in 2020/21. The proportion of rough sleepers from EEA countries was 30%, which is virtually unchanged from the 29% recorded in both 2021/22 and 2020/21.

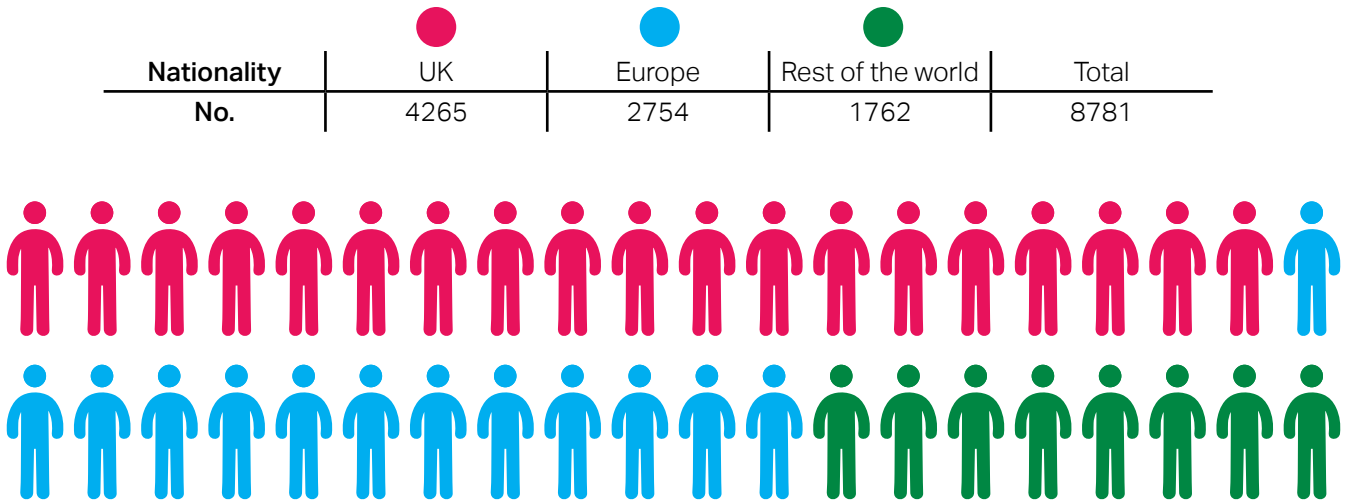
The proportion of people seen rough sleeping who were from non-European countries has increased slightly, at 20% compared to 17% in 2021/22. This figure continues a trend towards a higher proportion of non-European people seen rough sleeping, first noted with the 19% recorded in 2020/21, compared to the range of 11%-13% typically seen in earlier years. People from African countries accounted for 10% of all rough sleepers in 2022/23 (859 people), compared to 9% in 2021/22 (640 people) and 11% in 2020/21 (1,118 people). Asian nationals constituted 8% of people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 (712 people), compared to 7% in 2021/22 (509 people), and 7% in 2020/21 (702 people).

As in previous recent years, Romanians (1,031, 12%) comprise the single largest non-UK nationality, with Poles (550, 6%) making up the second largest. People from Eritrea (259, 3%) and India (255, 3%) are the third and fourth most numerous non-UK nationalities.

The number of people seen rough sleeping whose nationality was not known was 1,272, which is a significant increase on the figures of 792 in 2021/22 and 771 in 2020/21.

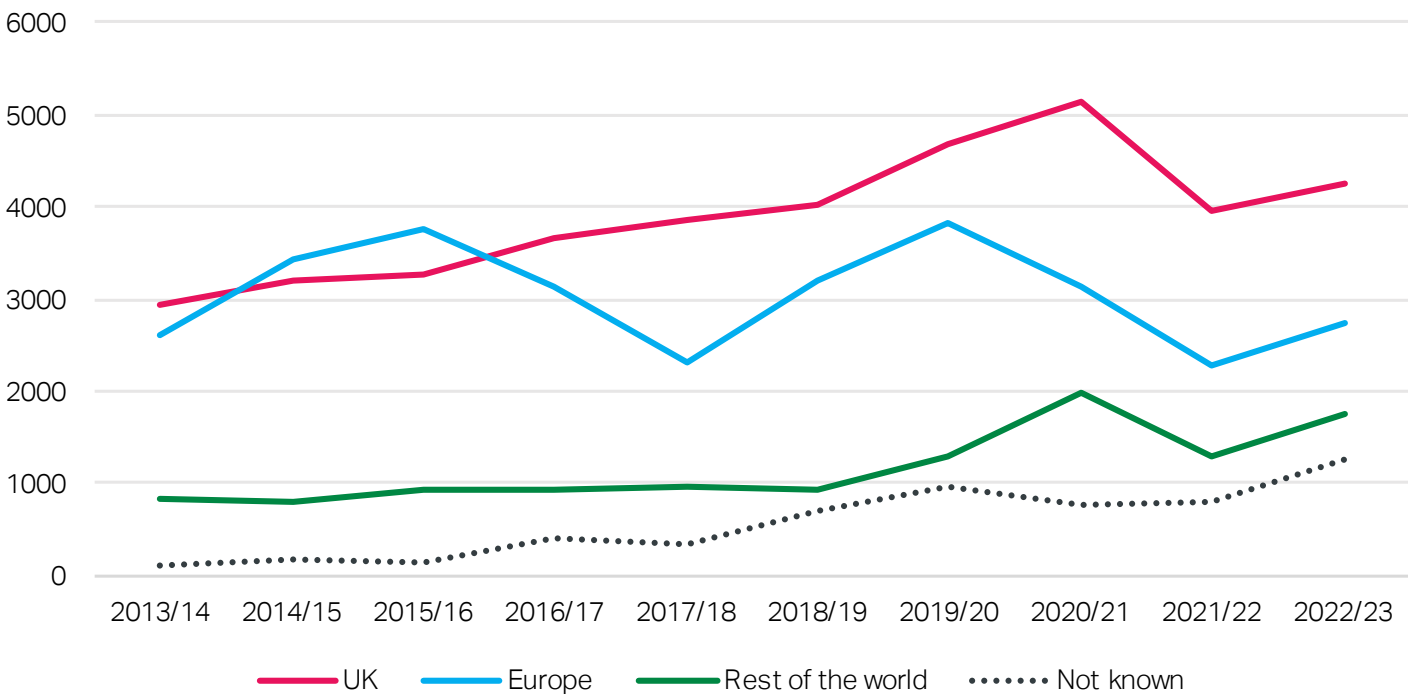
The high proportion of people whose nationality was not known means that commentary on nationality trends should be treated with caution. It should be borne in mind that non-UK nationals tend to be more likely than UK nationals to be recorded as unknown nationality.

Chart 5: Nationality of people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23



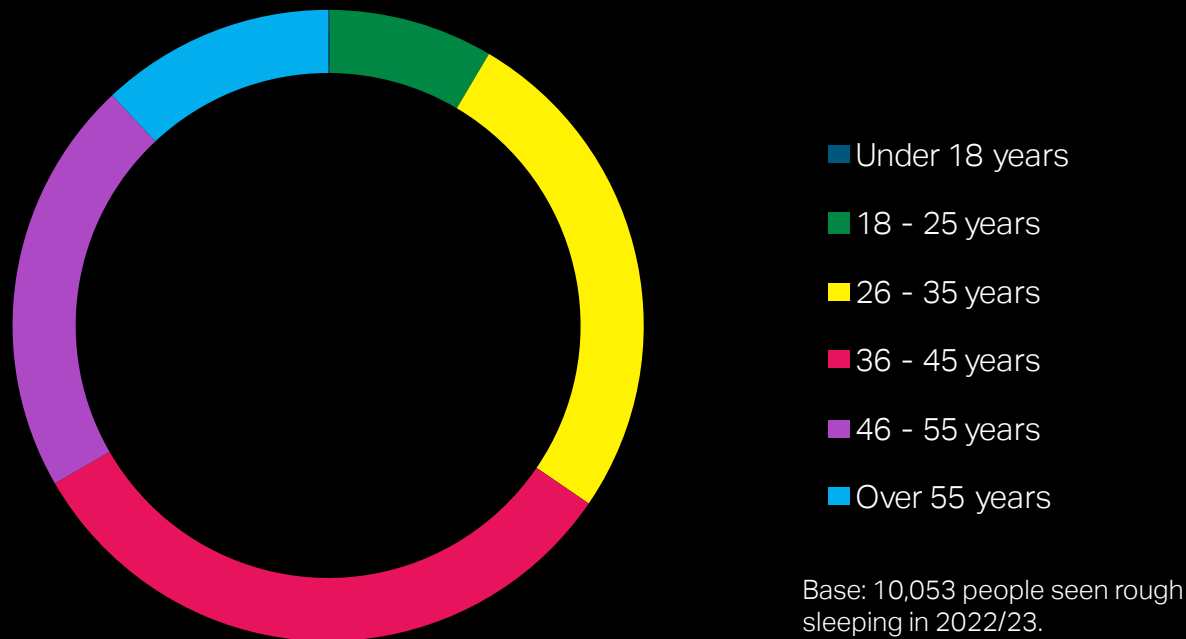
Base: 8,781 people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 whose nationality was known.

Chart 6: Nationality of people seen rough sleeping, 2013/14 - 2022/23



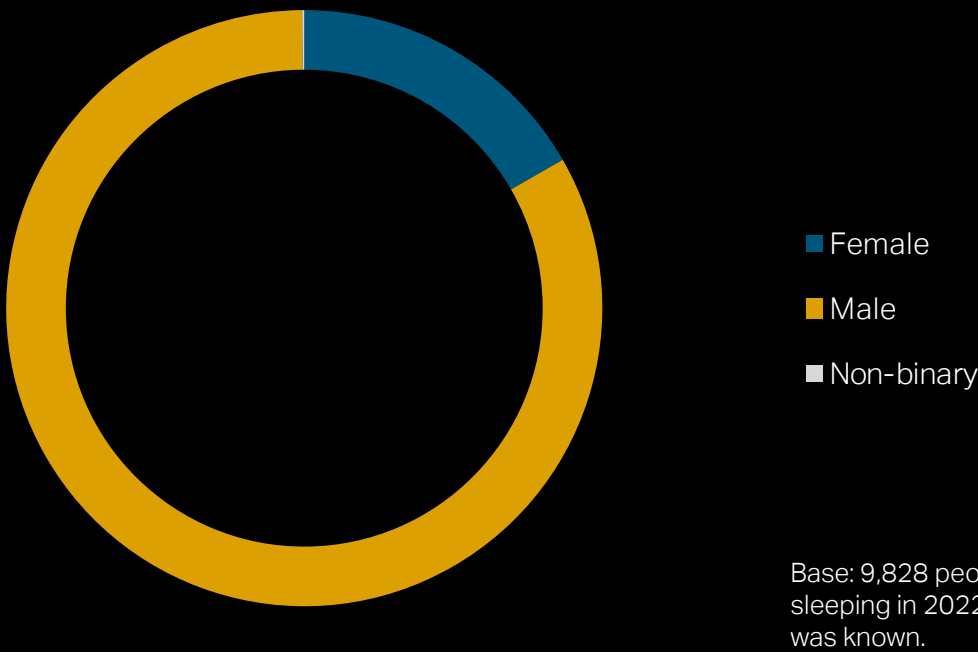
DEMOGRAPHICS

Chart 7: People seen rough sleeping in 2022/23, by age



Age	No.	%
Under 18 years	9	0%
18 - 25 years	847	8%
26 - 35 years	2616	26%
36 - 45 years	3229	32%
46 - 55 years	2146	21%
Over 55 years	1206	12%
Total	10053	100%

Chart 8: People seen rough sleeping in 2022/23, by gender

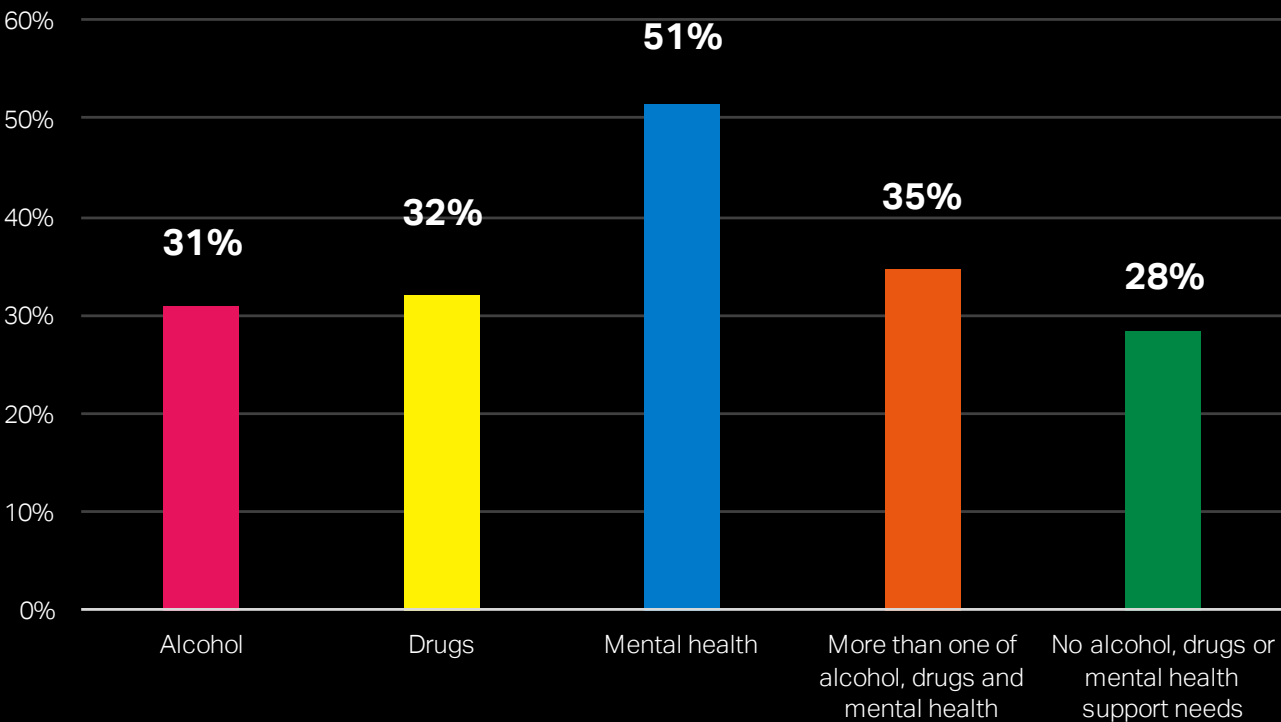


Gender	No.	%
Female	1642	17%
Male	8175	83%
Non-binary	11	0%
Total	9828	100%

The gender and age profile of people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 shows little variation from that of people seen in 2021/22. The majority of rough sleepers (83%) are male, while around four fifths (79%) are aged between 26 and 55. Just under one tenth (9%, 856 people) of those seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 were aged 25 or under, compared to 8% (707 people) in 2021/22.

SUPPORT NEEDS

Chart 9: People seen rough sleeping in 2022/23, by support needs

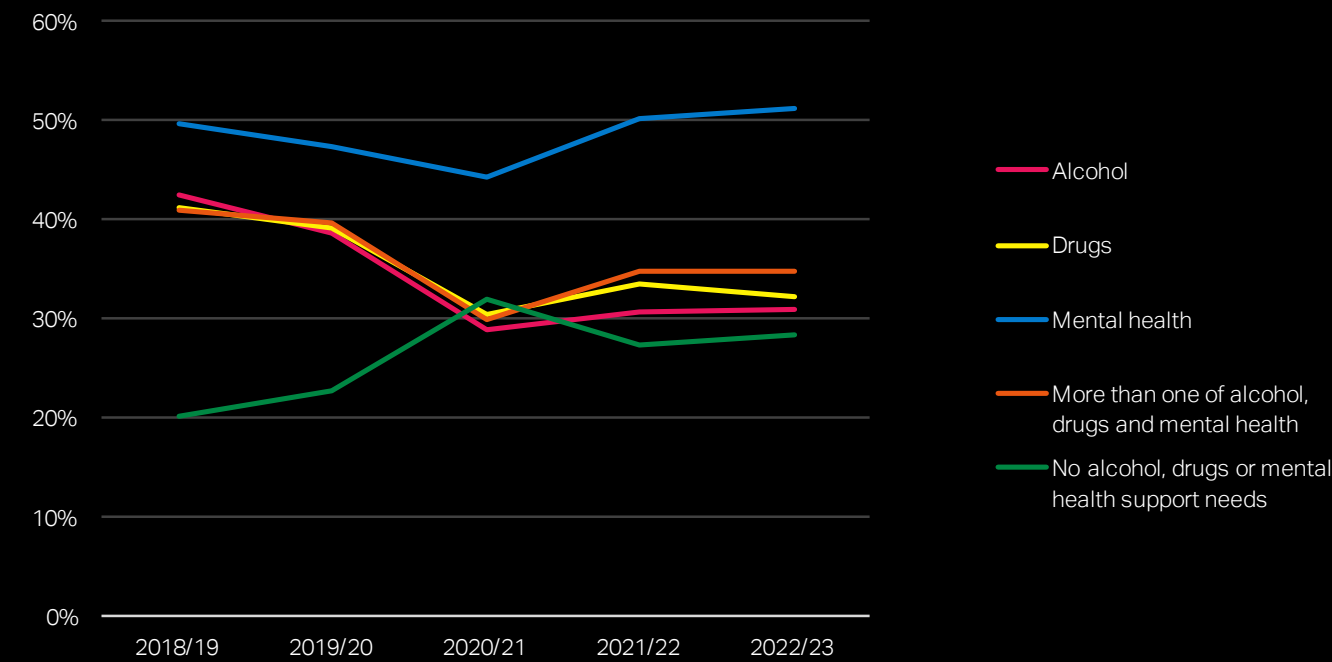


Base: 7,178 people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 who had been assessed for at least one of the three key support needs.

The most frequently reported support need amongst people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 was mental health, with 51% of those assessed during the period having a need in this area. 32% of people assessed had a support need relating to drug use, while 31% were found to have a support need around alcohol. Just over a third (35%) of those assessed were found to have more than one of the three support needs, while 28% had no support needs in these areas.

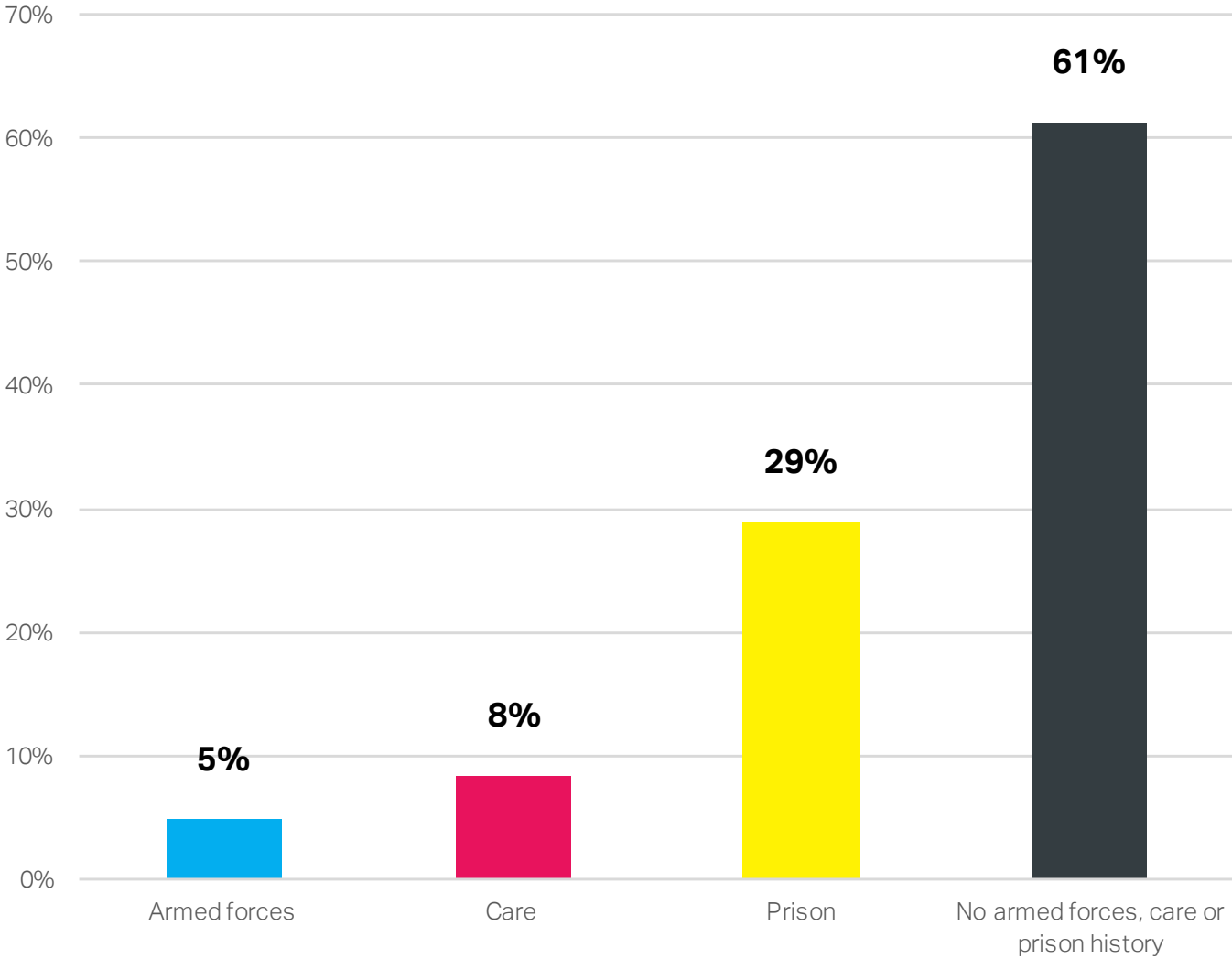
Following a period around 2020/21 when the proportion of rough sleepers assessed as having support needs relating to alcohol, drugs or mental health decreased, 2022/23 has confirmed a trend to somewhat higher proportions of reported support needs, first seen in 2021/22. The proportions for alcohol and drugs are still lower than those recorded in the pre-pandemic period, however.

Chart 10: Support needs proportions for people seen rough sleeping, 2018/19 - 2022/23



Findings from 2022/23 are relatively unchanged from 2021/22, with those found to have a need in relation to mental health constituting 51% of those assessed, compared to 50% in 2021/22. People with an alcohol support need represented 31% in 2022/23, compared to 31% in 2021/22, and people with a drug support need represented 32% compared to 34% in 2021/22. The proportion of rough sleepers assessed as having more than one of the three support needs has remained static, at 35% in both 2022/23 and 2021/22. The proportion with none of the three support needs has increased only marginally, at 28% in 2022/23, compared to 27% in 2021/22, but this remains notably higher than the proportion of 20% with none of the three needs in 2018/19.

Chart 11: People seen rough sleeping in 2022/23, by experience of armed forces, care or prison



Base: 7,132 people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 for whom one or more institutional or armed forces history was recorded.

INSTITUTIONAL AND ARMED FORCES HISTORY

CHAIN records information about whether people have spent time in the armed forces, prison or local authority care at any time in their life.

Of those people seen rough sleeping during 2022/23, 29% had experience of serving time in prison, while 8% had experience of the care system. Of the 589 people with experience of living in care, 87 were aged 25 or under.

Overall, 5% of people seen rough sleeping in 2022/23 had served in the armed forces at some point in their lives. Looking at this in more detail, 2% (119 people) of those 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 broadly consistent with 2021/22.

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CHAIN enquiries:

020 7840 4451

chain@homelesslink.org.uk

Copies of this report are available from:

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