



CHAIN ANNUAL BULLETIN

GREATER
LONDON
2021/22



SUPPORTED BY
MAYOR OF LONDON

This report presents information about people seen rough sleeping by outreach teams in London between April 2021 and March 2022. 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 represents the UK’s most detailed and comprehensive source of information about rough sleeping, and is commissioned and funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA). The system is now managed by Homeless Link, but was managed by St Mungo’s during the period covered by this report.

Copies of the full CHAIN Greater London 2021/22 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

8,329 people were seen rough sleeping by outreach workers in London during 2021/22.



- This represents a 24% decrease compared to the total of 11,018 people seen in 2020/21.
- This is only the second time in the last ten years that there has been a year on year decrease in the total number of people seen rough sleeping.
- Outreach teams and other support services helped 3,963 (48%) of these people to access accommodation or return to their home area.

NEW ROUGH SLEEPERS

5,091 people (61% of the total) were seen sleeping rough for the first time in London in 2021/22.



- This was a 32% decrease on the number of new rough sleepers in 2020/21, and was the biggest factor in the overall reduction in people seen rough sleeping.
- 70% of new rough sleepers reported their last settled base as being some form of long-term accommodation, including 25% who had been living with friends or family.
- 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 (36%).

LONGER-TERM ROUGH SLEEPERS

The number of longer-term rough sleepers also decreased compared to 2020/21.



- 2,033 people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 had also been seen in 2020/21 (24% of the total). This group are also referred to in the report as 'stock'.
- 1,205 people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 had returned to rough sleeping after at least a year away (14% of the total).
- The stock group decreased by 4%, while the returner group decreased by 11%.

NATIONALITY

People from 131 different countries were seen rough sleeping in London in 2021/22.

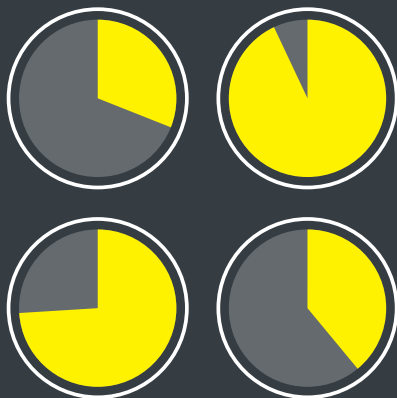


- Just over half (52%) of people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 were from the UK, while slightly over one fifth (22%) were from CEE* countries.
- People from non-European countries accounted for 17% of all those seen rough sleeping. This is slightly lower than the proportion of 19% in 2020/21, but still higher than the previous norm 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.

* 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.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND SUPPORT NEEDS

The proportions of people seen rough sleeping who had alcohol, drug or mental health support needs rose, following a dip in 2020/21.



- 50% of rough sleepers had a mental health support need, compared to 44% in 2020/21. 31% had an alcohol support need, compared to 29% in 2020/21, and 34% had a drug support need, compared to 31% in 2020/21.
- 83% of people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 were men.
- 8% of people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 were aged 25 or under.
- 32% of people seen rough sleeping during the period had experience of spending time in prison.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SEEN ROUGH SLEEPING

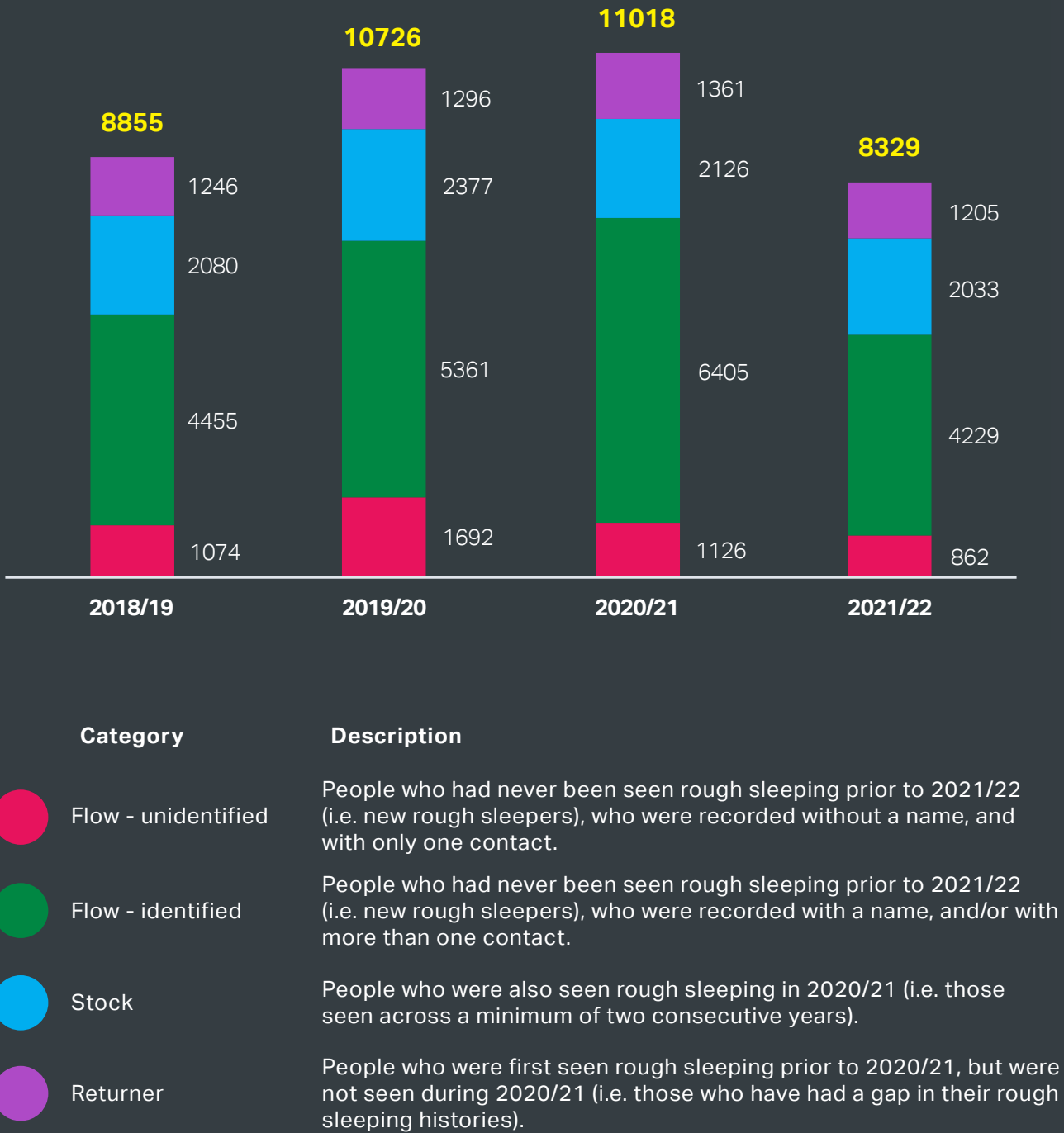
8,329

people were seen rough sleeping in London in 2021/22, which is a 24% decrease compared to the total of 11,018 people seen in 2020/21. This compares to a 3% increase between 2019/20 and 2020/21, and a 21% increase between 2018/19 and 2019/20.

5,091

people were seen rough sleeping for the first time this year (also referred to as flow), which is 61% of all people seen rough sleeping in the period. Of this group, 71% were only seen once, and 17% were categorised as 'unidentified'. Just under one quarter (24%) of people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 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 2020/21. All three groups have shown decreases in their numbers between 2020/21 and 2021/22, but the decline in the number of new rough sleepers has been the most marked.

Figure (a) Profile of the number of people seen rough sleeping 2018/19 - 2021/22 using flow, stock, returner model



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 24% decrease in the number of people seen rough sleeping between 2020/21 and 2021/22 is the largest reduction during the ten year period covered by this chart.

The 8,329 people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 is the lowest annual total since 2017/18, but is still 29% higher than the total of 6,437 recorded in 2012/13.

The reduction in the total number of people seen rough sleeping during 2021/22 has been particularly influenced by the lower number of new rough sleepers arriving on the streets during the period. It is likely that the overall reduction in people recorded rough sleeping is at least in part due to the additional resources that have been put into addressing rough sleeping during the 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 monthly line graph in figure (d) of this report shows that there was a steady reduction in numbers through 2020/21, followed by maintenance at that lower level during 2021/22.

Figure (b) Long range trend in number of people seen rough sleeping

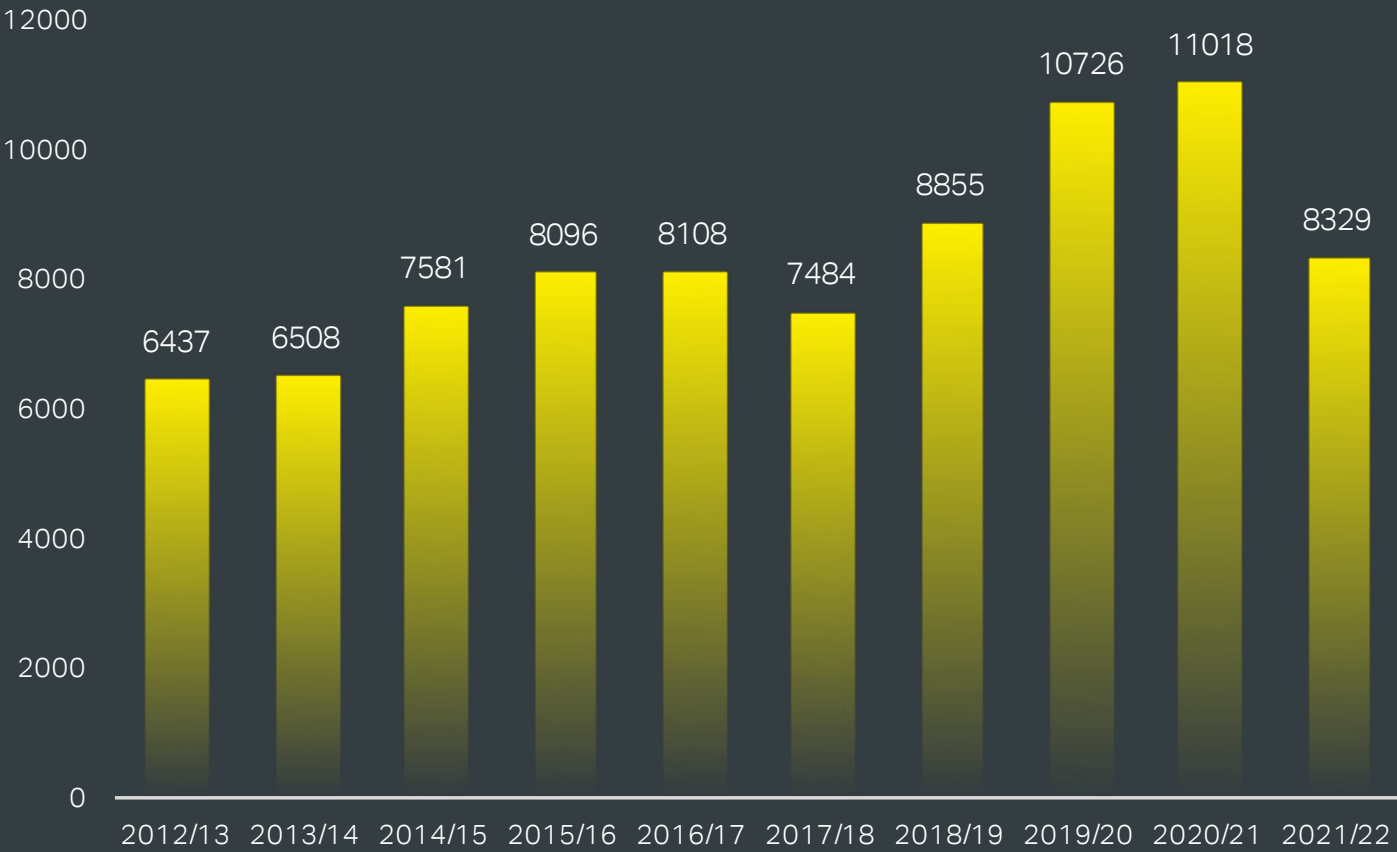
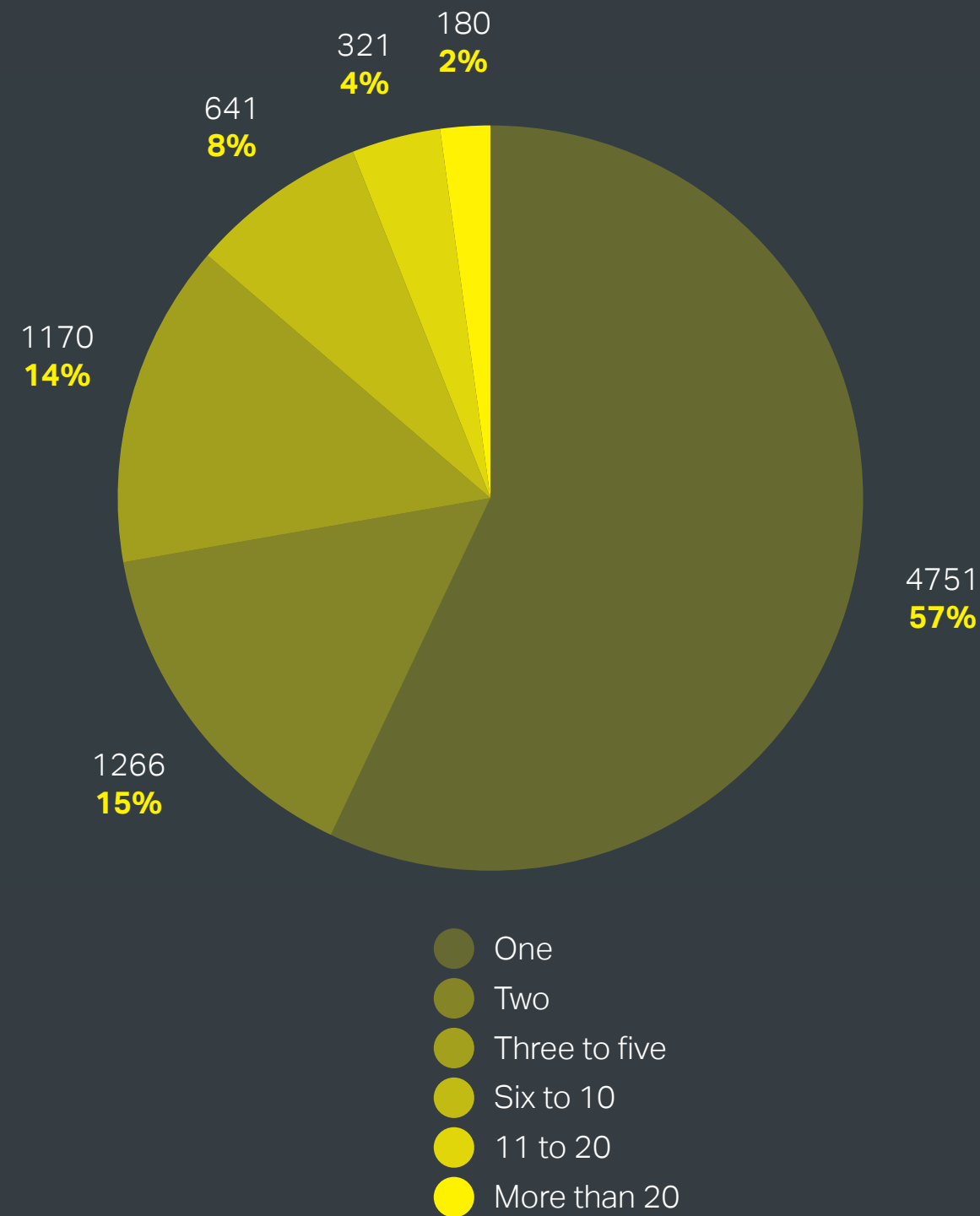


Figure (c) Number of times individuals were seen rough sleeping during 2021/22



Base: 8,329 people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22.

NUMBER OF TIMES SEEN ROUGH SLEEPING

4,751 (57%) people were seen rough sleeping only once in 2021/22, which compares to 6,870 (62%) seen rough sleeping just once in 2020/21. It is probable that the slight reduction in the proportion of people seen once relates to the decrease in the number and proportion of new rough sleepers in 2021/22, as people in this category tend to be less likely to be recorded on multiple occasions.

Just over one in twenty (6%) of people recorded rough sleeping in 2021/22 were seen more than ten times. Nineteen people were seen rough sleeping more than 50 times in the year, compared to thirteen people with this many contacts in 2020/21, and three in 2019/20.

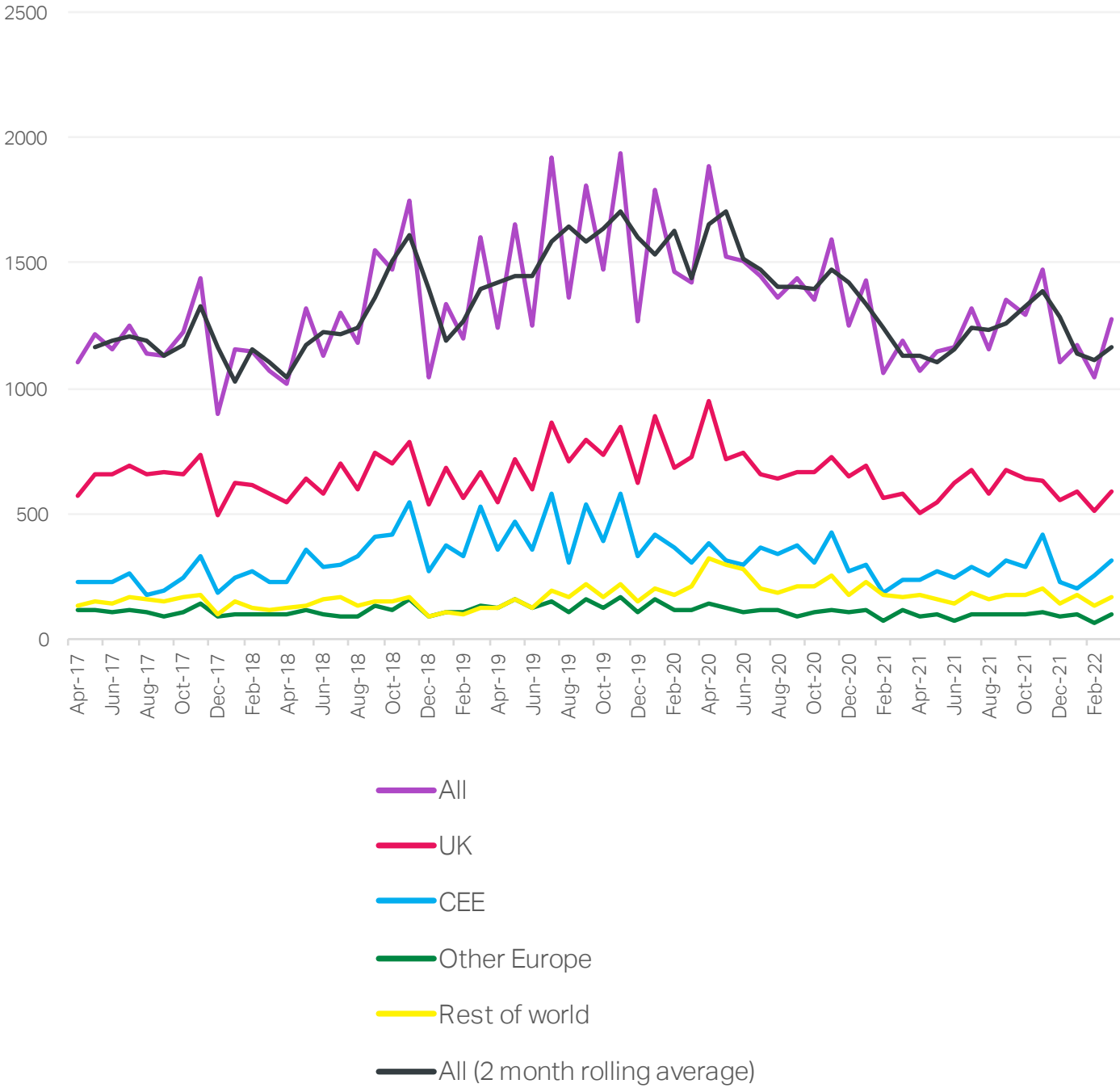
MONTHLY TREND

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 includes an annual peak in November, when the Government’s annual street count takes place, with the lowest numbers usually recorded in December, when winter shelters come into operation. However, 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. The All (2 month rolling average) line smooths out these variations to give a clearer indication of the ongoing trend.

The pattern for the last two years shows further variation from previous periods. There was a peak in April 2020, which appears to be related to the start of the Covid-19 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 Covid-19 pandemic and Government’s Everyone In initiative. This downward trend bottomed out in winter 2020/21, followed by a return to regular seasonal patterns, albeit at a lower level, during 2021/22.

Figure (d) Number of people seen rough sleeping month by month, April 2017 - March 2022



SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

As in previous years, the borough in which the greatest number of people were seen rough sleeping was Westminster, with 1,698 people (20% of the overall London total). However, this is the lowest annual total for Westminster since 2009/10.

Five boroughs recorded more than 400 rough sleepers during the year. Of the top ten boroughs, only Camden and City of London recorded a greater number of people rough sleeping in 2021/22 than in 2020/21, and in both cases the increases were relatively minor.

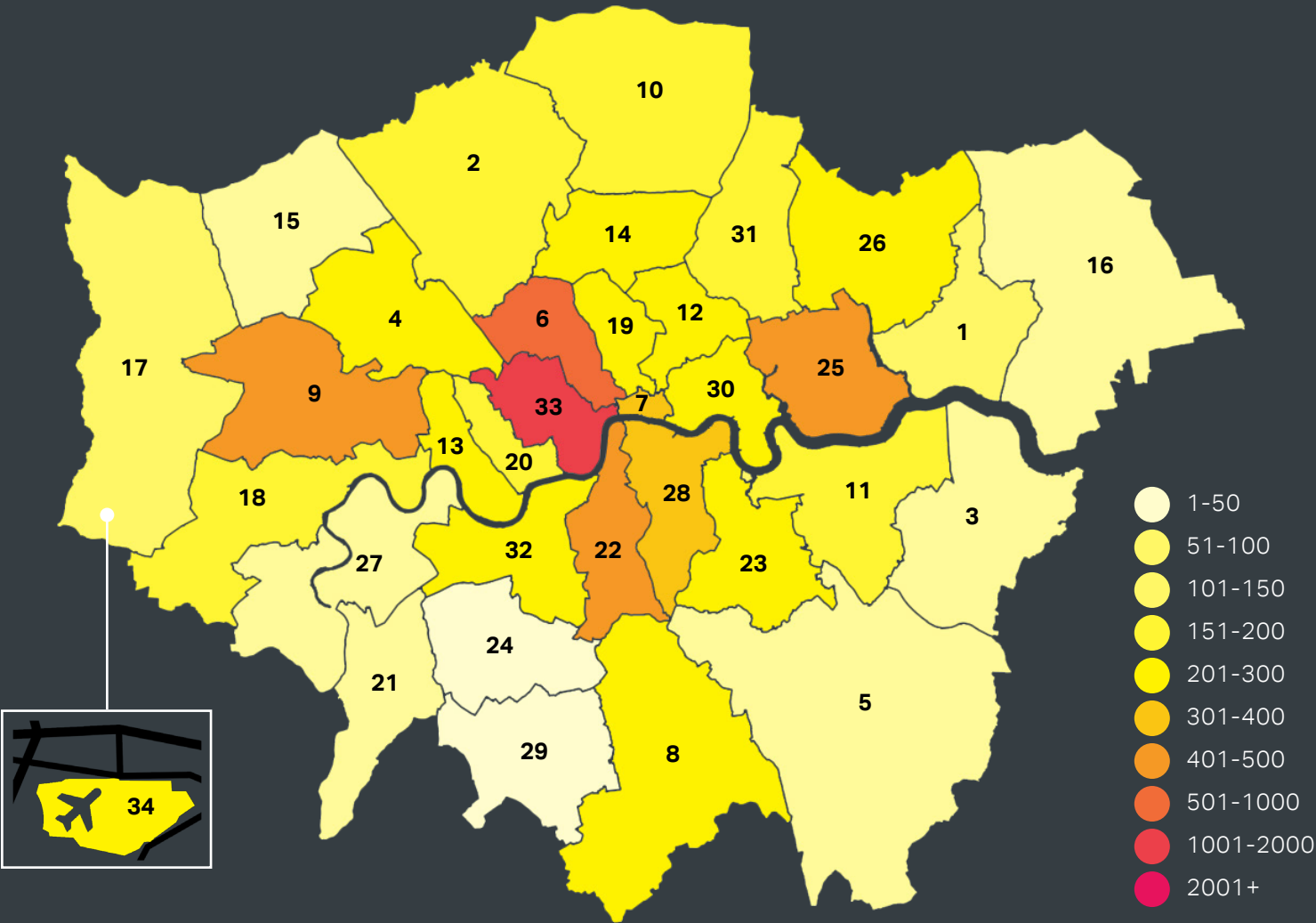
A total of 233 people were seen rough sleeping at Heathrow airport, which is counted separately from Hillingdon, due to the specific rough sleeping issues found there.

During 2021/22, 142 people were recorded rough sleeping on buses, and eighteen were recorded on the London Underground network.

Figure (e) Boroughs in which the five highest totals of rough sleepers were recorded during 2021/22

Borough	2021/22	2020/21
Westminster	1698	2162
Camden	666	630
Ealing	448	624
Lambeth	438	581
Newham	428	578

Figure (f) Number of people seen rough sleeping during 2021/22, by borough



Key	Borough	Total	Key	Borough	Total
1	Barking & Dagenham	131	18	Hounslow	144
2	Barnet	173	19	Islington	238
3	Bexley	93	20	Kensington & Chelsea	193
4	Brent	283	21	Kingston upon Thames	99
5	Bromley	57	22	Lambeth	438
6	Camden	666	23	Lewisham	264
7	City of London	372	24	Merton	45
8	Croydon	271	25	Newham	428
9	Ealing	448	26	Redbridge	247
10	Enfield	183	27	Richmond	61
11	Greenwich	135	28	Southwark	388
12	Hackney	229	29	Sutton	29
13	Hammersmith & Fulham	214	30	Tower Hamlets	297
14	Haringey	268	31	Waltham Forest	153
15	Harrow	58	32	Wandsworth	264
16	Havering	69	33	Westminster	1698
17	Hillingdon	140	34	Heathrow	233

NATIONALITY

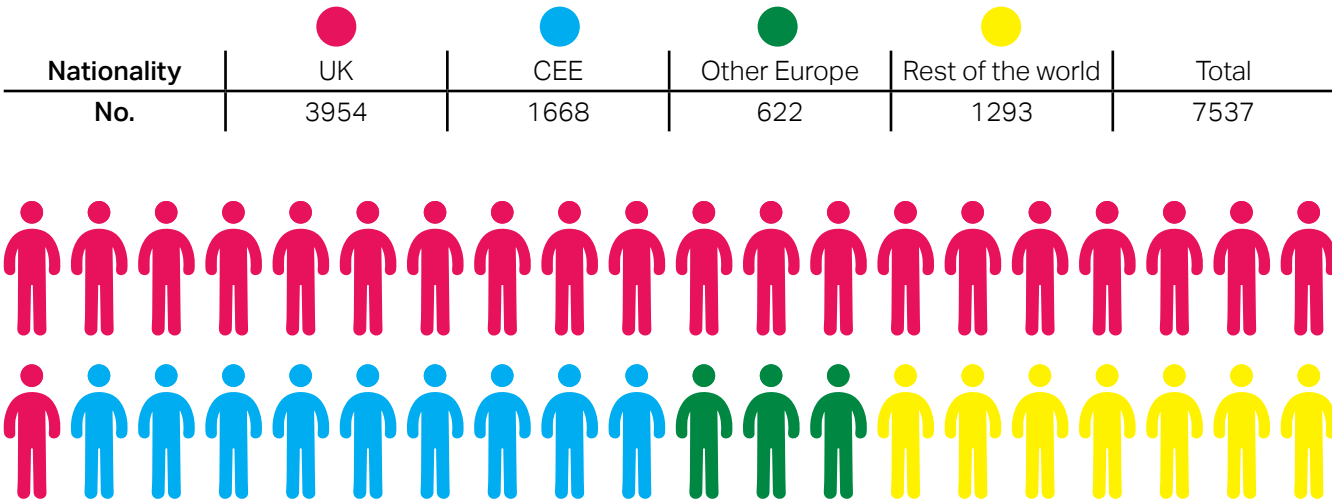
The nationality profile of rough sleepers in London remains diverse, with a total of 131 different nationalities recorded during 2021/22. The proportion of people seen rough sleeping who were UK nationals was 52%, which is only slightly changed from the proportions of 50% in 2020/21 and 48% in 2019/20. The proportion of rough sleepers from CEE countries was 22%, which is unchanged from 2020/21, following a marked decrease from 30% in 2019/20.

The proportion of people seen rough sleeping who were from non-European countries has declined slightly, at 17% compared to 19% in 2020/21, but is still notably higher than the range of 11%-13% seen in earlier years. People from African countries accounted for 8% of all rough sleepers in 2021/22 (640 people), compared to 11% in 2020/21 (1,118 people) and 7% in 2019/20 (651 people). Asian nationals constituted 7% of people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 (509 people), compared to 7% in 2020/21 (702 people), and 5% in 2019/20 (520 people).

As in previous recent years, Romanians (895, 12%) comprise the single largest non-UK nationality, with Poles (432, 6%) making up the second largest. People from India (181, 2%) and Portugal (131, 2%) are the third and fourth most numerous non-UK nationalities.

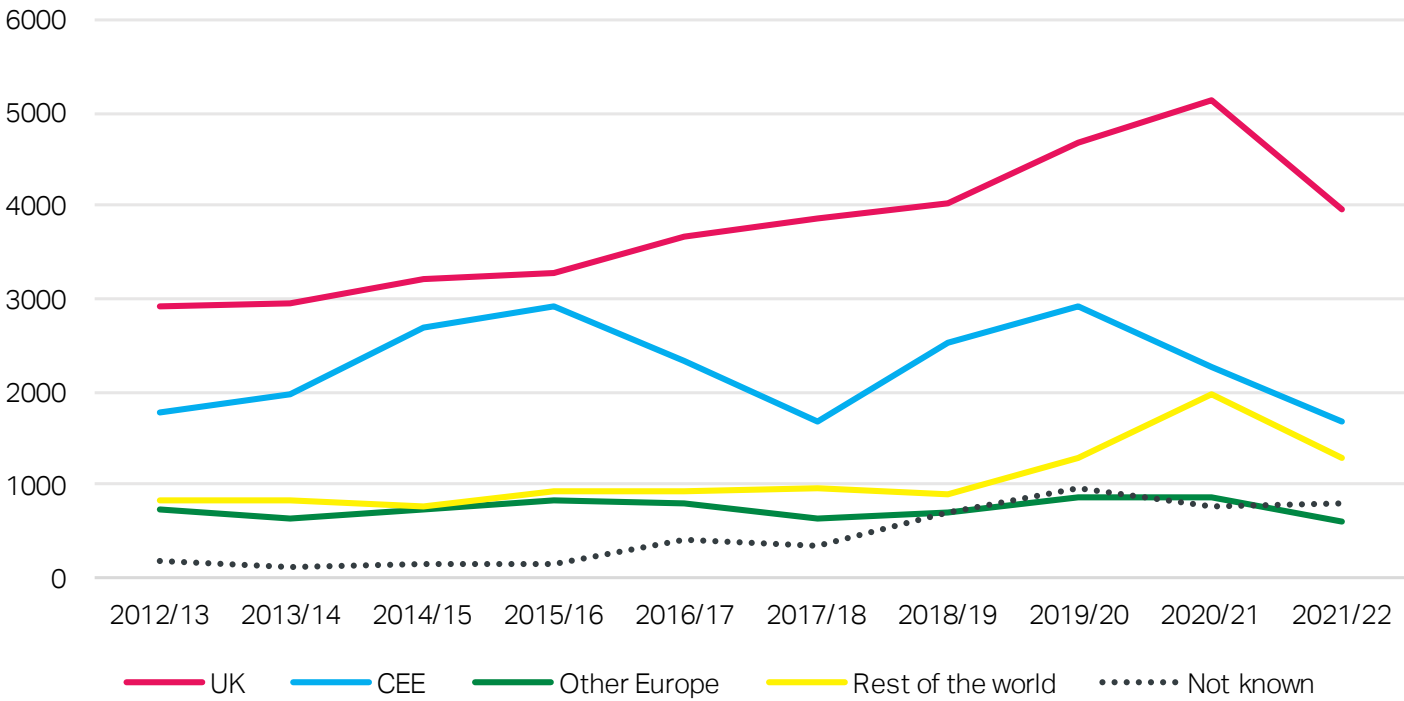
The number of people seen rough sleeping whose nationality was not known was 792, which is a small increase on the figure of 771 in 2020/21, but much lower than the 954 in 2019/20.

Figure (g) Nationality profile of people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22



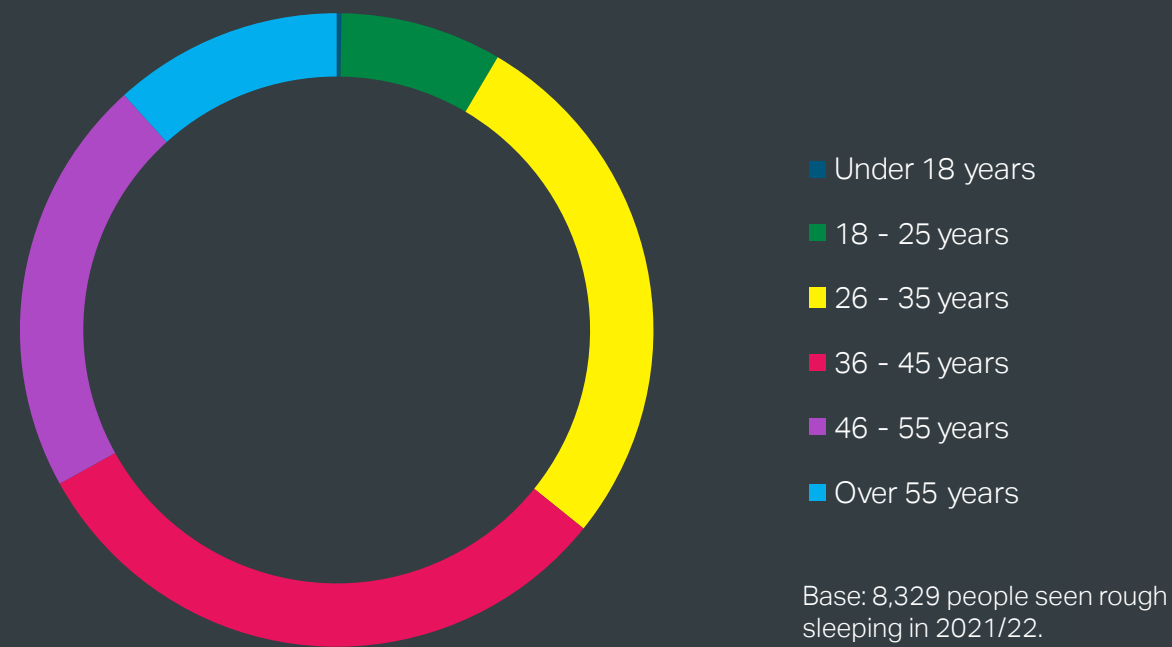
Base: 7,537 people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 whose nationality was known.

Figure (h) Long range trend in nationality profile of people seen rough sleeping



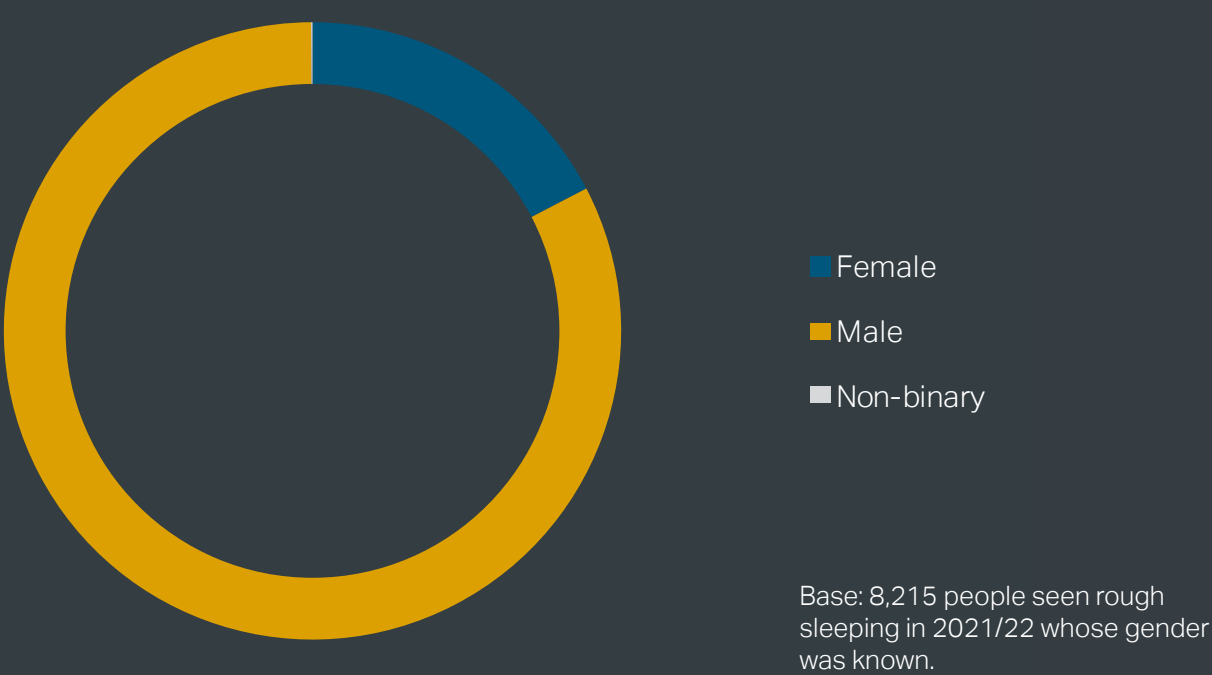
DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure (i) Age profile of people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22



Age	No.	%
Under 18 years	20	0%
18 - 25 years	687	8%
26 - 35 years	2273	27%
36 - 45 years	2595	31%
46 - 55 years	1779	21%
Over 55 years	975	12%
Total	8329	100%

Figure (j) Gender profile of people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22

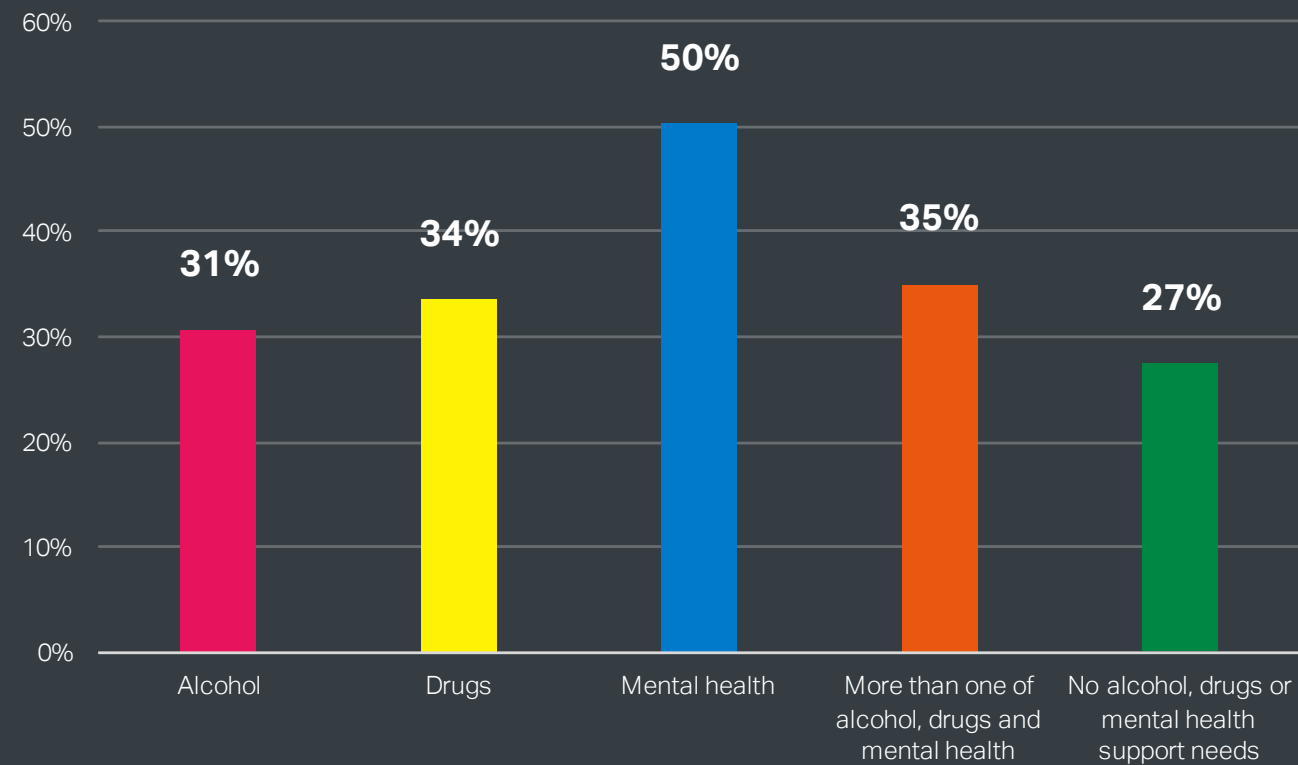


Gender	No.	%
Female	1427	17%
Male	6782	83%
Non-binary	6	0%
Total	8215	100%

The gender and age profile of people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 shows little variation from that of people seen in 2020/21. The majority of rough sleepers (83%) are male, while four-fifths (80%) are aged between 26 and 55. There has been a slight decrease in the proportion of people seen rough sleeping who were aged 25 or under, with 8% (707 people) of rough sleepers seen in 2021/22 in this group, compared to 10% (1,093 people) in 2020/21.

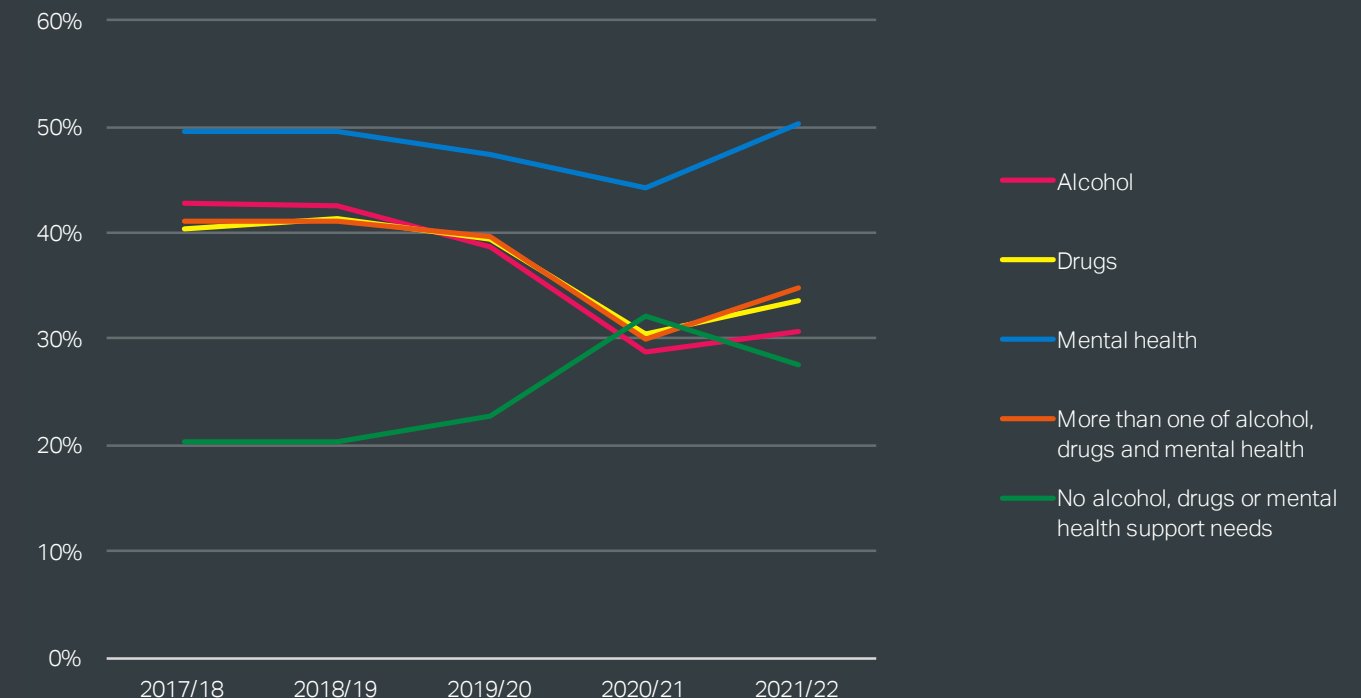
SUPPORT NEEDS

Figure (k) Support needs profile of people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22



Base: 6,225 people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 who had been assessed for at least one of the three key support needs.

Figure (l) Long range trend in support needs profile of people seen rough sleeping



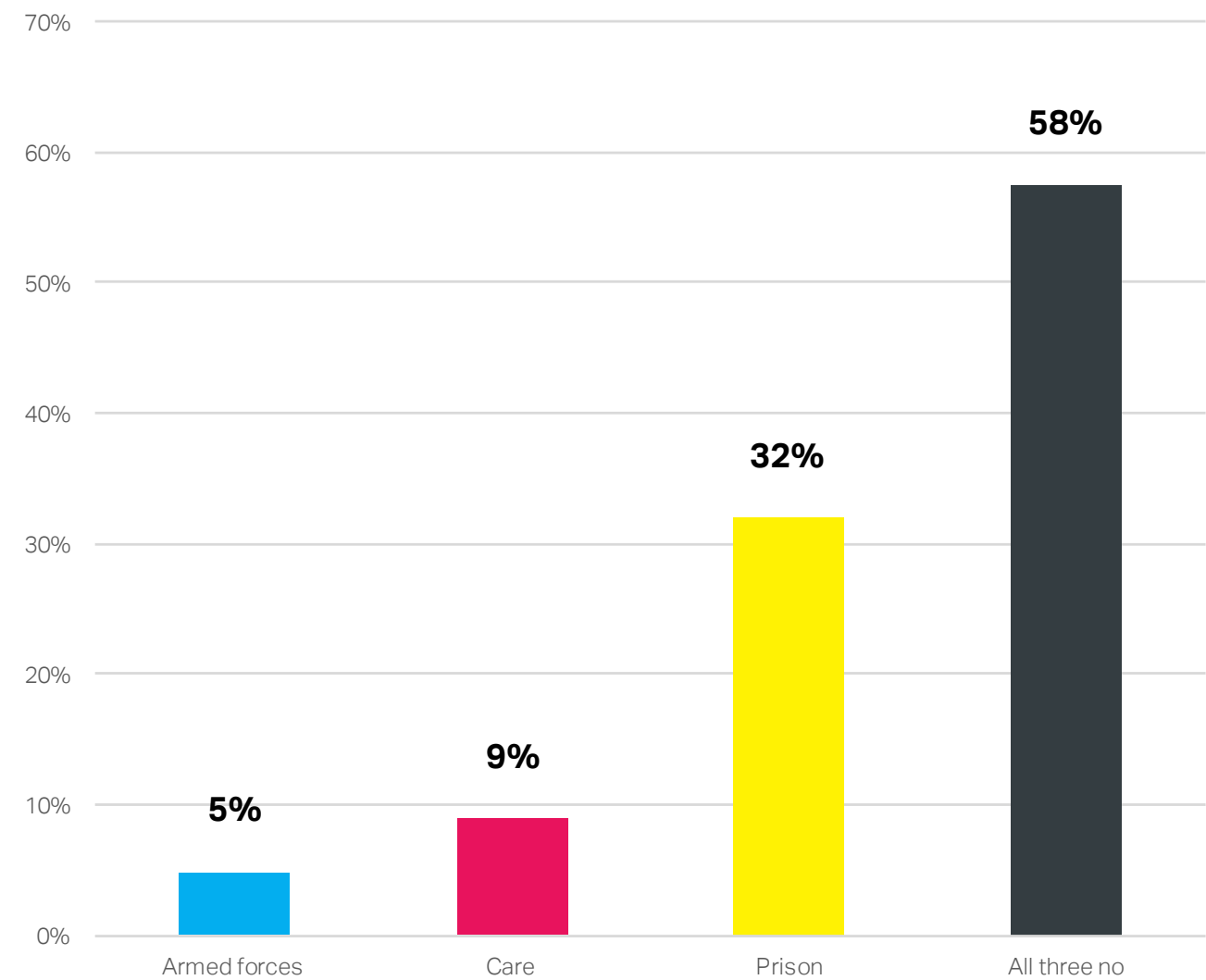
The most frequently reported support need amongst people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 was mental health, with 50% of those assessed during the period having a need in this area. 34% of people assessed had a support need relating to drug use, while 31% were found to have a support need around alcohol. Just over a third (35%) of those assessed were found to have more than one of the three support needs, while 27% had no support needs in these areas.

Following a period in which the proportion of rough sleepers assessed as having support needs relating to alcohol, drugs or mental health decreased, 2021/22 has seen slight increases in all these areas. Those found to have a need in relation to mental health constituted 50% of those assessed, compared to 44% in 2020/21.

People with an alcohol support need represented 31% in 2021/22, compared to 29% in 2020/21, and people with a drug support need represented 34% compared to 31% in 2020/21. The proportion of rough sleepers assessed as having more than one of the three support needs has also increased, from 30% in 2020/21 to 35% in 2021/22, while the proportion with none of the three support needs has decreased, from 32% in 2020/21 to 27% in 2021/22.

It should be noted that an increase in the proportion of individuals recorded with a particular support need does not necessarily equate to an increase in their number, as the size of the overall base has decreased.

Figure (m) Experience of serving in the armed forces, and spending time in prison or in local authority care, among people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22



Base: 6,209 people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 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.

Just under one third (32%) of people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 had experience of spending time in prison, while 9% had experience of the care system. Of the 554 people with experience of living in care, 66 were aged 25 or under.

Overall, 5% of people seen rough sleeping in 2021/22 had served in the armed forces at some point in their lives. Looking at this in more detail, 2% (110) 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 broadly consistent with 2020/21.

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