

Ending Homelessness Together

Homelessness Strategy **2022-27**

Rough Sleeping Counts/Estimates

March 2025



2024 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 outline also allows the Housing Executive to track progress, consider whether current measures are effective in tackling rough sleeping and/or consider if new approaches are required. To ensure consistency is maintained each year, and to collect data which is comparable with other jurisdictions, the Housing Executive conduct the rough sleeping count/estimates using Homeless Link's Rough Sleeping Estimate guidance¹.

Rough Sleeping 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 on the following dates and locations:

- **Belfast** – night of Wednesday 6th November leading into the morning of Thursday 7th November 2024.
- **Newry** – night of Thursday 7th November leading into the morning of Friday 8th November 2024.
- **Derry/Londonderry** – night of Monday 25th November leading into the morning of Tuesday 26th November 2024.

The Housing Executive carried out Belfast and Newry rough sleeping street 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 invaluable daily support and assistance to individuals who rough sleep in the cities.

Rough Sleeping Street Estimates

An evidence-based approach was used in all other areas across Northern Ireland to gather rough sleeping estimates. This method is intelligence-led and involves working with a multitude of partner agencies, including local Housing Executive offices, PSNI, local councils, health trusts and relevant community and voluntary

¹ Homeless Link, 'Rough Sleeping Estimates Toolkit 2024'
<https://homeless.org.uk/knowledge-hub/rough-sleeping-snapshot-estimates-toolkit-2024/>

agencies. These agencies record and report how many individuals 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 utilising 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 estimates across Northern Ireland was the evening of Thursday 28th November 2024 leading into the morning of Friday 29th November 2024.

Headline Figures

A total of 72 people were estimated to be rough sleeping in Northern Ireland across the street counts/estimates outlined above. This represents a 60% increase from the 2023 figure of 45. 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 4,667 people estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2024. This has risen for the third year in a row, increasing 20% since 2023.²

Rough sleeping by area

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

Table 1

Council	Antrim & Newtownabbey	Ards & North Down	Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon	Belfast	Causeway Coast & Glens	Derry City & Strabane	Fermanagh & Omagh	Lisburn & Castlereagh	Mid & East Antrim	Mid Ulster	Newry, Mourne & Down	Total
2024	0	0	4	51	2	2	1	2	0	4	6	72

Acknowledgements

The Housing Executive would like to acknowledge and thank the dedicated staff from the Welcome Organisation, Depaul,

First Aid Housing and Support Services (FHASS) and Housing Executive operational staff for their assistance in both the preparation and completion of the rough

²Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, 'Rough Sleeping Snapshot in England: Autumn 2024',

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2024/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2024>

sleeping street counts and street estimates.

Additionally, the Housing Executive would like to thank the wide range of

organisations who supported the completion of the street estimates in all other areas across Northern Ireland.

Key Documents

The following documents contain additional information relevant to the Housing Executive's work on homelessness.

[Homelessness Strategy 2022-27](#)

[Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 Year 1
Action Plan](#)

[Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 Year 2
Action Plan](#)

[Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 Year 3
Action Plan](#)

[Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 Year 1
Annual Progress Report](#)

[Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 Year 2
Annual Progress Report](#)

The below table highlights the Street Estimates counts since 2018 when records began for each of the different council areas.

Table 2

Council	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Antrim & Newtownabbey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ards & North Down	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	0	4	0	1	1	1	4
Belfast	16	28	10	18	26	32	51
Causeway Coast & Glens	4	0	0	0	0	0	2
Derry City & Strabane	13	1	2	0	2	3	2
Fermanagh & Omagh	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Lisburn & Castlereagh	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Mid & East Antrim	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Mid Ulster	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
Newry, Mourne & Down	5	1	6	4	3	7	6
Total	38	36	18	23	33	45	72