

# Homeless Watch 2009

A Snapshot Survey of Homelessness in  
Derbyshire

28<sup>th</sup> September to 11<sup>th</sup> October



## South Derbyshire Report

HLG Resource Service

April 2010

Copies of this report are available on the Internet at:

[www.hlg.org.uk](http://www.hlg.org.uk)

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## **Executive Summary**

### **1 Introduction**

The Homeless Watch Survey aims to identify and analyse levels of homelessness and the needs of people currently homeless in Derbyshire. It also seeks to draw comparisons with other data sources as well as build on the previous snapshot survey undertaken last year in order to help identify patterns of homelessness in the County.

A key objective of the survey is to help inform the development of strategies and services designed to:

- prevent homelessness;
- reduce levels of homelessness and rough sleeping;
- improve service provision;
- improve the lives of people who find themselves homeless in Derbyshire.

### **2 Homeless people in South Derbyshire**

- adult presentations show an increase of 69% compared with last year – 22 adults presented this year compared with 13 in 2008
- five and a half times more children presented as homeless this year than in 2008 – 11 this year compared with only two in 2008

### **3 Characteristics of homeless people**

- men are over-represented within the homeless population in the district - 73% of those presenting to the survey as homeless in South Derbyshire were men and 27% women
- young people aged 18 to 24 comprise only 7% of the general population of the district but made up 27% of those presenting to the survey as homeless
- presentations by homeless children increased by five and a half times compared to 2008 – up from only two last year to 11

### **4 Background and support needs**

- in 2008, five presentations were made by people who reported a support need related to a learning difficulty - 36% of the recorded support needs. This year only one person reported this need.

## **5 Current living situation**

- eight presentations were made by people who spent the night prior to presenting to the survey at their own home – representing 35% of total presentations; almost twice the proportion of people presenting in this situation across the County
- only one rough sleeper presented to the survey in South Derbyshire this year, compared with two rough sleepers in 2008.

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the Homeless Watch survey

The Derbyshire Homeless Watch Survey 2009 is the second annual survey of homelessness in Derbyshire. It provides a snapshot survey that records details of everyone who presented as homeless to participating agencies in the County, during the two week survey period from 28th September to 11th October 2009. The 2009 survey provides an opportunity to identify and analyse levels of homelessness and the needs of homeless people in Derbyshire at present and to build on the first survey undertaken last year to identify and analyse trends and changes in homelessness in the County.

**This report provides an analysis of survey findings concerning homelessness in the South Derbyshire district.**

The Homeless Watch Survey 2009 has been undertaken against a background of:

- economic recession
- a continued emphasis on homelessness prevention in Government policy
- the recent development of five year homelessness strategies for each of the districts and boroughs of Derbyshire
- the case of 'G vs Southwark' which clarified the legal duty placed on local authorities to support and accommodate homeless teenagers under section 20 of the Children Act 1989
- a growing emphasis on the role of local strategic partnerships, the delivery of targets through local area agreements and the removal of the 'ring fence' around Supporting People funding

The South Derbyshire Homelessness Strategy 2007-12 aims "*to prevent homelessness by ensuring that South Derbyshire residents have access to affordable accommodation and support to sustain a home*".

The objectives of the strategy are to:

- end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation in circumstances other than in an emergency
- limit the use of temporary accommodation for homeless households
- work with stakeholders to ensure an adequate supply of affordable homes
- ensure that residents have access to affordable appropriate services to support them through a homeless crisis and to prevent the re-occurrence of homelessness
- ensure that all vulnerable people have the same access to appropriate and stable housing as non-vulnerable people

The findings of this report can be considered alongside the objectives set out within the strategy document.

## 1.2 Aims of the survey

The aims of the Homeless Watch Survey are to:

- identify and analyse levels of homelessness and the needs of homeless people in Derbyshire
- identify patterns and trends in homelessness by comparing current findings with those from the previous Homeless Watch survey
- use other data sources to contextualise findings from the Homeless Watch survey, thereby deepening our understanding of the profile of homeless people in Derbyshire
- provide evidence to inform local policy-making and the development and delivery of services for homeless people

## 1.3 How the survey was conducted

During the two week snapshot period, agencies across Derbyshire were asked to complete a questionnaire for each person or household who presented to them as homeless. Agencies were asked wherever possible to complete the form with the homeless person actually present, but this was not always possible. 333 agencies were invited to take part in the survey this year and 49 did so. 13 agencies gave nil returns and the overall agency response rate was 14.7%. Both the number of participating agencies and the response rate are down on the previous year. However, three agencies in South Derbyshire participated in the Homeless Watch Survey 2009 – up from two last year.

## 1.4 How the findings have been presented

For the purpose of the district reports, figures on the number of presentations and homeless people are calculated using a different methodology than has been used for the area analysis in the main Derbyshire-wide Homeless Watch report. Figures in this report for South Derbyshire are based on presentations by people who were **either** recorded by the Homeless Watch Survey 2009 as receiving advice about their homelessness whilst in the district itself **or** recorded as seeking advice whilst in another Derbyshire authority area but as having a local connection<sup>1</sup> to South Derbyshire. For the purposes of brevity this report generally refers to all presentations by homeless people in or with a connection to the district as those ‘presenting in South Derbyshire’.

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of *local connection* used by the survey can be found in Appendix 1

In addition to presenting the findings from the current survey, the data have been compared with those from the previous year in order to detect trends, and with other data sources where appropriate so as to contextualise the findings. For instance, the characteristics of homeless people have been compared with the local demographic profile for the general population as revealed in the 2001 Census<sup>2</sup> in order to give an indication of the prevalence of homelessness among sub-groups in the population.

Please note that most of the data tables and charts have been adjusted to remove repeat presentations except where it is useful in indicating changes in the circumstances of those presenting during the survey period.

The findings of the survey have been presented in this report as a response to four key questions:

1. How many people are homeless?
2. Who are the homeless?
3. What do homeless people need in addition to housing?
4. Where do homeless people live?

The main report provides detailed information for the entire sample on repeat homelessness, reasons for homelessness, outcomes of contact with agencies and homeless people's aspirations for housing.

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<sup>2</sup> 2001 Census data is available online at: [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

## 2 Homeless People in South Derbyshire

**Key questions:** How many people are homeless? How do their numbers compare with last year's? How often are people homeless? Where do homeless people have a local connection?

### 2.1 People presenting as homeless in South Derbyshire

**Key findings: Adult presentations show an increase of 69% compared with last year and five and a half times more children presented as homeless this year as in 2008.**

33 homeless people presented to the survey in or with a connection to South Derbyshire – comprising 22 adults (after one repeat presentation was removed)<sup>3</sup> and 11 homeless children. These figures compare with only 15 presentations comprising 13 adults and two children in 2008. Adult presentations show an increase of 69% compared with last year and five and a half times more children presented as homeless this year than in 2008. It should be borne in mind though that an additional agency took part in the survey in South Derbyshire this year and therefore more data is available for the district.

Table One: Homeless People in South Derbyshire, or with a Local Connection to the district

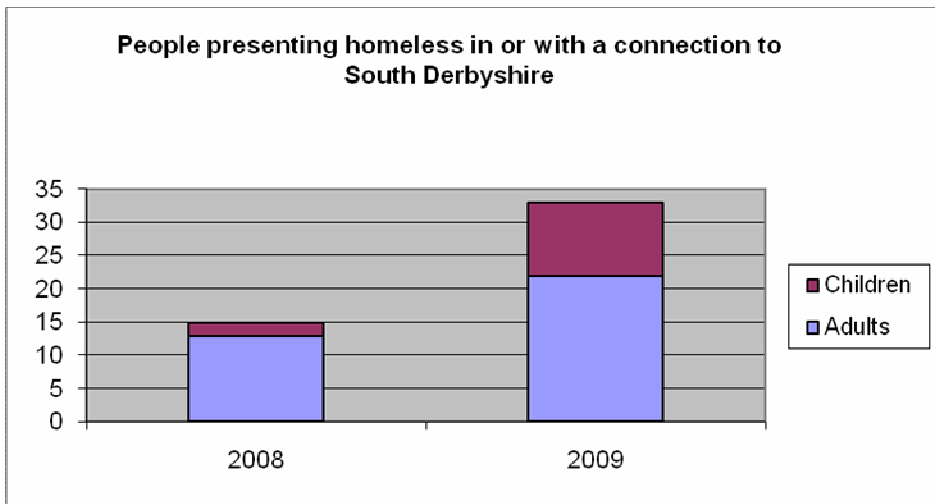
Category	Number
	Adjusted Figure to Take Account of Repeat Presentations
Adults	22
Children	11
Total	33

The graph at Figure 2.1 below provides a comparison between this year's figures and those reported last year.

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<sup>3</sup> Repeat presentations are where individuals presented to more than one agency during the survey fortnight, identified by comparing initials, gender and date of birth information.

Figure 2.1



## 2.2 People with a local connection to South Derbyshire

**Key findings: all of the 23 adult presentations made in South Derbyshire (including the one repeat) were made in the district itself.**

The data below shows that all of the 23 adult presentations made in South Derbyshire (including the one repeat) were made in the district itself. It also shows that one rough sleeper presented in the district. This compares with two presentations by rough sleepers in 2008.

Table One (a): Presentations and Local Connection

	All in South Derbyshire	South Derbyshire – Rough Sleepers Only
<b>Actual Presentations in South Derbyshire</b>	23	1
<b>Actual Presentations Outside South Derbyshire</b>	0	0
<b>Presented in or with a local connection to South Derbyshire</b>	23	1

### 3 Characteristics of Homeless People

**Key questions:** Who are the homeless? How are they distributed around population variables, such as gender, age, ethnic origin and household structure?

#### 3.1 Gender

**Key finding: Men are over-represented within the homeless population in the district - 73% of those presenting to the survey as homeless in South Derbyshire were men and 27% women**

Table Two below shows that 73% of those presenting to the survey as homeless in South Derbyshire were men and 27% women. 2001 census data indicates that 49% of the general population are men and 51% women. Across Derbyshire as a whole 63% of those presenting to the survey were men. The findings for South Derbyshire this year are noticeably different to those reported in 2008 when 54% of those presenting to the survey as homeless were men and 46% were women.

Table Two: Gender

Gender	Number	%
Male	16	73
Female	6	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 3.2 Age

**Key findings: Young people aged 18 to 24 comprise only 7% of the general population of the borough but made up 27% of those presenting to the survey as homeless.**

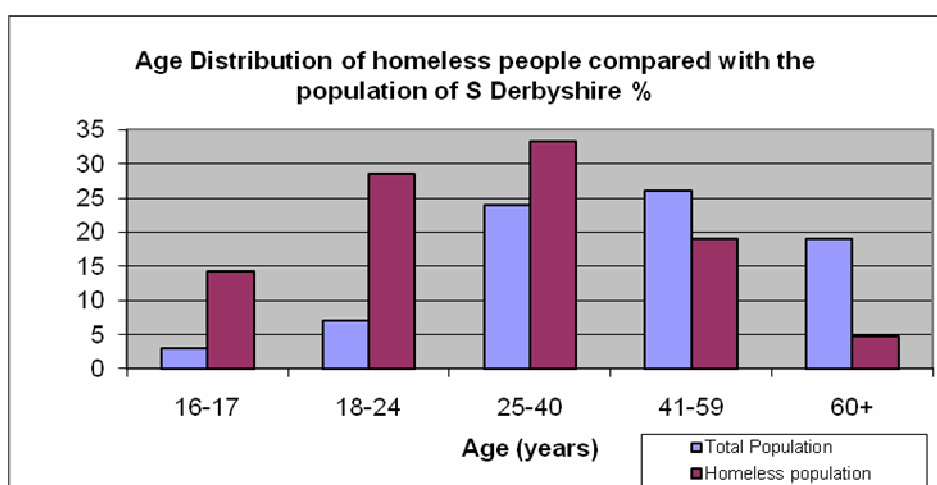
The data at Table Three below shows that there were three presentations by homeless young people aged under 18 this year. This compares with one presentation by an under 18 year old in 2008. Homeless people aged between 18 and 24 made up 27% of adult presentations (after the one repeat is removed) and those aged between 25 and 40 made up almost 32% of the survey population for South Derbyshire.

Figure 3.2 shows a distorted age profile amongst homeless people compared with the general population. It shows a particular over-representation of young people aged 18 to 24 in the homeless population when compared to the general population of South Derbyshire. People aged between 18 and 24 comprise only 7% of the general population of the borough but made up 27% of those presenting to the survey.

Table Three: Age

Age Range	Male	Female	Total
16 &17 Years Old	2	1	3
18-24 Years Old	4	2	6
25-40 Years Old	5	2	7
41-59 Years Old	3	1	4
60 years old and over	1		1
No Date of Birth Supplied	1		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>22</b>

Figure 3.2



### 3.3 Ethnic origin

The data at Table Four shows that only one person of an ethnic origin other than White British presented as homeless in South Derbyshire. The minority ethnic population of the district is just over 4% according to 2001 Census data.

Table Four: Ethnic Origin

Ethnic Origin	Number	%
Black/Black British: Other	1	2.5
White: British	36	95
No Data Supplied	1	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3.4 Household structure

**Key findings: 22% of presentations by households in South Derbyshire were families with children – the same proportion as for the County as a whole. However, presentations by homeless children increased by five and a half times compared with 2008 – up from only two last year to 11 in 2009.**

Table Five below shows that 15 or 68% of those presenting as homeless in South Derbyshire were single people. Four single parents and two couples with children presented to the survey. 22% of presentations by households in the district were families with children – the same figure as the County as a whole. Presentations by homeless children increased by five and a half times compared with 2008 – up from only two last year to 11 in 2009.

Table Five: Household Type

Household Type	Number	Percentage - South Derbyshire	Percentage - Derbyshire
Single Person (No Kids)	15	68	65
Single Parent With Children	4	18	12
Couple With Children	2	9	10
Childless Couple	1	5	7
No Data Supplied		0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table Six: Age and number of dependent Children

Age of Children	Number of Children in this Age Range
0 - 4 Years Old	3
5 – 10 Years Old	3
11 – 15 Years Old	2
16 & 17 Years Old	1
18 Years Old and Over	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>

## 4 Background and Support Needs

**Key questions:** What do homeless people need in addition to housing? How many spent time in the care of a local authority, and how many have other challenges in their lives that arise from, for instance, mental health problems or substance misuse?

### 4.1 Care leavers

Table Seven below shows that only one person with a history of care presented as homeless in South Derbyshire, which is the same as last year.

Table Seven: Age of Care Leavers

Age	Number of This Age With Care History
16 & 17 Years Old	
18 – 21 Years Old	
22 Years Old and Over	1
No Data Supplied	
Total	1

### 4.2 Support Needs

**Key findings:** In 2008, five presentations were made by people who reported a support need related to a learning difficulty - 36% of the recorded support needs. This year only one person reported this need.

In 2008, five presentations were made by people who reported a support need related to a learning difficulty - 36% of the recorded support needs. The South Derbyshire Homelessness Strategy 2007-12 identifies tackling homelessness amongst people with learning difficulties as an 'amber issue' for the district – i.e. an issue where measures are in place but where there is room for improvement. This year only one person reported this need.

The most prevalent support need reported this year was support related to a history of offending. This was reported by four people presenting to the survey, or 17% of presentations – which compared with 14% reporting this need across the County. Last year, two presentations were made by people reporting this support need in South Derbyshire. No one reported a need related to mental health issues this year compared with four presentations last year and three people reported a need relating to drug problems – the same number as last year. One person reported a need related to alcohol last year

and this has increased to three in 2009. As highlighted last year the Homelessness Strategy identifies homelessness amongst people with a combination of mental health, drug and alcohol problems as a 'red issue' – defined as 'a big issue in the district that needs addressing urgently'.

Table Eight: Support Needs

Support Needs	Number	Percentage of Presentations- South Derbyshire	Percentage - Derbyshire
Ex-Offender	4	17	14
Drug Abuse	3	13	12
Alcohol Abuse	2	9	14
Learning Difficulties	1	4	4
Domestic Violence	1	4	7
Mental Health			10
Physically Disabled			2
Other	3	13	11
No Data Supplied			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>

*Please note that people could record more than one support need. Three presentations were made by homeless people in the district who reported no support needs and seven people did not state if they had support needs or not.*

## 5 Current Living Situation

**Key questions:** Where do homeless people live? Where did they spend the previous night and where did they hope to spend the next night? How many people slept rough the previous night, where did they stay and for how long?

### 5.1 Previous night's accommodation

**Key finding:** Eight presentations were made by people who spent the night prior to presenting to the survey at their own home – representing 35% of total presentations; almost twice the proportion of people presenting in this situation across the County.

The data at Table Nine below shows that eight presentations were made by people who spent the night prior to presenting to the survey at their own home – representing 35% of total presentations; almost twice the proportion of people presenting in this situation as across the County. Four presentations

were made by people who had spent the previous night at their parent's home and four at the home of a friend. Two people reported spending the previous night in custody.

Table Ten provides a comparison between where people presenting to the survey spent the night prior to completing a survey form with where they expected to be sleeping the coming night. It shows very little change in the circumstances of homeless people in South Derbyshire participating in the Homeless Watch Survey 2009 between the night after and night before presenting to a participating agency.

Table Nine: Previous Night's Accommodation

<b>Where Person Spent the Previous Night</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage - South Derbyshire</b>	<b>Percentage - Derbyshire</b>
<b>Own Home</b>	8	35	18
<b>Parents' Home</b>	4	17	14
<b>Friend's Home</b>	4	17	25
<b>Other Relative's Home</b>	4	17	7
<b>Custody</b>	2	9	1
<b>Slept Rough</b>	1	4	16
<b>B&amp;B Lodgings</b>			2
<b>Hostel</b>			1
<b>Partner's Home</b>			2
<b>Grandparents' Home</b>			1
<b>Hospital</b>			1
<b>Emergency Bed</b>			1
<b>Other</b>			3
<b>No Data Supplied</b>			10
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Please note that since the place where a person was staying the previous night could change during the course of the survey period, the figures shown are for all 23 adult presentations including the one repeat presentation.*

Table Ten: Comparison of previous and coming night's accommodation

		Where Person Is Sleeping the Night Following Contact With An Agency															
		B & B Lodgings	Custody	Emergency Bed	Friend's Home	Grandparents	Hospital	Hostel	Other Relative's	Own Home	Parents Home	Partner's Home	Sleeping Rough	Childrens Home or Foster Care	Other	No Data Supplied	Totals
Where Person Slept The Night Prior To Seeing Agency For Advice	B&B Lodgings																
	Custody		2														2
	Emergency Bed																
	Friend's Home				3			1									4
	Grandparent's																
	Hospital																
	Hostel																
	Other Relative's							2		1						1	4
	Own Home							1	7								8
	Parent's Home									3					1		4
	Partner's Home																
	Sleeping Rough											1					1
	Childrens Home or Foster Care																
	Other																
	No Data Supplied																
Totals		2		3			4	7	4		1			1	1	23	

Please note that the table includes repeat presentations since a person's circumstances could change over the course of the survey period.

## **5.2 Rough sleeping**

Only one rough sleeper presented to the survey in South Derbyshire this year, compared with two rough sleepers in 2008. The person sleeping rough reported that they were sleeping out in the open air and had been rough sleeping for more than one night and less than a week.

## **6 Conclusions**

This report sets out some of the key findings for South Derbyshire of the Derbyshire Homeless Watch Survey 2009. The main report for Derbyshire can be used to compare the findings for the borough with other districts and with the County as a whole.

Of particular concern for South Derbyshire are the findings that adult presentations show an increase of 69% compared with last year – 22 adults presented this year compared with 13 in 2008 and that five and a half times more children presented as homeless this year than in 2008 – 11 this year compared with only two in 2008.

These findings in particular merit further investigation and action.

## Appendix 1: Definitions used

The following definitions were used in this survey.

**Homelessness:** People were regarded as homeless if they were

- Living in something not normally considered to be housing (such as derelict buildings, sheds, vehicles – i.e. sleeping rough);
- Living with the insecurity of not knowing where they would sleep tomorrow or over the next 28 days, e.g. sleeping on a friend's floor for a few days or staying temporarily with relatives;
- Living in a state of dispossession (i.e. not being able to have their belongings in the same place that they are sleeping).

**Local connection:** People had a local connection to a locality if

- Members of their immediate family lived there;
- They had lived there for 6 of the past 12 months or 3 of the past 5 years;
- They had formal employment in the area.

**Adult:** For the purposes of this survey, people were adults if they were aged 16 years or more.

**Care leavers:** the following definition has been used for care leavers:

“The expression ‘children in care’ refers both to children who are the subject of care orders and to children provided with accommodation by a local authority for more than 24 hours, either under section 20 or section 21 of the Children Act 1989, or who have been placed or authorised to be placed with prospective adopters by a local authority (but not a registered adoption society). Care Leavers are young people who have been in the care system and for whom the local authority has an ongoing responsibility once they have formally left care.” (p.1) [Available at: [www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk](http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk) ]