

Homeless Watch 2009

A Snapshot Survey of Homelessness in
Derbyshire

28th September to 11th October



Chesterfield Borough Report

HLG Resource Service
April 2010

Copies of this report are available on the Internet at:

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 Chesterfield

- 85 homeless adults presented to the survey this year - a fall of over 18 percent when compared with the 104 presentations last year
- for dependent children the number of presentations this year at 32 is very close to the 33 last year.

3 Characteristics of homeless people

- nearly twice as many men presented to the survey than women. 65% of those presenting to the survey as homeless in Chesterfield were men compared with 35% women
- 16 and 17 year olds comprise only 2% of the population of the borough but made up 16% of those presenting as homeless to the survey
- seven people of an ethnic origin other than White British presented as homeless in Chesterfield or with a connection to the borough representing just over 8% of total presentations (after invalid data is removed i.e. where no ethnic origin was recorded). The UK 2001 census found that just over 3% of the population of Chesterfield were from a non White British ethnic origin
- 24% of presentations in Chesterfield were made by homeless families with children which contrasts with 58% of those accepted as statutorily homeless by English local authorities in the third quarter of 2009.

4 Background and support needs

- there were only 3 presentations in Chesterfield by homeless people with a care history compared with 15 in 2008 – a huge reduction in care leavers presenting as homeless
- only one of those with a care history had been in care in Derbyshire
- reported support needs are generally lower than last year with a 73% reduction in the numbers of people reporting a support need related to drug problems compared with last year

5 Current living situation

- 29 or 32% of people presenting to the survey spent the previous night at a friend's home which compares with 38 and 29% last year and with 25% for Derbyshire as a whole
- the total number of rough sleepers recorded for the borough by the 2009 Homeless Watch Survey was 15 – a reduction of 50% compared to the 30 recorded last year

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, including Derby City, 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 Chesterfield.

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

- a continued economic recession;
- a continued emphasis on homelessness prevention in Government policy;
- the recent development of five year homelessness strategies for Derby City and 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 findings set out within this survey report can be considered alongside the Homelessness Strategy for Chesterfield 2008-13. The strategy has five key aims:

- Prevention of homelessness
- Thinking strategically - addressing and revising issues and solutions in the short, medium and long-term
- Learning from others and seeking best practice
- Working in partnership
- Empowering customers through choice and involvement.

The strategy document identifies the main causes of homelessness in Chesterfield as:

- being asked to leave by friends and family
- loss of private rented accommodation

- domestic violence.

The Homelessness Strategy concludes with five targets for tackling homelessness in the borough:

- 1: To reduce the number of acceptances against the main causes of homelessness
- 2: To reduce repeat homelessness year on year
- 3: To secure a year on year increase in homelessness prevention outcomes
- 4: To increase the number of people receiving support to maintain their tenancy working in partnership with key agencies and providers
- 5: To minimise the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

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
- To identify patterns and trends in homelessness by comparing current findings with those from the previous Homeless Watch survey
- To use other data sources to contextualise findings from the Homeless Watch survey, thereby deepening our understanding of the profile of homeless people in Derbyshire
- To 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.

Seven agencies in Chesterfield participated in the 2009 survey compared with 15 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 Chesterfield are based on presentations by

people who were **either** recorded by the Homeless Watch Survey 2009 as receiving advice about their homelessness whilst in Chesterfield borough itself **or** recorded as seeking advice whilst in another Derbyshire authority area but as having a local connection¹ to Chesterfield. For the purposes of brevity this report refers to all presentations by homeless people in or with a connection to Chesterfield borough as those 'presenting in Chesterfield'.

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 Census² 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.

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

² 2001 Census data is available online at: www.statistics.gov.uk

2 Homeless People in Chesterfield

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 Chesterfield

Key finding: presentations by homeless adults have fallen by around 18% compared with last year.

117 people presented as homeless in Chesterfield or with a local connection to the borough, comprising 85 adults and 32 dependent children (after 7 repeat presentations were removed)³.

Table One: Homeless People in Chesterfield, or with a Local Connection to the area

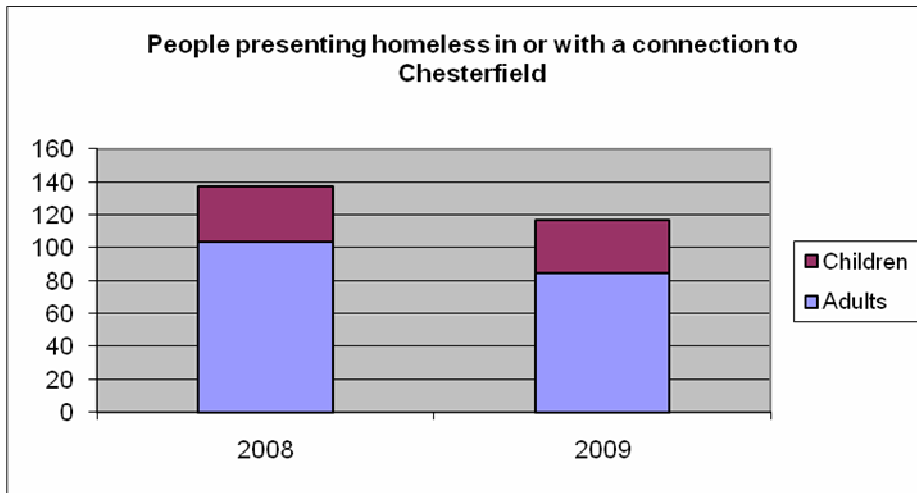
Category	Number
	Adjusted Figure to Take Account of Repeat Presentations
Adults	85
Children	32
Total	117

Figure 2.1 compares these figures with those reported last year. What they show is that presentations by homeless adults have fallen by over 18 percent when compared with the 104 presentations last year whereas for dependent children the number of presentations this year at 32 is very close to the 33 last year.

As noted above, seven agencies participated in the survey this year compared with 15 in 2008. This is likely to have had an impact on the number of presentations recorded in Chesterfield.

³ 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 Chesterfield

Key findings: No homeless people presented outside the borough with a connection to Chesterfield. Half the number of rough sleepers presented to the survey as last year.

The data below shows that all of the 92 total adult presentations made in Chesterfield or by those with a connection to the borough including the 7 repeats, were made in Chesterfield itself. The table provides a breakdown of rough sleepers presenting in or with a connection to Chesterfield and shows that the total number of rough sleepers recorded for the borough was 15 which is half the 30 recorded last year.

Table One (a): Presentations and Local Connection

	All in Chesterfield	Chesterfield – Rough Sleepers Only
Actual Presentations in Chesterfield	92	15
Actual Presentations Outside Chesterfield	0	0
Presented in or with a local connection to Chesterfield	92	15

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: Nearly twice as many men presented to the survey than women.

65% of those presenting to the survey as homeless in Chesterfield were men compared with 35% women. These figures compare with 59% men and 40% women last year. The gender breakdown for Chesterfield this year is in line with Derbyshire as a whole where 63% of those presenting were men.

Table Four: Gender

Gender	Number	%
Male	54	64
Female	30	35
No Data Supplied	1	1
Total	85	100

3.2 Age

Key finding: 16 and 17 year olds comprise only 2% of the population of the borough but made up 16% of those presenting as homeless to the survey.

The data indicates that thirteen presentations were made in Chesterfield by young homeless people aged under 18. This compares with only six last year. Eight of the homeless 16 and 17 year olds were young women compared with only four in 2008. Homeless people under 25 made up almost 45% of those presenting as homeless in Chesterfield. This compares with a proportion of 35% last year.

Figure 3.2 shows a distorted age profile amongst homeless people compared with the general population from 2001 census data. It shows that 16 and 17 year olds and 18 to 24 year olds are hugely over represented amongst the homeless population in Chesterfield. 16 and 17 year olds comprise only 2% of the population of the borough but made up 16% of those presenting as homeless to the survey. 18 to 24 year olds comprise 7% of the total population and 31% of the homeless population.

As noted last year, the Chesterfield Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2008-13 identifies the continuing development of services specifically for young people as a key action. The issue of homelessness amongst young people in Chesterfield appears to have worsened since last year according to the findings of the survey

Figure 3.2

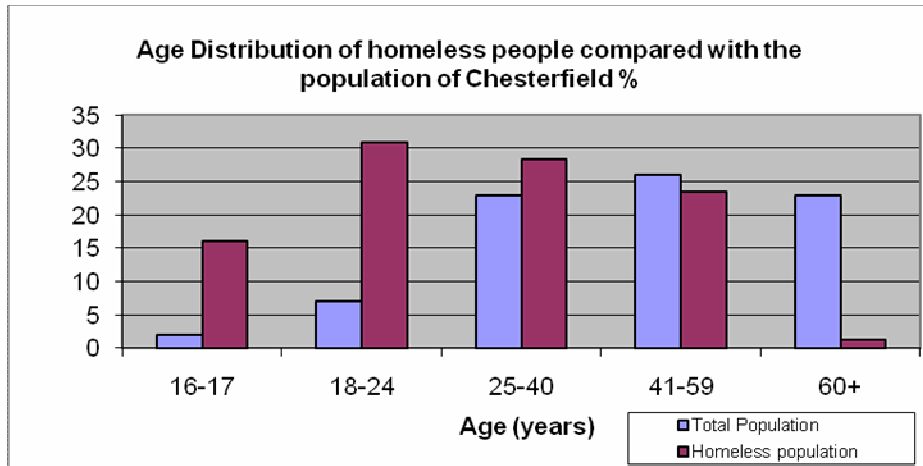


Table Three: Age

Age Range	Male	Female	Gender Not Stated	Total
16 &17 Years Old	5	8		13
18-24 Years Old	16	9		25
25-40 Years Old	15	8		23
41-59 Years Old	15	3	1	19
60 years old and over	1			1
No Date of Birth Supplied	2	2		4
Total	54	30	1	85

3.3 Ethnic origin

The data below shows that seven people of an ethnic origin other than White British presented as homeless in Chesterfield or with a connection to the borough. This represents just over 8% of total presentations (after invalid data is removed i.e. where no ethnic origin was recorded).

The UK 2001 census found that just over 3% of the population of Chesterfield were from a non White British ethnic origin. The data therefore suggests that people from black and minority ethnic communities are over-represented amongst the homeless population in Chesterfield. These findings are very similar to last year - however, as noted last year the numbers involved are low and it is therefore difficult to draw firm conclusions concerning homelessness amongst ethnic minorities in the borough.

Figure 3.1 provides a breakdown by ethnic minority of the homeless people presenting to the 2009 survey compared with census data for 2001 for the general population of Chesterfield. It shows considerable over-representation within the homeless population of certain ethnic groups – however, the numbers involved are too small to enable any firm conclusions to be drawn from the data.

Figure 3.3

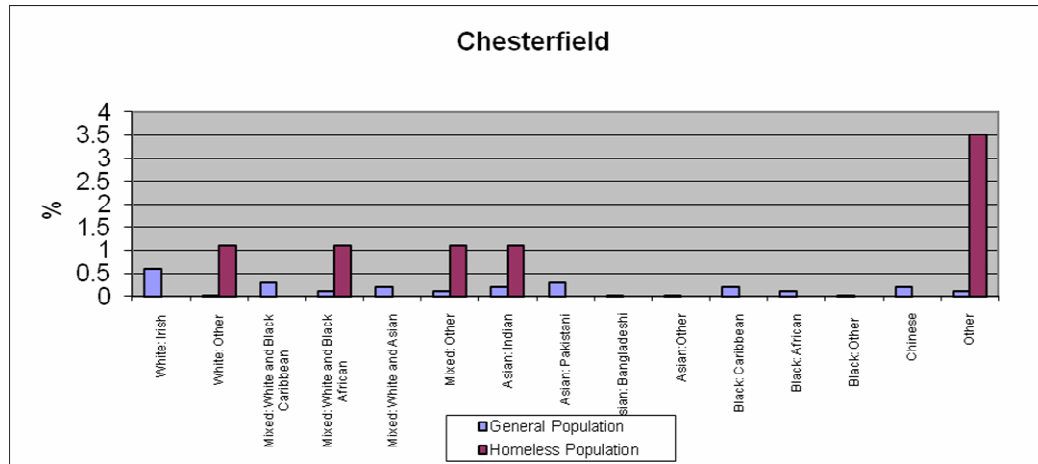


Table Five: Ethnic Origin

Ethnic Origin	Number	%
Asian/Asian British: Indian	1	1
Mixed: Other	1	1
Mixed: White & Black African	1	1
White: British	77	91
White: Other	1	1
Other	3	4
No Data Supplied	1	1
Total	85	100

3.4 Household structure

Key finding: 24% of presentations in Chesterfield were made by homeless families with children. This contrasts with 58% of those accepted as statutorily homeless by English local authorities in the third quarter of 2009.

The data below shows that 72% of presentations in Chesterfield were made by single homeless people, which is the same proportion as last year and that 24% of presentations were made by families with children. This compares with 19% last year. These figures compare with 65% single people and 29% families of all types presenting across Derbyshire as a whole. 32 children presented to the survey this year compared with 33 in 2008.

Table Six: Household Type

Household Type	Number	Percentage - Chesterfield	Percentage - Derbyshire
Single Person (No Kids)	61	72	65
Single Parent With Children	10	12	12
Couple With Children	10	12	10
Childless Couple	3	4	7
No Data Supplied	1	1	6
Total	85	100	100

Table Seven: Age & Number of Dependent Children

Age of Children	Number of Children in this Age Range
0 - 4 Years Old	13
5 – 10 Years Old	13
11 – 15 Years Old	4
16 & 17 Years Old	2
18 Years Old and Over	
Total	32

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

Key finding: Homeless people with a history of care recorded by the survey have fallen from 15 in 2008 down to only 3 this year.

The data below shows that that there were only 3 presentations in Chesterfield by homeless people with a care history. This compares with 15 in 2008 – a huge reduction. Only one of those with a care history had been in care in Derbyshire.

Table Eight: Age of Care Leavers

Age	Number of This Age With Care History
16 & 17 Years Old	
18 – 21 Years Old	1
22 Years Old and Over	2
No Data Supplied	
Total	3

Table Nine: Where People Were in Care

	Number of This Age With Care History
Derbyshire	1
Outside Derbys	1
No Data Supplied	1
Total	3

4.2 Support Needs

Key findings: Reported support needs are generally lower than last year. There has been a 73% reduction in the numbers of people reporting a support need related to drug problems compared with last year.

The data below shows that 12 presentations, representing 13% of the total, were made in Chesterfield by homeless people with a support need relating to drug problems. These figures compare with 45 presentations (35%) in 2008 – showing a fall of over 73% in the numbers of people reporting drug problems as a support need since last year.

16 presentations were made by people reporting a mental health support need, which is very close to the 17 reporting this need last year. The proportion of people reporting mental health problems in Chesterfield at 17% is noticeably higher than those presenting to the survey across Derbyshire where 10% reported this support need.

Only 9 people reported a need related to alcohol problems compared with 22 last year and 14 people identified themselves as ex-offenders compared with 32 last year.

Domestic violence was reported as a support need by 11 people compared with 9 in 2008. 12% of those presenting in Chesterfield reported this problem compared with 7% across Derbyshire as a whole.

Please note that people could record more than one support need and that 38 presentations were made by homeless people in Chesterfield who reported no support needs.

Table Ten: Support Needs

Support Needs	Number	Percentage of Presentations- Chesterfield	Percentage - Derbyshire
Mental Health	16	17	10
Ex-Offender	14	15	14
Drug Abuse	12	13	12
Domestic Violence	11	12	7
Alcohol Abuse	9	10	14
Learning Difficulties	5	5	4
Physically Disabled	2	2	2
Other	16	17	11
No Data Supplied	2	2	1
Total	87	N/A	N/A

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

The data set out below indicates that 29 or 32% of people presenting to the survey spent the previous night at a friend's home. These figures compare with 38 and 29% last year and with 25% for Derbyshire as a whole.

15 people spent the previous night sleeping rough. This compares with 30 who reported doing so the night before presenting to last year's survey. This indicates a reduction of 50% in the numbers of rough sleepers presenting to the survey in Chesterfield. Last year, Chesterfield recorded the highest number of rough sleepers of any area in Derbyshire. However, this year 24 people presented to the survey as sleeping rough in Derby City – the highest number across the County.

14 presentations were made by those who reported spending the previous night in their own home and 14 at their parent's home.

Table Twelve provides data on where homeless adults spent the night *before* making contact with a participating agency and where they expected to spend the following night *after* making contact. It indicates that:

- 80% of people sleeping rough expected to do so again the following night after contact with an agency.

- 1 rough sleeper expected to acquire hostel accommodation.
- 4 people would find hostel accommodation for the night after presenting to the survey who had not been in a hostel the previous night.

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 92 adult presentations including repeats.

Table Eleven: Previous Night's Accommodation

Where Person Spent the Previous Night	Number	Percentage - Chesterfield	Percentage - Derbyshire
Friend's Home	29	32	25
Slept Rough	15	16	16
Own Home	14	15	18
Parents' Home	14	15	14
Partner's Home	5	5	2
Other Relative's Home	4	4	7
B&B Lodgings	3	3	2
Grandparents' Home	2	2	1
Hostel	2	2	1
Hospital	1	1	1
Other	2	2	3
No Data Supplied	1	1	10
Total	92	100	100

Table Twelve: Comparison of Previous & 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	2					1										3
	Custody																
	Emergency Bed																
	Friend's Home	2			20		2			2		1			2		29
	Grandparent's					2											2
	Hospital						1										1
	Hostel							2									2
	Other Relative's								3	1							4
	Own Home					1				11		1			1		14
	Parent's Home				3				2		9						14
	Partner's Home				2							3					5
	Sleeping Rough							1		1			11		1	1	15
	Childrens Home or Foster care																
	Other														2		2
	No Data Supplied														1		1
Totals	4			25	3	1	6	5	13	11	4	12		5	3	92	

5.2 Rough sleeping

Key finding: Rough sleeping in Chesterfield recorded by the 2009 survey has fallen by 50% compared with the levels recorded last year.

As highlighted above, the total number of rough sleepers recorded for the borough by the 2009 Homeless Watch Survey was 15 – a reduction of 50% compared to the 30 recorded last year. As reported last year, the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan identifies a feasibility study of accommodation provision and support for rough sleepers as a high priority for the borough.

The data at Table Twelve indicates that the majority of rough sleepers (73%) slept out in the open air. Table Thirteen indicates that 40% of rough sleepers reported sleeping rough for more than one month – highlighting a continuing problem of entrenched rough sleeping in Chesterfield – even though the total number of rough sleepers has fallen dramatically since last year.

Table Twelve: Type of Rough Sleeping

Slept Rough Type	Number	Percentage - Chesterfield	Percentage - Derbyshire
Building/Structure Not For Habitation	4	27	26
Sleeping In Open Air	11	73	45
Squat			4
Don't Know			4
No Data Supplied			21
Grand Total	15	100	100

Table Thirteen: Time Spent Rough Sleeping

Time Rough Sleeping	Number in This Category	Percentage - Chesterfield	Percentage - Derbyshire
1 night	2	13	6
More than a night up to 1 week	6	40	19
More than 1 week and up to 1 month	1	7	4
More than 1 mth and up to 3 mths	3	20	32
More than 3 mths and up to 6 mths			4
More Than 6 mths and up to 12 mths	1	7	9
More than 12 mths	2	13	15
Don't Know			4
No Data Supplied			6
Total	15	100	100

6 Conclusions

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

The report highlights some key differences between findings this year and in 2008 – the first year that the survey was carried out in Chesterfield. Of particular note are the findings that presentations by homeless adults are down by 18% compared to last year; presentations by people with a history of care down from 15 last year to 3 this year and presentations by rough sleepers down by 50% compared with last year. All of these findings are very welcome. However the report also highlights some serious problems – in particular a large over representation of young people within the homeless population compared with the general population and a continued problem of entrenched rough sleeping.

It is hoped that the report will be used by commissioners and service providers to help understand changing patterns of homelessness in Chesterfield and make informed and effective responses to the issues highlighted here.

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]