

# CHAIN ANNUAL BULLETIN GREATER LONDON 2018/19

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CHAIN



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This bulletin presents information about people seen rough sleeping by outreach teams in London between April 2018 and March 2019. 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 St Mungo's, represents the UK's most detailed and comprehensive source of information about rough sleeping.

Copies of the full CHAIN Greater London 2018/19 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.



# HEADLINE FINDINGS

## TOTAL ROUGH SLEEPERS

8,855



people were seen rough sleeping by outreach workers in London during 2018/19.

- This represents an **18%** increase compared to the total of **7,484** people seen in 2017/18.
- **60%** of these people were seen rough sleeping just once during the period.
- Outreach teams and No Second Night Out (NSNO) supported **2,379** (27%) of these people to access accommodation or return to their home area.

## NEW ROUGH SLEEPERS



5,529

people (62% of the total) were seen sleeping rough for the first time in London in 2018/19.

- The number of new rough sleepers has increased by **24%** compared to 2017/18.
- **49%** of new rough sleepers reported their last settled base as being some form of long term accommodation, including **34%** coming from private rented accommodation.
- As in previous years, the most frequently cited reason for new rough sleepers leaving their last settled base was being evicted or asked to leave by the person they were staying with (**31%**).

## LONGER TERM ROUGH SLEEPERS



The numbers of longer term rough sleepers increased at a lower rate than new rough sleepers, with the stock group growing by 9% and returners growing by 11%.

- **2,080** people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 had also been seen in 2017/18 (**23%** of the total). This group are also referred to in the report as 'stock'.
- **1,246** people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 were those who had returned to rough sleeping after at least a year away (**14%** of the total).

## NATIONALITY



The number of Central and Eastern European (CEE) nationals\* seen rough sleeping has increased by 50% compared to 2017/18, while the number of UK nationals has increased by 4%.

## DEMOGRAPHICS AND SUPPORT NEEDS



The proportion of rough sleepers with a support need relating to drug use (41%) has stabilised after a previous period of increase (31% in 2015/16, 35% in 2016/17, 40% in 2017/18).

- Just under half (**49%**) of people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 were from the UK, which compares to **54%** in 2017/18, and **47%** in 2016/17.
- **31%** of those seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 were from CEE countries, which compares to **24%** in 2017/18, and a similar proportion of **30%** in 2016/17.
- Romanians continued to represent the single biggest non-UK nationality group, comprising **16%** of all people seen rough sleeping in the year.

- Proportions of rough sleepers with support needs around alcohol (**42%**) and mental health (**50%**) are largely similar to those found in 2017/18.
- **84%** of people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 were male.
- **8%** of people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 were aged 25 or under.
- There are no significant changes in the gender and age profile of rough sleepers in 2018/19, compared to that in 2017/18.

\* 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

## 8,855

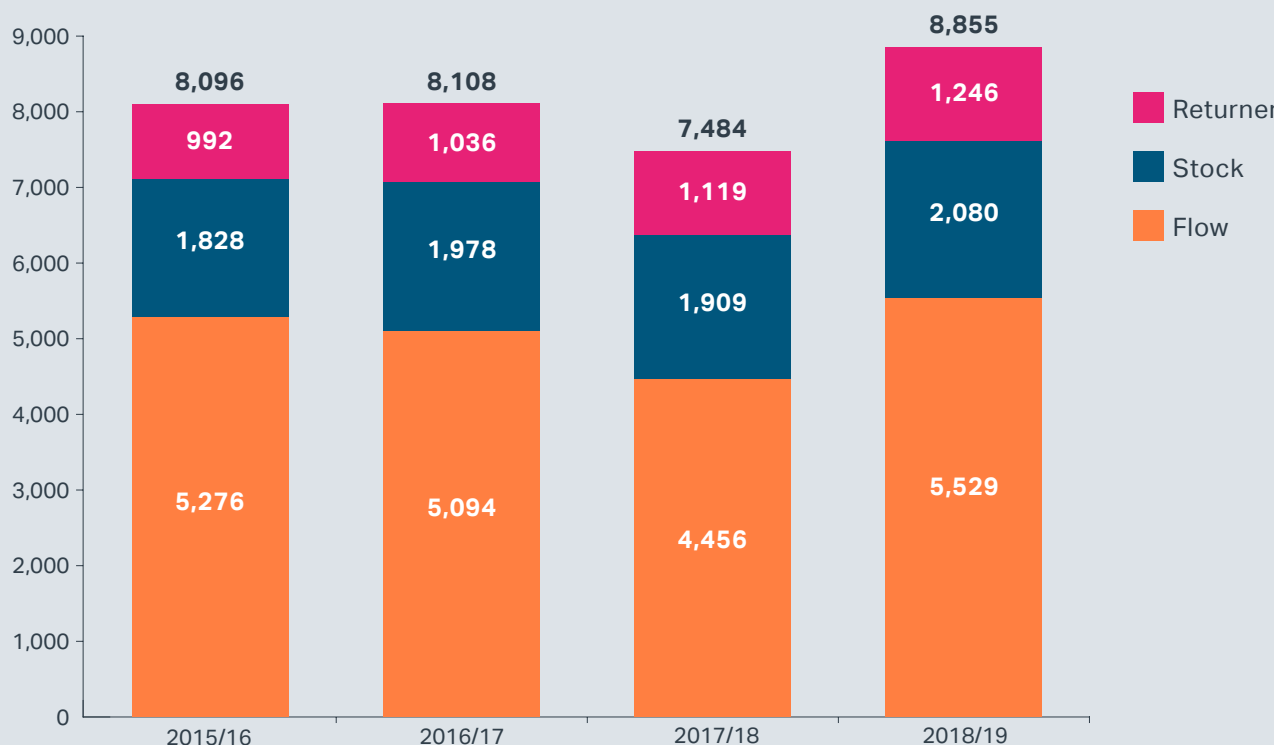
people were seen rough sleeping in London in 2018/19, which is an 18% increase compared to the total of 7,484 people seen in 2017/18. This compares to an 8% decrease between 2016/17 and 2017/18, and virtually no change between 2015/16 and 2016/17.

## 5,529

people were seen rough sleeping for the first time this year (also referred to as flow), which is 62% of all people seen rough sleeping in the period. Nearly three quarters (73%) of new rough sleepers were only seen once, compared to 72% in both 2017/18 and 2016/17. Just under a quarter (23%) of people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 were also seen in the preceding year (stock group). Around one seventh (14%) of people seen rough sleeping were in the returner group, meaning they had been seen rough sleeping in the past but not in 2017/18. The proportion of people in each group is broadly consistent with last year.

**Figure (a)**

Profile of the number of people seen rough sleeping 2015/16 – 2018/19 using flow, stock, returner model



### Category

### Description

#### Flow

People who had never been seen rough sleeping prior to 2018/19 (i.e. new rough sleepers).

#### Stock

People who were also seen rough sleeping in 2017/18 (i.e. those seen across a minimum of two consecutive years).

#### Returner

People who were first seen rough sleeping prior to 2017/18, but were not seen during 2017/18 (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. Following last year's break in the upward trend, 2018/19 has shown a return to the earlier pattern.

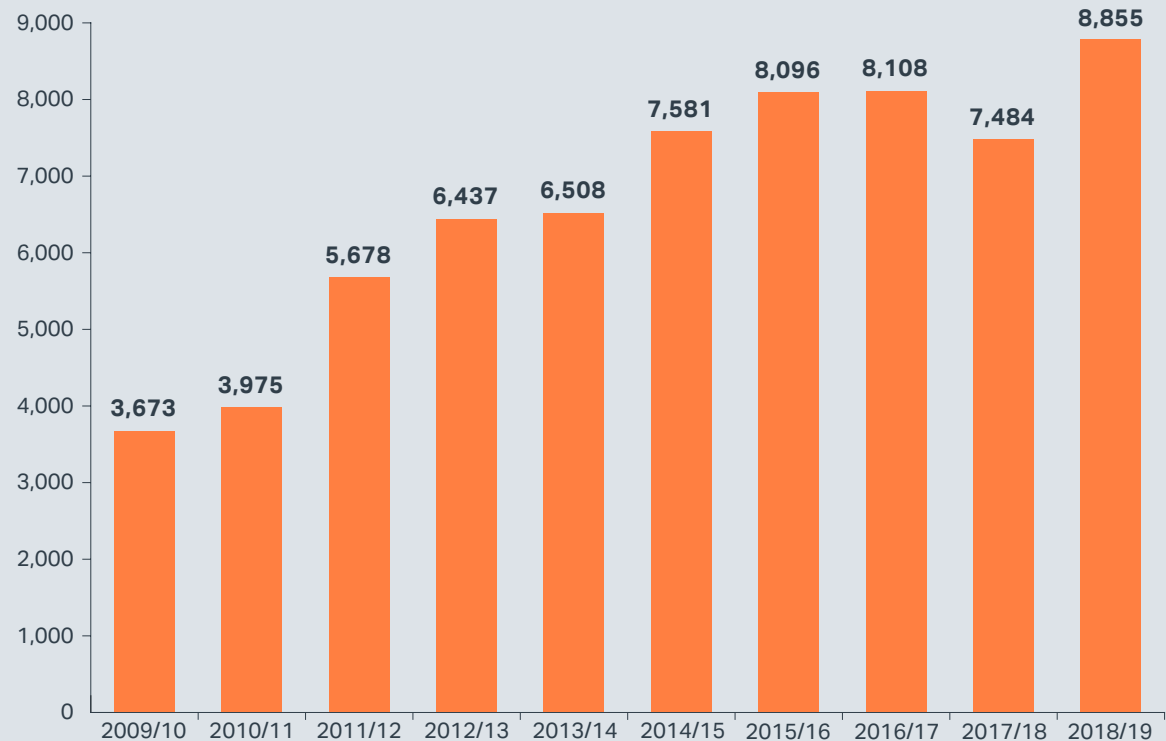
The 8,855 people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 is almost two and a half times the number seen ten years ago.

The significant increase in 2011/12 is likely to have been at least in part accounted for by the expanded outreach presence associated with the introduction of No Second Night Out.

Likewise, during 2018/19 significant new funding saw a large increase in the number of outreach services and staff in London.

**Figure (b)**

Long range trend of number of people seen rough sleeping



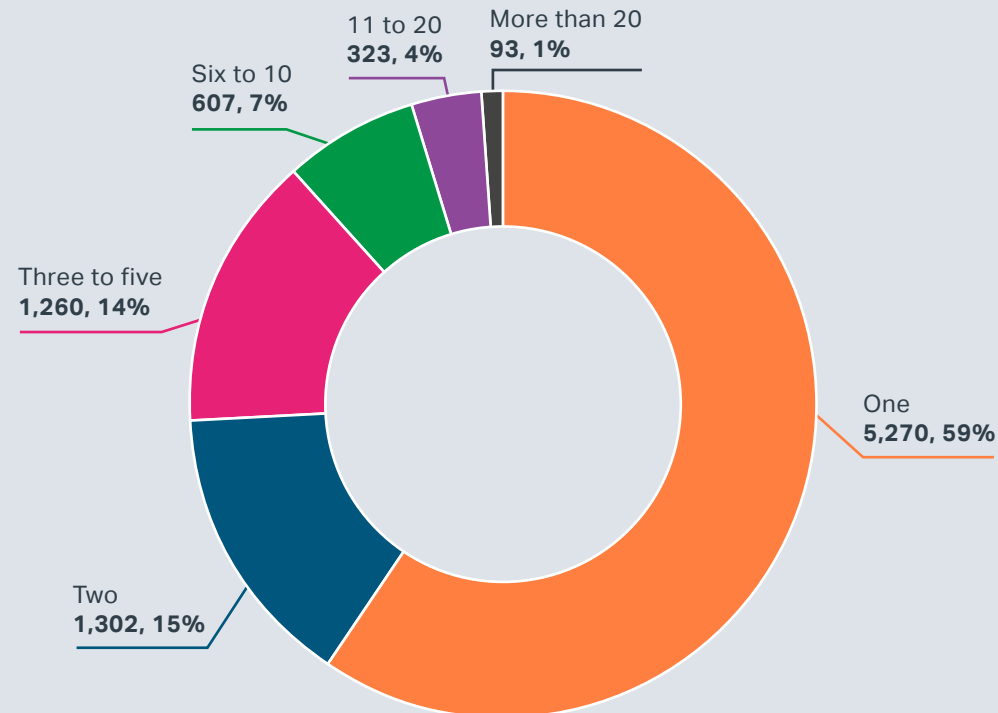
# NUMBER OF TIMES SEEN ROUGH SLEEPING

**5,270 (60%)**

people were seen rough sleeping only once in 2018/19, which compares to 4,413 (59%) seen rough sleeping just once in 2017/18. Around one in twenty people (5%) were seen rough sleeping more than ten times. Nobody was seen rough sleeping more than 50 times in the year, which compares to one person in 2017/18 and five people in 2016/17.

**Figure (c)**

Number of times seen rough sleeping



Base: 8,855 people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19

# MONTHLY TREND

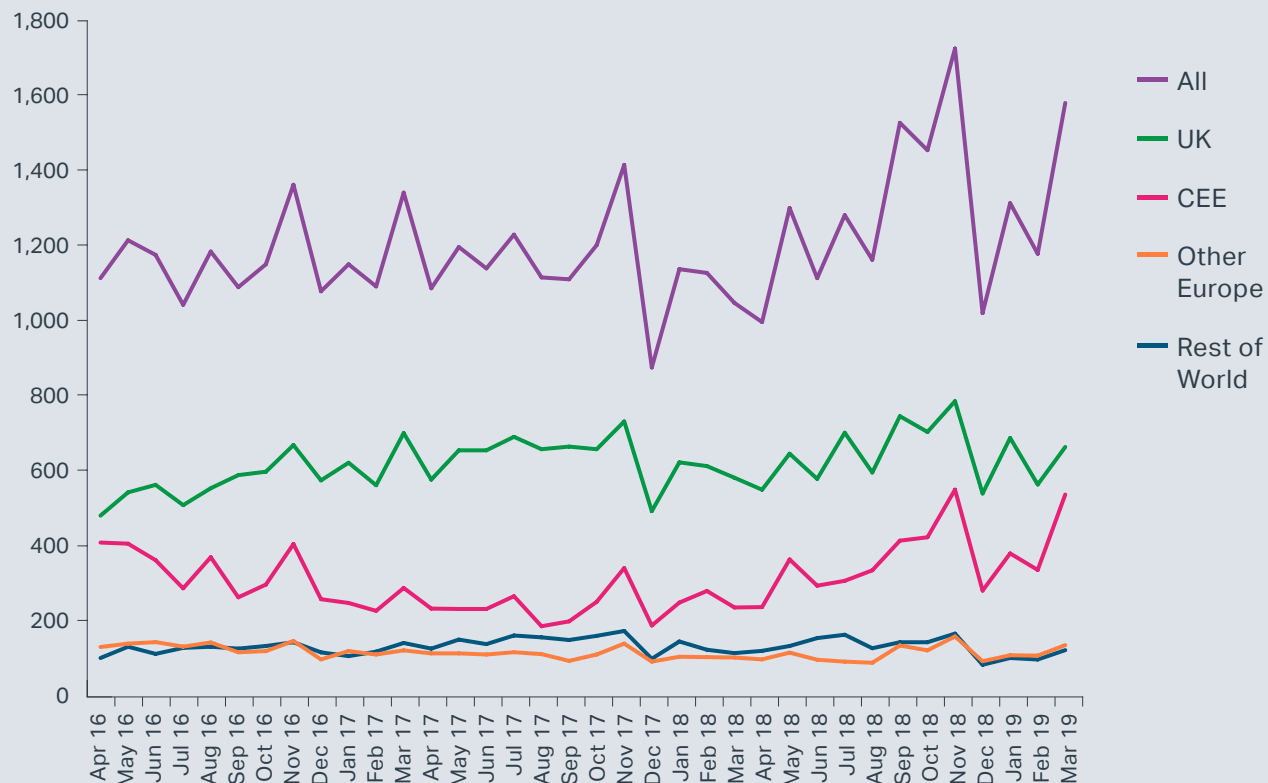
During 2018/19, the month in which the highest number of people were seen rough sleeping was November 2018 (1,746 people), while the lowest number were seen in December 2018 (1,041 people). The November peak is consistent with previous years, while the December trough also reflects the general yearly pattern.

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 in operation. It is usually the case that months during which official street counts take place will show a spike in numbers, and the government's main annual street count is held in November.

The nationality comparison shows an upward trend during 2018/19 in the monthly total of CEE nationals seen rough sleeping. This reverses the trend observed during 2016/17 and 2017/18, during which time the number of CEE nationals seen rough sleeping was largely in decline, and reflects the general nationality trend apparent elsewhere in this report.

**Figure (d)**

Number of people seen rough sleeping month by month, April 2016 - March 2019





# SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

As in previous years, the borough in which the greatest number of people were seen rough sleeping was Westminster, with 2,512 people (28% of the overall London total). Eight boroughs recorded more than 300 rough sleepers during the year. Of the ten boroughs with the highest numbers of rough sleepers, only Tower Hamlets has shown a decrease in numbers compared to 2017/18.

A total of 283 people were seen rough sleeping at Heathrow airport, which is counted separately from Hillingdon, due to the specific rough sleeping issues found there.

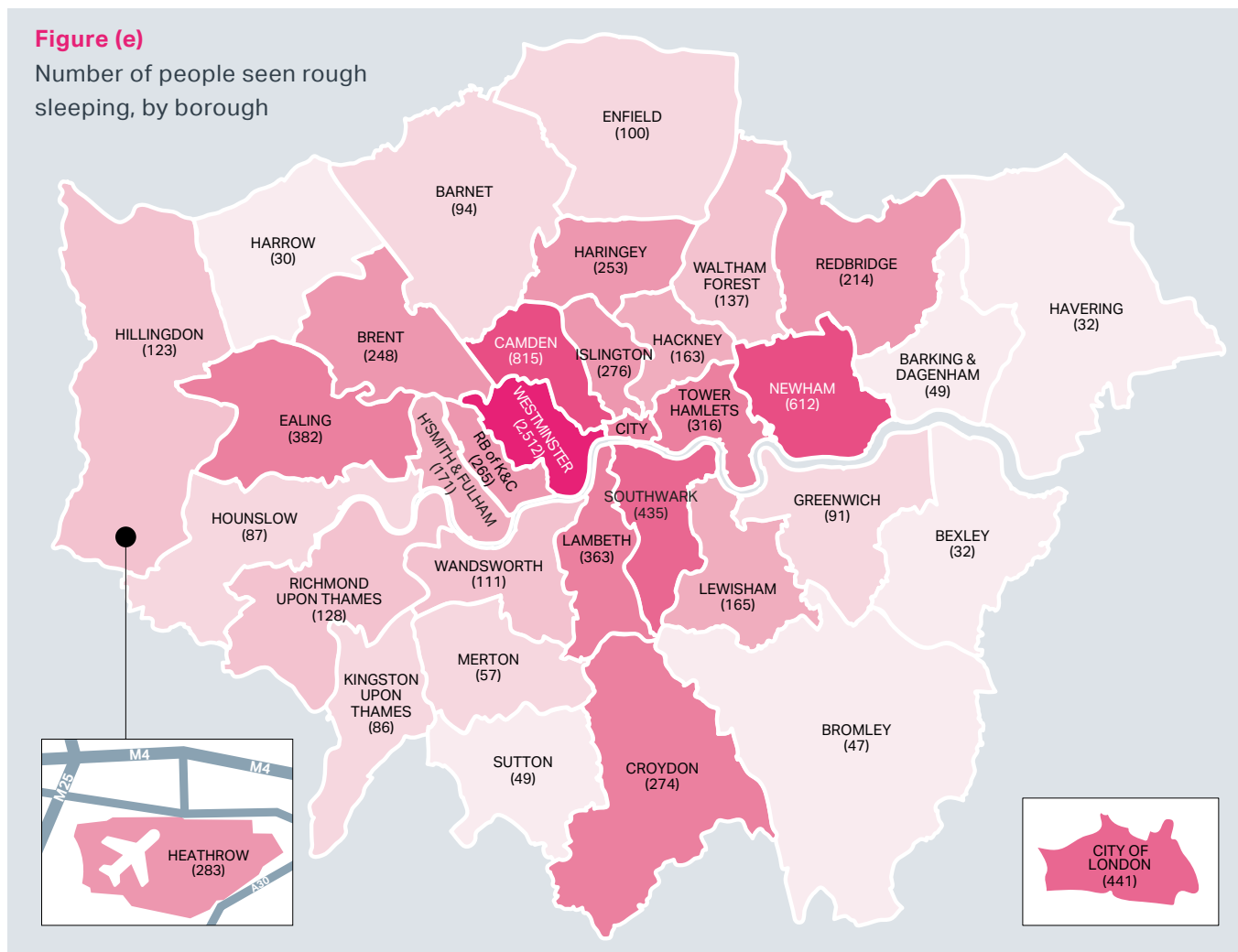
The Mayor of London's TFL Outreach service recorded 224 people rough sleeping on buses during 2018/19, as well as 18 people on the night tube.

## Top five boroughs

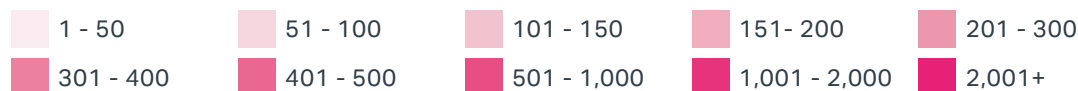
	Borough	2018/19	2017/18
1.	Westminster	2,512	2,165
2.	Camden	815	784
3.	Newham	612	418
4.	City of London	441	348
5.	Southwark	435	309

**Figure (e)**

Number of people seen rough sleeping, by borough



No. people seen rough sleeping



# NATIONALITY

The nationality profile of rough sleepers in London remains diverse, with a total of 126 different nationalities recorded during 2018/19. The proportion of people seen rough sleeping who were UK nationals was 49%, which is a decrease from the recent peak of 54% seen in 2017/18, and more in line with the 47% seen in 2016/17. Conversely, the proportion of rough sleepers from CEE countries has increased after a previous dip, with 31% seen in 2018/19, compared to 24% in 2017/18 and 30% in 2016/17. In terms of absolute figures, the number of UK nationals seen rough sleeping has increased by 4% compared to 2017/18, while the number of CEE nationals has increased by 50%.

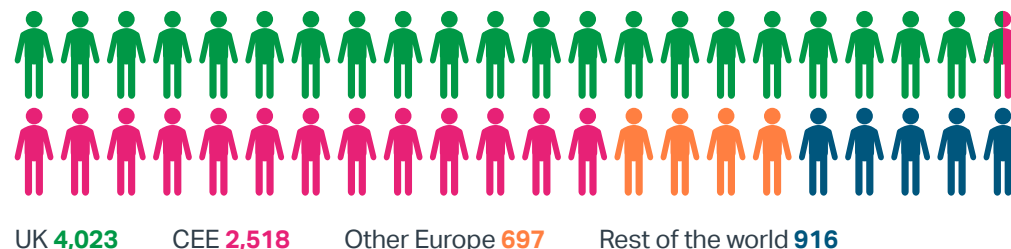
Romanians (1,279, 16%) continue to make up the largest non-UK nationality group, with Poles (665, 8%) making up the second largest non-UK nationality group.

There were a significant number of rough sleepers from non-CEE European countries, mostly those in the European Economic Area, with Italy (130), the Republic of Ireland (120), and Portugal (98) continuing to be the most heavily represented. 459 (6%) people seen rough sleeping in the year were from African countries, and 358 (4%) were of Asian nationality (144 of whom were Indian).

The number of people seen rough sleeping whose nationality was not known has increased significantly in 2018/19, at 701 compared to 346 in 2017/18.

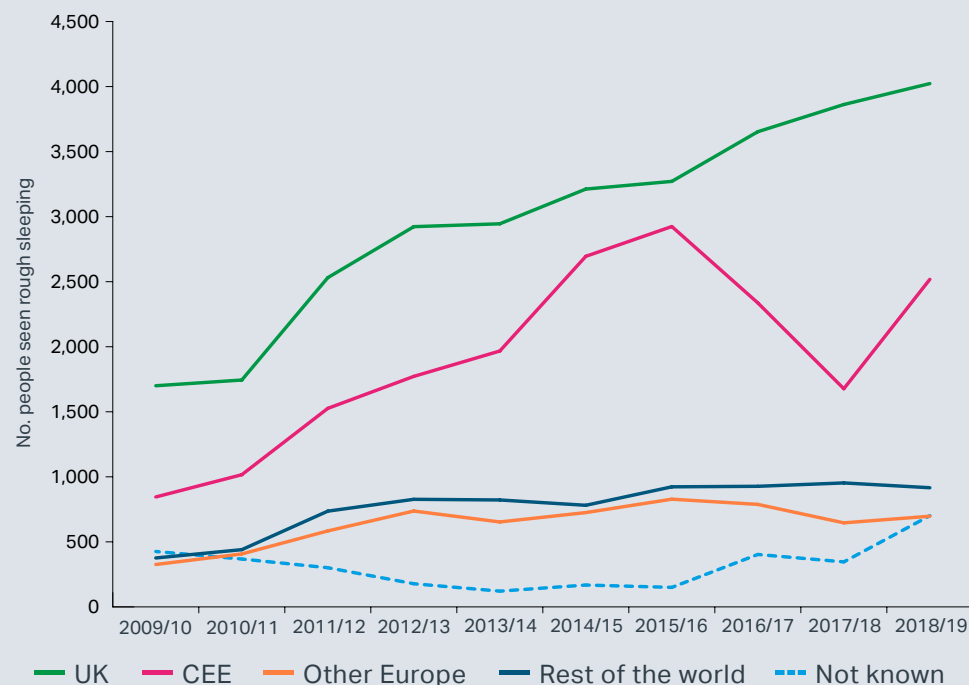
**Figure (f)**

Nationality of people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19



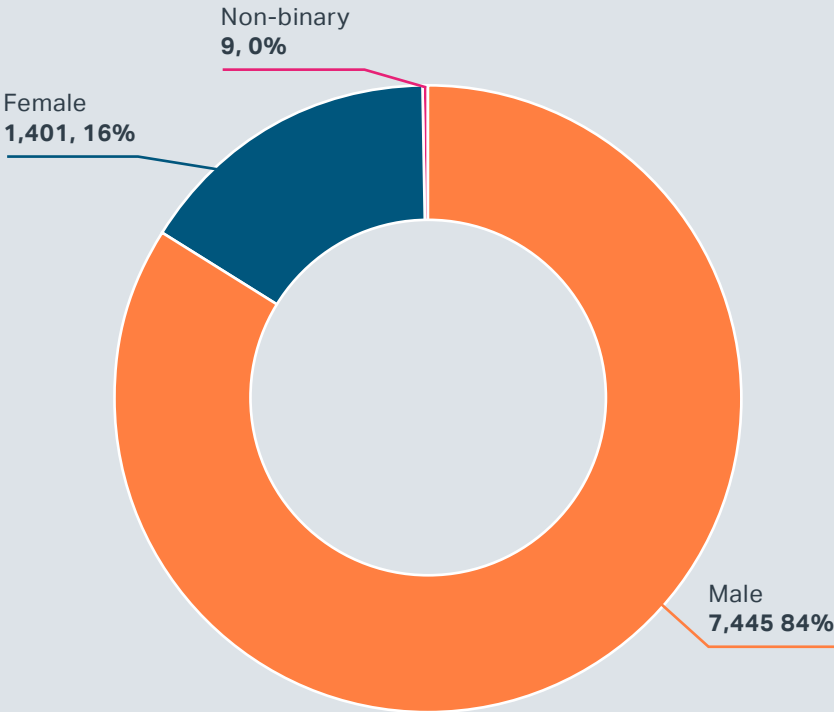
**Figure (g)**

Long range trend in nationality profile of people seen rough sleeping



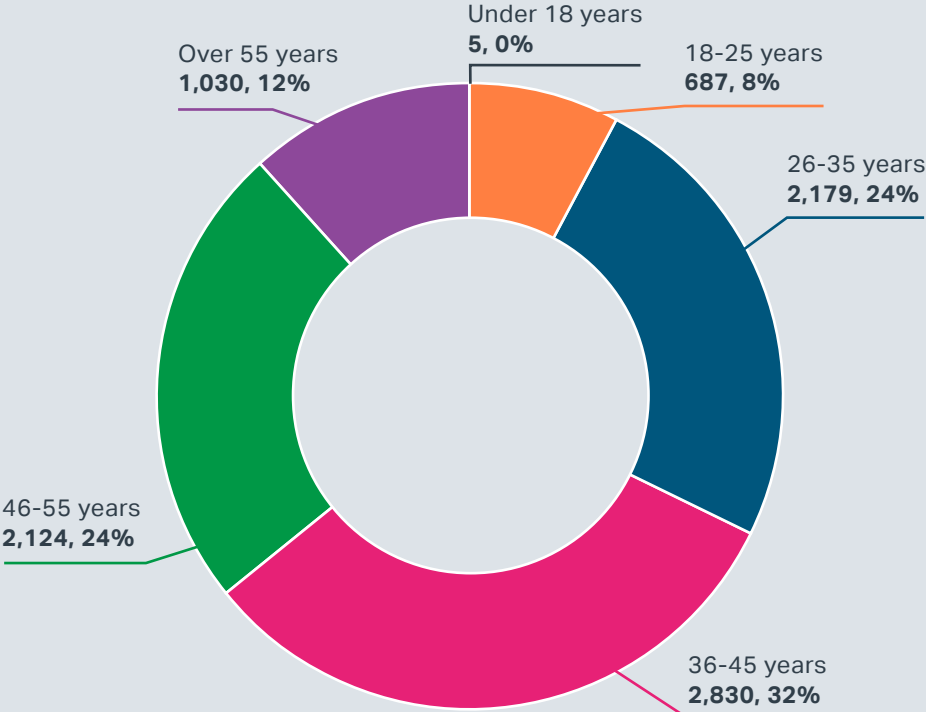
# DEMOGRAPHICS

**Figure (h)**  
Gender profile of people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19



Base: 8,855 people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19

**Figure (i)**  
Age profile of people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19



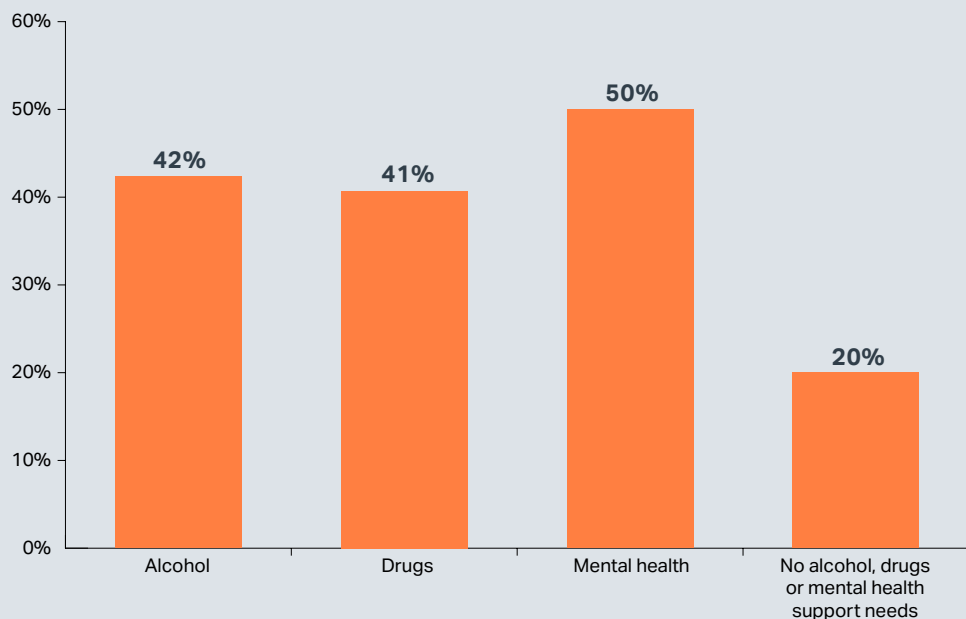
Base: 8,855 people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19

The gender and age profile of people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 shows little variation from that of people seen in 2017/18. The majority of rough sleepers (84%) are male, while four-fifths (81%) are aged between 26 and 55, with a fairly even distribution within that age band.

# SUPPORT NEEDS

**Figure (j)**

Support needs profile of people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19

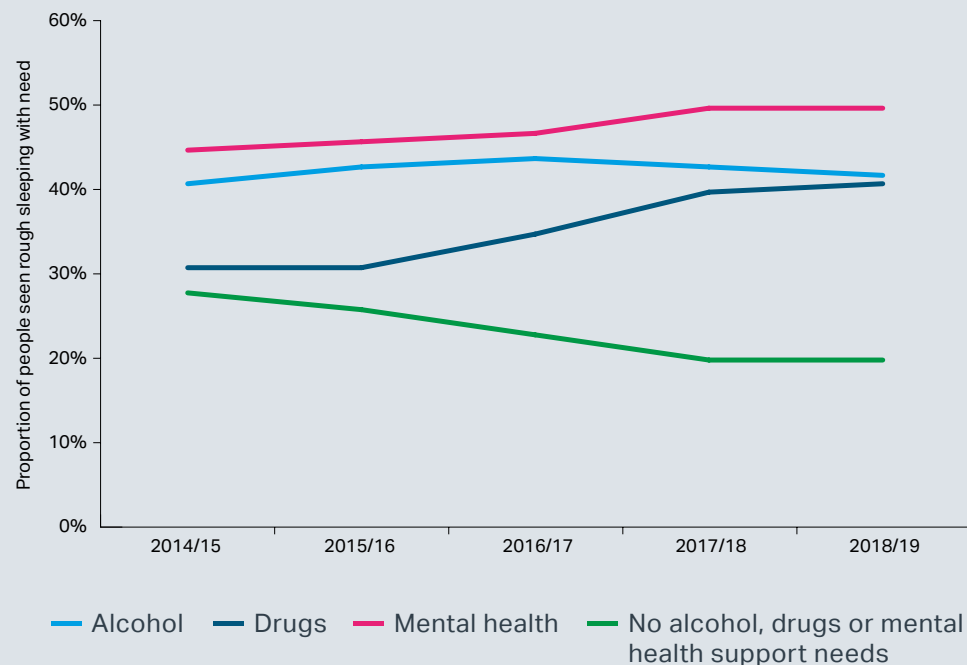


**Base:** 5,352 people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 who had been assessed for at least one of the three key support needs.

The most frequently reported support need amongst people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 was mental health, with 50% of those assessed during the period having a need in this area. Alcohol was the second most prevalent need, at 42%, while 41% of rough sleepers were assessed as having a support need relating to drugs.

**Figure (k)**

Long range trend in support needs profile of people seen rough sleeping



The proportions of support needs reported for rough sleepers in 2018/19 have remained largely static compared to 2017/18, whereas the previous two years had shown increases for people assessed as having drug and, to a lesser extent, mental health needs. Similarly, the proportion of those assessed as having none of the three support needs has remained static, following a previous downward trend. It is important to note that, while the proportions of people assessed as having these needs have remained steady, the actual numbers have increased.



# INSTITUTIONAL AND ARMED FORCES HISTORY

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

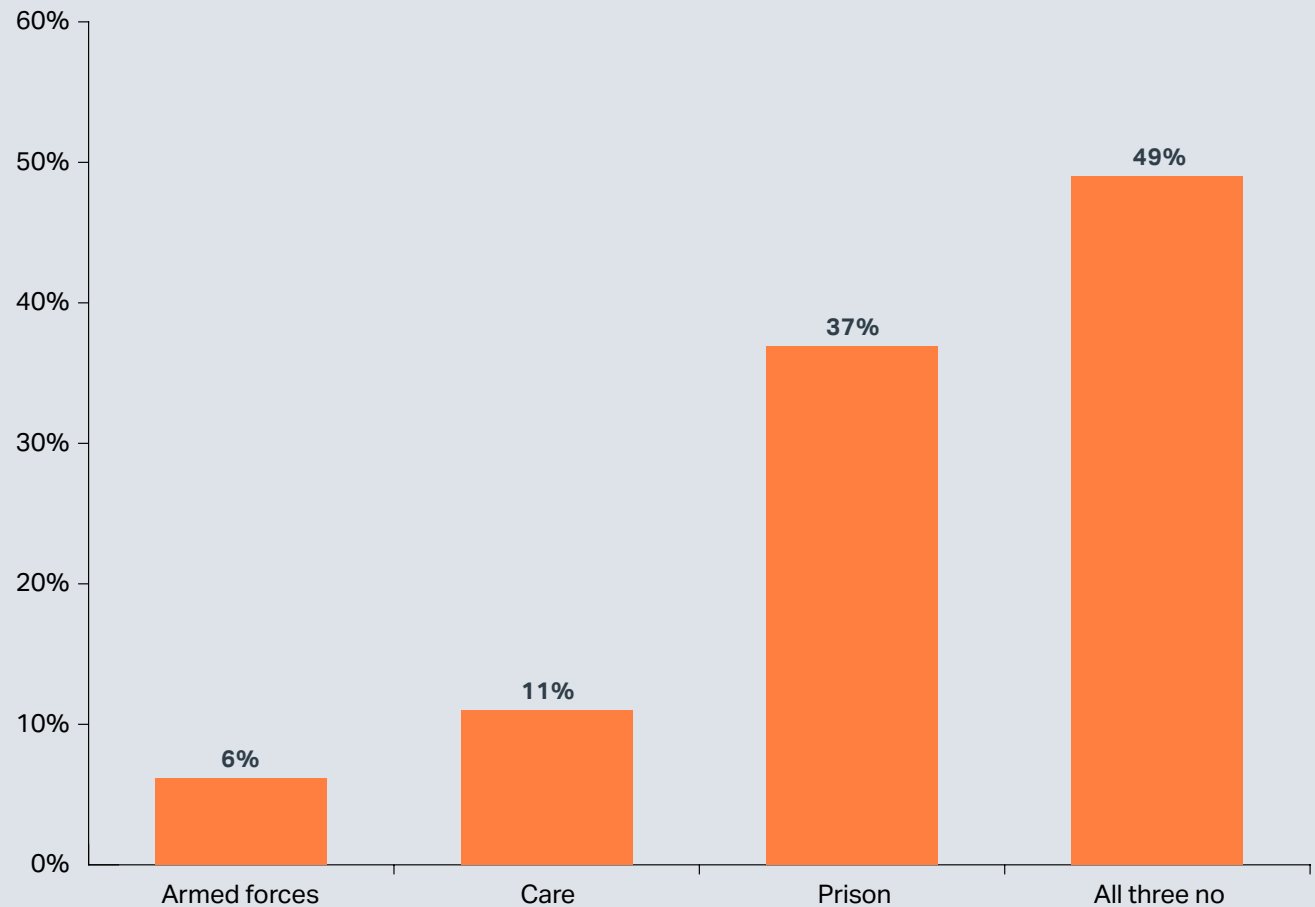
Just over one third (37%) of people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 had experience of serving time in prison, while 11% had experience of the care system.

Overall, 6% of people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 had served in the armed forces at some point in their lives. Looking at this in more detail, 2% (115) 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 2017/18.

**Figure (I)**

Experience of serving in the armed forces, and spending time in prison or in local authority care, among people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19



**Base:** 5,194 people seen rough sleeping in 2018/19 for whom one or more institutional history was recorded.

# CHAIN ANNUAL BULLETIN GREATER LONDON 2018/19

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Copies of this report are available from:

<http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>

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