

# Homeless Watch 2009

A Snapshot Survey of Homelessness in  
Derbyshire

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



## Amber Valley 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 Amber Valley**

- presentations by homeless adults have increased by 31% compared with last year whereas the number of children presenting to the survey as homeless has fallen by 10%.
- no presentations were made outside the borough by homeless people with a connection to Amber Valley.

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

- the proportion of homeless women within the homeless population presenting in Amber Valley has fallen from 55% last year to 42% in 2009 whilst the proportion of men has increased from 38% to 58%.
- there has been an increase of 66% in the numbers of homeless people aged 25 and over presenting to the survey this year compared with 2008 - 25 homeless people in this age bracket presented this year compared with fifteen last year.
- 16 and 17 year olds, 18 to 24 year olds and 25 to 40 year olds are over represented amongst the homeless population in Amber Valley .
- four people of an ethnic origin other than White British presented as homeless in Amber Valley representing over 10.5% of total adult presentations whilst the UK 2001 census found that just over 2% of the population of Amber Valley were of a non White British ethnic origin. In 2008, two people of an ethnic origin other than White British presented as homeless in Amber Valley representing almost 6% of the 29 total

adult presentations. Whilst the numbers involved are small, the findings indicate a worsening problem of homelessness amongst ethnic minority groups in Amber Valley.

- eight childless couples presented to the survey this year compared with no couples without children in 2008.
- 65% of presentations were made by single people and 22% by homeless households including children compared with 52% single people and 48% households with children last year.

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

- 23% of presentations by those under 25 were made by young people with a care history.
- eight presentations were made by people with a support need related to a mental health problem - twice the number who reported this need in 2008.

#### **5 Current living situation**

- 33% of homeless people presenting to the survey in Amber Valley spent the night at their own home, 25% at their parent's home and 13% at the home of a friend.
- 13 presentations were made by people who spent the previous night at their own home compared with only six last year.
- the number of rough sleepers recorded by the survey has risen to three from only one 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, 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 begin to identify and analyse possible trends and changes in homelessness in the County.

**This report provides an analysis of survey findings concerning homelessness in Amber Valley.**

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 Amber Valley Homelessness Strategy Review 2008-11 puts a clear focus on homelessness prevention. The review document highlights some key challenges for the borough in tackling homelessness as:

- access to private rented accommodation
- difficulty faced by first time buyers in obtaining a mortgage
- impact of fewer houses being built
- increasing mortgage repossessions
- potential impact on funding for homelessness services following the implementation of Local Area Agreements.

The review highlights the major causes of homelessness in Amber Valley as:

1. Violent breakdown of relationship with a partner
2. Termination of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy
3. Parents no longer willing to accommodate.

The findings of this report can be considered alongside the challenges highlighted in 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.
- begin to 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. Five agencies in the Amber Valley area participated in the Homeless Watch Survey 2009 – down from eight last year. It is important to bear this in mind when considering the findings set out within this report.

## 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 Amber Valley are based on presentations by people who were **either** recorded by the Homeless Watch Survey 2009 as receiving advice about their homelessness whilst in Amber Valley borough itself **or** recorded as seeking advice whilst in another Derbyshire authority area but as having a local connection<sup>1</sup> to Amber Valley. For the purposes of

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

brevity this report refers to all presentations by homeless people in or with a connection to Amber Valley as those 'presenting in Amber Valley'.

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 possible emerging 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 Amber Valley

**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 Amber Valley

**Key finding: The number of homeless adults presenting to the survey as homeless in Amber Valley has increased by 31% compared to last year.**

56 people presented as homeless in Amber Valley or with a local connection to the borough, comprising 38 adults and 18 dependent children (after two repeat presentations were removed)<sup>3</sup>. These figures compare with 29 adult presentations and 20 children in 2008.

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

Category	Number
	Adjusted Figure to Take Account of Repeat Presentations
Adults	38
Children	18
Total	56

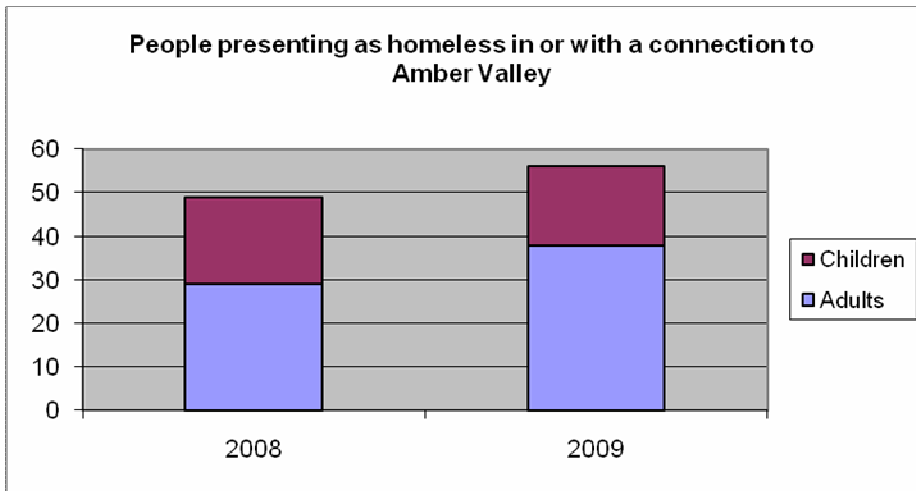
Figure 2.1 below provides a comparison between this year's figures and those reported last year. Presentations by homeless adults have increased by 31% compared with last year whereas the number of children presenting to the survey as homeless has fallen by 10%.

As noted above, five agencies participated in the survey this year compared with eight in 2008. A higher number of homeless adults were thereby recorded by a smaller number of agencies.

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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 Amber Valley

**Key findings: No presentations were made outside the borough by homeless people with a connection to Amber Valley. The number of rough sleepers recorded has risen to three from only one in 2008.**

The data below shows that all of the 40 adult presentations made in Amber Valley or by those with a connection to the borough (including the two repeats), were made in Amber Valley itself. The table also records rough sleepers presenting in the borough and shows that the total number of rough sleepers was three, an increase on the one rough sleeper recorded in 2008.

Table One (a): Presentations and Local Connection

	All in Amber Valley	Amber Valley – Rough Sleepers Only
<b>Actual Presentations in Amber Valley</b>	40	3
<b>Actual Presentations Outside Amber Valley</b>	0	0
<b>Presented in or with a local connection to Amber Valley</b>	40	3

### 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:** The proportion of homeless women presenting in Amber Valley has fallen from 55% last year to 42% in 2009 whilst the proportion of men within the homeless population has increased from 38 to 58%.

58% of those presenting to the survey as homeless in Amber Valley were men compared with 42% women. These figures are very different to findings last year when 55% of those presenting to the survey were women and 38% were men. The gender breakdown for Amber Valley this year is closer to the findings for Derbyshire as a whole where 63% of those presenting were men.

Table Four: Gender

Gender	Number	%
Male	22	58
Female	16	42
Total	38	100

#### 3.2 Age

**Key finding:** There has been an increase of 66% in the numbers of homeless people aged 25 and over presenting to the survey this year compared with 2008.

The data below show that four presentations were made by young homeless people under 18; three of whom were young women. This is a small increase on the three presentations by homeless 16 and 17 year olds reported last year. Whilst homeless people under 25 made up 34% of those presenting to the survey in 2009 compared with 48% last year, the number of presentations is much the same – 13 this year compared with 14 in 2008. The proportion of young homeless people in Amber Valley this year is closer to the findings for the County as a whole where homeless people under 25 made up 37% of the total homeless population.

As noted last year the Amber Valley Homeless Review 2008-11 Action Plan identifies increasing the awareness of young people of homelessness and housing advice as a key action.

There has been an increase of 66% in the numbers of homeless people aged 25 and over presenting to the survey this year compared with 2008. 25 homeless people in this age bracket presented this year compared with fifteen last year.

Figure 3.2 shows a distorted age profile amongst homeless people compared with the age profile of the general population taken from 2001 Census data. It shows that 16 and 17 year olds, 18 to 24 year olds and 25 to 40 year olds are over represented amongst the homeless population in Amber Valley. 16 and 17 year olds comprise only 2% of the population of the borough but made up 11% of those presenting as homeless to the survey. 18 to 24 year olds comprise 7% of the total population and 24% of the homeless population. 25 to 40 year olds comprise 23% of the general population and 39% of those presenting to the survey as homeless.

Figure 3.2

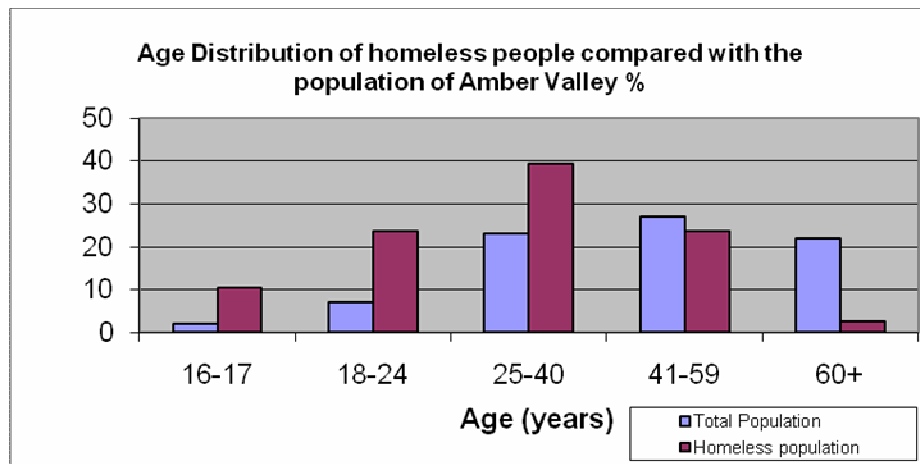


Table Three: Age

Age Range	Male	Female	Total
16 & 17 Years Old	1	3	4
18-24 Years Old	5	4	9
25-40 Years Old	8	7	15
41-59 Years Old	8	1	9
60 years old and over		1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>38</b>

### 3.3 Ethnic origin

**Key finding: Whilst the numbers involved remain small, survey findings indicate a worsening problem of homelessness amongst ethnic minority groups in Amber Valley.**

The data below shows that four people of an ethnic origin other than White British presented as homeless in Amber Valley. This represents over 10.5% of total adult presentations after repeats are removed.

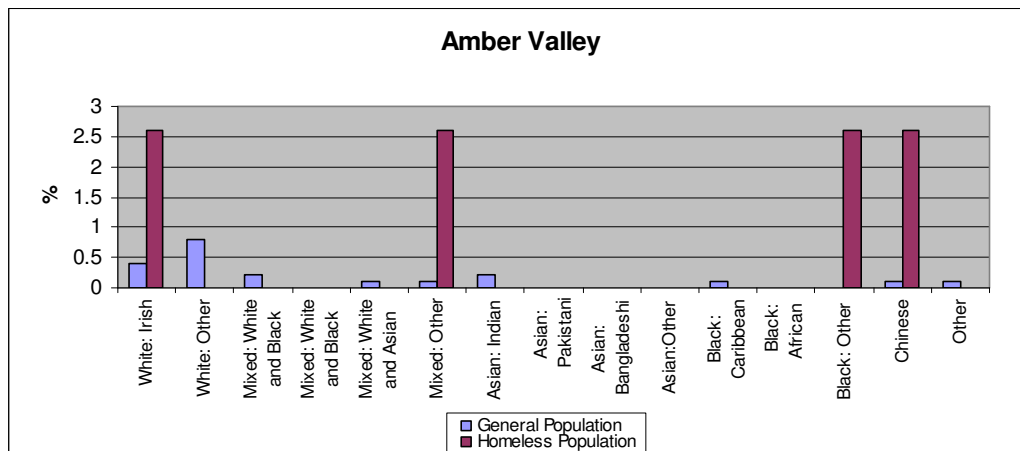
Figure 3.1 compares the ethnic origin of homeless people presenting to the survey with the ethnic breakdown for the population of the borough as a whole. The UK 2001 census found that just over 2% of the population of Amber Valley were from a non White British ethnic origin. The data therefore suggests that people from black and minority ethnic communities are considerably over-represented amongst the homeless population in the borough.

In 2008, two people of an ethnic origin other than White British presented as homeless in Amber Valley representing almost 6% of the 29 total adult presentations. Whilst the numbers involved are small, the findings indicate a worsening problem of homelessness amongst ethnic minority groups in Amber Valley.

Table Five: Ethnic Origin

Ethnic Origin	Number	%
Black/Black British: Other	1	3
Chinese	1	3
Mixed: Other	1	3
White: British	34	89
White: Irish	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 3.1



### 3.4 Household structure

**Key finding: Eight childless couples presented to the survey this year compared with no couples without children in 2008.**

The data shows that 65% of presentations were made by single people and 22% by homeless households including children. These figures compare with 52% single people and 48% households with children last year. Eight childless couples presented to the survey this year compared with no couples without children in 2008. Findings this year are in line with those for Derbyshire as a whole - 65% single people and 29% families of all types.

18 dependent children presented to the survey this year compared with 20 in 2008. A third of dependent children were aged four or under.

Table Six: Household Type

Household Type	Number	Percentage - Amber Valley	Percentage - Derbyshire
Single Person	14	37	65
Single Parent With Children	8	21	12
Couple With Children	7	18	10
Childless Couple	8	21	7
No Data Supplied	1	3	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table Seven: Age & Number of Dependent Children

Age of Children	Number of Children in this Age Range
0 - 4 Years Old	6
5 – 10 Years Old	4
11 – 15 Years Old	6
16 & 17 Years Old	2
18 Years Old and Over	
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</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 use?

### 4.1 Care leavers

**Key finding: 23% of presentations by those under 25 were made by young people with a care history.**

The data below shows that three people with a history of care presented as homeless in Amber Valley. This compares with two people last year. All three care leavers were under 25. Care leavers made up less than 8% of total adult presentations but 23% of presentations by those under 25. Nationally, less than 1% of the whole population of young people are, or have been in local authority care, and around 30% of young, single homeless people have been in care.

Table Eight: Age of Care Leavers

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

Table Nine: Where People Were in Care

Area where in Care	Number
Derbyshire	1
Outside Derbyshire	
No Data Supplied	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>

## 4.2 Support Needs

**Key findings: Eight presentations were made by people with a support need related to a mental health problem - twice the number who reported this need in 2008. It represents 20% of presentations in Amber Valley (who reported any support needs) compared with only 10% reporting this support need across Derbyshire.**

Table Ten below records the support needs of people who presented as homeless during the survey period. It sets out needs reported for Amber Valley alongside the support needs recorded for Derbyshire as a whole.

The data shows that eight presentations were made by people with a support need related to a mental health problem. This is twice the number who reported this need in 2008. It represents 20% of presentations in Amber Valley (who reported any support needs) compared with only 10% reporting this support need across Derbyshire.

A support need related to alcohol problems was reported by five people presenting to the survey (13% of all presentations who reported any support needs). This is very similar to findings for last year. In 2008, five people presented to the survey reporting a support need related to drug problems and three did so this year.

Domestic violence was reported as a support need by four people presenting in 2009 compared with three last year. As noted last year, the Homelessness Strategy Review identifies domestic violence as the main cause of homelessness in the borough and the related Action Plan calls for increased support services for and better contact with women victims of domestic violence.

Table Ten: Support Needs

Support Needs	Number	Percentage of Presentations- Amber Valley	Percentage - Derbyshire
Mental Health	8	20	10
Alcohol Problems	5	13	14
Domestic Violence	4	10	7
Drug Problems	3	8	12
Learning Difficulties	3	8	4
Ex-Offender	1	3	14
Physically Disabled	1	3	2
Other	7	18	11
No Data Supplied			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>

*Please note that people could record more than one support need and that 19 presentations were made by homeless people in Amber Valley who reported no support needs.*

## **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**

Table Eleven below sets out data on where homeless people presenting to the survey spent the night prior to completing a survey form. It shows that 33% spent the night at their own home, 25% at their parent's home and 13% at home of a friend. 13 presentations were made by people who spent the previous night at their own home compared with only six last year.

Three people presenting to the survey spent the previous night sleeping rough. There were no repeat presentations by rough sleepers.

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 three people spent the night prior to presenting sleeping rough and three expected to sleep rough the coming 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 40 adult presentations including repeats.*

Table Eleven: Previous Night's Accommodation

<b>Where Person Spent the Previous Night</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage - Amber Valley</b>	<b>Percentage - Derbyshire</b>
<b>Own Home</b>	13	33	18
<b>Parents' Home</b>	10	25	14
<b>Friend's Home</b>	5	13	25
<b>Slept Rough</b>	3	8	16
<b>Emergency Bed</b>	1	3	1
<b>Hospital</b>	1	3	1
<b>Hostel</b>	1	3	1
<b>Partner's Home</b>	1	3	2
<b>Other Relative's Home</b>			7
<b>B&amp;B Lodgings</b>			2
<b>Grandparent's Home</b>			1
<b>Custody</b>			1
<b>Other</b>	4	10	3
<b>No Data Supplied</b>	1	3	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table Twelve: 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			1													1	
	Custody																	
	Emergency Bed																	
	Friend's Home	1			3	1											5	
	Grandparent's																	
	Hospital							1									1	
	Hostel						1										1	
	Other Relative's																	
	Own Home								10						1	2	13	
	Parent's Home				2						8							10
	Partner's Home											1						1
	Sleeping Rough												3					3
	Childrens Home or Foster Care																	
	Other	1								2						1		4
	No Data Supplied									1								1
Totals	2		1	5	1		1	1	13	8	1	3		1	3		40	

## 5.2 Rough sleeping

**Key finding: Three people reported sleeping rough in Amber Valley this year compared with only one in 2008.**

As highlighted above, the data shows that there were three rough sleepers in Amber Valley who presented to the 2009 Homeless Watch Survey. This compares with only one rough sleeper presenting last year. Table Twelve below shows that two of the three rough sleepers slept out in the open. Table Thirteen indicates a problem of entrenched rough sleeping in the borough – with two of the three rough sleepers reporting sleeping rough for more than a month.

Table Twelve: Type of Rough Sleeping

Slept Rough Type	Number	Percentage - Amber Valley	Percentage - Derbyshire
Building/Structure Not For Habitation	1	33	26
Sleeping In Open Air	2	67	45
Squat			4
Don't Know			4
No Data Supplied			21
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table Thirteen: Time Spent Rough Sleeping

Time Rough Sleeping	Number in This Category	Percentage - Amber Valley	Percentage - Derbyshire
1 night			6
More than a night up to 1 week			19
More than 1 week and up to 1 month			4
More than 1 mth and up to 3 mths	2	67	32
More than 3 mths and up to 6 mths			4
More Than 6 mths and up to 12 mths			9
More than 12 mths			15
Don't Know	1	33	4
No Data Supplied			6
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## **6 Conclusions**

This report sets out some of the key findings for Amber Valley 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.

The report highlights an increase in numbers of homeless adults in the borough - survey findings show that presentations by homeless adults have increased by 31% compared with last year. The report also indicates growing problems in the borough including an increase in numbers of rough sleepers; an over representation of ethnic minorities amongst homeless people and an increase in homeless people presenting with mental health problems.

It is hoped that consideration of this report by commissioners and service providers will help to increase awareness of the nature of homelessness in the borough and contribute to initiatives designed to tackle the problems 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](http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk)]