# **2022 Rough Sleeping Count/Estimates**

As part of our commitment to regularly monitor and measure the extent of rough sleeping throughout Northern Ireland, the Housing Executive have been conducting annual rough sleeping counts/estimates since 2018. Prior to 2018 the Housing Executive carried out snapshot counts only in areas where there was an identified need, which were primarily urban areas such as Belfast and Newry. The approach since 2018 has enabled the Housing Executive to publish information on rough sleeping across Northern Ireland as outlined in this update. This snapshot also allows the Housing Executive to track progress, consider whether current measures are effective in tackling rough sleeping and/or if new approaches are needed.

To ensure consistency each year and to gather data which is comparable with other jurisdictions, the Housing Executive conduct the rough sleeping count/estimates using Homeless Link’s Rough Sleeping Estimate guidance[[1]](#footnote-1).

**Rough Sleeper Street Counts**

As per Homeless Link’s guidance, rough sleepers are identified using the definition below:

*People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places, not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or ‘bashes’).*

The rough sleeper street counts took place in the following locations:

* Belfast – night of Tuesday 1st November leading into the morning of Wednesday 2nd November
* Newry – night of Tuesday 8th November leading into the morning of Wednesday 9th November
* Derry/Londonderry – night of Tuesday 22nd November leading into the morning of Wednesday 23rd November

The Housing Executive carried out Belfast & Newry counts alongside staff from the Welcome Organisation. The count for Derry/Londonderry was carried out alongside staff from First Housing Aid and Support Services (FHASS). Both partner organisations have expert knowledge of rough sleeping and provide daily support and assistance to individuals who rough sleep in the cities.

**Rough Sleeper Street Estimates**

An evidence-based estimates approach was used in all other areas across Northern Ireland to gather rough sleeping estimates. This method is intelligence-led and involves working with partner agencies, including local Housing Executive offices, PSNI, local councils, health trusts and relevant community and voluntary agencies. These agencies record and report how many people are rough sleeping in their area on a chosen night.

It is important to emphasise that the purpose of the estimate is to assess the numbers of people rough sleeping on the typical night chosen, rather than a larger sample of street activity, hidden homelessness or people using homelessness services. This means that, for example, a person who sometimes sleeps rough but sometimes has accommodation/shelter is not included in the estimate unless there is evidence that they did sleep rough on that night.

The chosen night for the evidence-based count across Northern Ireland was the evening of Tuesday 22nd November going into the morning of Wednesday 23rd November.

**Headline Figures**

A total of 33 people were estimated to be rough sleeping in Northern Ireland across the street counts/estimates outlined above. This represents a 43% increase from the 2021 figure of 23.

The use of a methodology that is consistent with England enables a comparison to be in respect of overall numbers. When a direct comparison is made numbers of rough sleepers in Northern Ireland are substantially lower than the most recent figures provided for England where it was noted that there were 3,069 people estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2022.

**Rough sleeping by area**

The table below outlines the number of rough sleepers by Local Government District (LGD).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Council | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| Antrim & Newtownabbey | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ards & North Down | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Belfast | 16 | 28 | 10 | 18 | 26 |
| Causeway Coast & Glen | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Derry City & Strabane | 13 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Fermanagh & Omagh | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lisburn & Castlereagh | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mid & East Antrim | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mid Ulster | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Newry, Mourne & Down | 5 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 3 |
| **Total** | **38** | **36** | **18** | **23** | **33** |

**Acknowledgements**

The Housing Executive would like to note the assistance of Welcome Organisation (for Belfast and Newry) and First Housing Aid and Support Service (for Derry/Londonderry) in both the preparation and completion of each of the street counts. Additionally, the Housing Executive acknowledges the wide range of organisations who supported the completion of the estimates in all other areas.

1. Homeless Link, ‘Rough Sleeping Estimates Toolkit 2021 – A guide for Local Authorities’ - [Microsoft Word - Rough Sleeping Estimates Toolkit 2021 (Final) (kxcdn.com)](https://homelesslink-1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/Rough_Sleeping_Estimates_Toolkit_2021_4FyGfJw.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)