

Homeless Watch 2008

A Snapshot Survey of Homelessness in
Nottinghamshire

29th September to 10th October 2008



Ashfield District Report

HLG Resource Service
March 2009

Copies of this report are available on the Internet at:

www.hlg.org.uk

Background

The Nottinghamshire Homeless Watch Survey 2008 is the fifth annual snapshot survey of homelessness in the County. The 2008 survey records details of everyone who presented as homeless to participating agencies in the County during the two week period from 29th September to 10th October 2008.

For the purposes of the survey and report, homeless people are defined as those people presenting to agencies who 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).

The main report is complemented by a set of district reports which summarise survey findings for each of the seven boroughs and districts within the County, including Nottingham City.

This report provides an analysis of survey findings concerning homelessness in the Ashfield district.

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 Nottinghamshire-wide Homeless Watch report. Figures in this report for Ashfield District Council are based on presentations by people who were either recorded by the Homeless Watch Survey 2008 as receiving advice about their homelessness whilst in the Ashfield area **or** recorded as seeking advice whilst in another Nottinghamshire authority area but as having a local connection to Ashfield.

A local connection is defined for the purposes of the survey as:

- family connection
- residence in area for 6 of the last 12 months or 3 of the last 5 years
- employment in the area.

This methodology is consistent with that used in some of the district based homelessness snapshot surveys that have taken place in previous years, notably the regular annual surveys conducted in Ashfield.

This is the fifth survey of its kind carried out across Nottinghamshire and this report which focuses on the Ashfield district takes the opportunity to draw comparisons with data from previous years and where possible identify trends in local homelessness and related issues. Please note that data and findings from the survey report for 2004 have not been included since 2004 was the first year of the survey and the methodology and analysis has been refined and improved since then. Furthermore, considerably fewer agencies took part in the survey in 2004 than more recently. There is now four years reliable data available and it has been concluded by HLG that it is most useful to focus on findings from 2005 onwards.

[NB: For the purposes of brevity this report generally refers to all presentations by homeless people in or with a connection to Ashfield as those 'presenting in Ashfield']

The Homeless Watch Survey 2008 has been undertaken against a background of:

- a worsening national and global economic situation
- an increasing national emphasis on homelessness prevention reflected within priorities for local commissioners
- the recent development of new five year homelessness strategies in each of the districts and boroughs of Nottinghamshire
- a new emphasis on the role of local strategic partnerships and the delivery of targets through local area agreements
- a new national strategy to tackle rough sleeping.

The Ashfield Homelessness Strategy 2008-11 states the mission of the district council for tackling homelessness as:

"...working together with partner agencies to prevent homelessness by improving choice and access to housing, providing excellent services that respond to the many and varied needs of individuals".

The strategy document highlights that parental evictions and mortgage arrears were the major causes of homelessness in 2007/8 – representing 44% of all households accepted as statutorily homeless. It reports that repossessions due to mortgage arrears have increased four fold in the district over the past four years.

The strategy sets out three key priorities for tackling homelessness in Ashfield:

- Enhanced prevention services
- Increased provision of temporary accommodation for specific vulnerable groups
- Improved outcomes for young homeless people.

The findings set out within this survey report can be considered alongside the new Homelessness Strategy for Ashfield.

SURVEY ANALYSIS FOR ASHFIELD DISTRICT

Table One: Homeless People in Ashfield or with a Local Connection to the district

Category	Number Adjusted Figure to Take Account of Repeat Presentations
Adults	101
Children	56
Total	157

Table One (a): Presentations and Local Connection

	All in Ashfield	Ashfield – Rough Sleepers Only
Actual Presentations in Ashfield	77	9
Actual Presentations Outside Ashfield	42	16
Presented in or with a local connection to Ashfield	119	25

There were 119 presentations by homeless adults in Ashfield or by those with a local connection to the district as defined above, including 18 repeat presentations. 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. Most of the data tables set out below have been adjusted to remove repeats except where it is useful to show the picture for all presentations and helpful to indicate potential changes in the circumstances of those presenting during the survey period.

After removing repeat presentations and including dependent children, **Table One shows a total of 157 presentations by homeless people in or with a connection to the district including 101 adults and 56 dependent children.** These figures compare with 147 presentations last year including 95 adults and 52 dependent children indicating a small increase since then. In 2006 there were a total of 121 presentations by homeless people including 84 adults and 37 dependent children and in 2005, 189 presentations (including 135 adults and 54 dependent children).

The small increase in numbers this year in Ashfield is contrary to a general reduction in numbers of homeless people presenting to the 2008 survey across the County. **However, consistent with the overall picture, numbers of homeless people in Ashfield have fallen since 2005. Total numbers of homeless people including children have fallen by 17% since 2005 and homeless adults by 25%.**

Table One (a) shows that of the 119 presentations made by homeless adults in or with a connection to Ashfield (including repeat presentations), 77 were made to agencies in Ashfield itself and 42 outside the district.

The table also provides a breakdown of rough sleepers presenting in or with a connection to Ashfield. **The total number of rough sleepers recorded for the district by the 2008 Homeless Watch Survey was 25.** This includes nine sleeping rough in Ashfield itself and 16 recorded as sleeping rough outside the district. The 25 total rough sleepers represents a notable increase on the survey findings last year when 14 presentations were made by rough sleepers including ten sleeping rough in Ashfield and four outside the district. The total number of rough sleepers recorded for Ashfield in 2006 was 17 and in 2005 the total was 31. Again, whilst numbers of rough sleepers show an increase on last year there has been a decrease since 2005.

Table Two: Area where advice was received

Local Authority Area	Male		Female		Not Stated		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Ashfield	30	52	44	79	3	60	77	65
Broxtowe	1	2	2	4			3	3
Mansfield	17	29	9	16	2	40	28	24
Nottingham City	9	16	1	2			10	8
Derbyshire	1	2					1	1
Total	58	100	56	100	5	100	119	100

Table Two provides a breakdown of where those presenting as homeless in Ashfield or who have a local connection to Ashfield actually presented for advice during the survey fortnight. It shows that the majority (65%) presented in Ashfield itself but that almost a quarter (24%) presented as homeless in Mansfield, underlining the strong link between the two districts in terms of homeless people as highlighted in the report last year. Such data as this suggests a need for partnership and joint working between the two districts to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

Please note that this table shows all presentations, including repeats.

The tables below have been adjusted to remove any repeat presentations unless otherwise stated.

Table Three: Age

Age Range	Male	Female	Gender Not Stated	Total
16 &17 Years Old	1	6		7
18-24 Years Old	11	10	1	22
25-40 Years Old	22	15	2	39
41-59 Years Old	12	12	1	25
60 years old and over	1	1		2
No Date of Birth Supplied	2	3	1	6
Total	49	47	5	101

Table Three shows the age of people who presented as homeless during the survey period (not including dependent children). 29% of those presenting were aged under 25, compared with 40% last year, 49% in 2006 and with 58% in 2005; indicating a continued decrease in homelessness amongst under twenty fives in Ashfield. This data might be seen as consistent with the strategic priority to improve outcomes for homeless young people in the district. The percentage of under twenty fives in Ashfield compares with a figure of 38% of total presentations for the County as a whole. 7% of those presenting in or with a connection to Ashfield were under 18, compared with 10% for the County.

Table Four: Gender

Gender	Number	%
Male	49	49
Female	47	47
Not Stated	5	5
Total	101	100

Table Four provides a gender breakdown of those presenting in Ashfield. It shows that 49% of presentations were made by men and 47% by women, when those presentations where no age data is available are removed the percentages are adjusted to 51% and 49% respectively. These figures compare with 52% men and 48% women last year. The gender breakdown of presentations to the survey for the County as a whole was 59% of the adjusted total men and 39% women (when those where no gender information is available are removed.)

Please note that the main survey report indicates a majority of women presenting in Ashfield. This discrepancy arises due to the difference in methodology used for the main report and the district reports explained in the 'Background' section above.

Table Five: Ethnic Origin

Ethnic Origin	Number	%
Asian/Asian British: Indian	1	1
Black/Black British: African	1	1
Mixed: White & Black Caribbean	2	2
White: British	91	90
White: Irish	1	1
Other	2	2
Not Stated	3	3
Total	101	100

Table Five indicates that seven presentations (approximately 7%) were made by those of an ethnic origin other than White British. This compares with only two last year. The proportion of homeless people of non White British ethnic origin recorded by the survey for 2005 was almost 7%.

The 2001 UK census shows that 1.9% of the total population of Ashfield were from an ethnic origin other than White British.

Table Six: Household Type

Household Type	Number	Percentage - Ashfield	Percentage - Nottinghamshire
Single Person (No Kids)	59	58	75
Single Parent With Children	26	26	14
Couple With Children	11	11	7
Childless Couple	5	5	3
Not Stated		0	1
Total	101	100	100

Table Seven: Age & Number of Dependent Children

Age of Children	Number of Children in this Age Range
0 - 4 Years Old	16
5 – 10 Years Old	18
11 – 15 Years Old	13
16 & 17 Years Old	7
18 Years Old and Over	2
Total	56

Tables Six and Seven above provide data on homeless households and children presenting as homeless in or with a connection to Ashfield.

Table Six shows that compared to the household type breakdown for Nottinghamshire as a whole, the figures for Ashfield show a lower percentage of single people; a higher percentage of single parents and a higher percentage of homeless couples with children. This is consistent with survey findings from last year, 2006 and 2005 and the issue was highlighted in last year's report.

Table Seven shows that 56 dependent children were recorded as homeless in Ashfield during the survey period. This number compares with 52 last year, 37 in 2006 and 54 in 2005. The main County-wide survey report highlights a 22% fall in the number of homeless children recorded across the County in 2008.

The data on families and children in Ashfield might be seen as consistent with what is set out in the Homelessness Strategy document which highlights mortgage arrears as one of the major causes of homelessness in the district, pointing out that repossession due to mortgage arrears increased four fold from 2004 to 2008.

Homeless Care leavers in Ashfield

Table Eight: Care Leavers by age

Age	Number of this age with Care History
16 & 17 Years Old	1
18 – 21 Years Old	0
22 Years Old and Over	3
Not stated	1
Total	5

Table Nine: Where people were in Care

	Number of This Age With Care History
Nottinghamshire	3
Nottingham City	0
Outside Notts	1
Not Stated	1
Total	5

Table Eight shows that a total of five care leavers presented as homeless in Ashfield or with a local connection to the district. This compares to eight last year, nine in 2006 and 15 in 2005; indicating a continued and welcome decrease as highlighted in last years report. The proportion of homeless people with a care background in Ashfield at only 5% compares favourably with a figure of 19% of presentations (or nearly one fifth) for the County as a whole.

Table Nine shows that of the care leavers presenting in Ashfield, three of the five were in care in Nottinghamshire and one outside the County.

Table Ten: Support Needs

Support Needs	Number	Percentage of Presentations- Ashfield	Percentage - Nottinghamshire
Drug Abuse	32	27	28
Mental Health	20	17	17
Ex-Offender	12	10	20
Alcohol Abuse	12	10	17
Learning Difficulties	10	8	8
Domestic Violence	6	5	8
Physically Disabled	4	3	2
Other	17	14	12
Total	113	N/A	N/A

Table Ten records the support needs of people who presented as homeless in Ashfield during the survey period. Please note that people could record more than one support need, which is why the total is greater than the number of individuals recorded by the survey and that 36 (30%) presentations reported no support needs.

Columns three and four of Table Ten provide comparisons between support needs indicated amongst homeless people in Ashfield and for the County as a whole. They show that support needs related to drug misuse and mental health reflects those recorded for the County as a whole. However, reported support needs related to offending are half the levels recorded for the County and those related to alcohol problems roughly 60% of County levels.

The 2006 survey report highlighted the issue of drug misuse in Ashfield with 29% of presentations reporting support needs relating to drug misuse at that time. This figure fell to 21% in 2007 but has increased to 27% in 2008. This support need was identified by 32 presentations in 2008 compared with 21 last year and 28 in 2006.

Table Eleven: Previous Night's Accommodation

Where Person Spent the Previous Night	Number	Percentage - Ashfield	Percentage - Nottinghamshire
Parents' Home	26	22	12
Slept Rough	25	21	24
Friend's Home	19	16	27
Own Home	19	16	10
Other Relative's Home	13	11	7
Hostel	3	3	4
Custody	2	2	2
B&B Lodgings	1	1	1
Grandparents' Home	1	1	1
Partner's Home	1	1	3
Hospital	1	1	1
Emergency Bed	0	0	1
Children's Home or Foster care	0	0	0
Other	5	4	3
Not Stated	3	3	3
Total	119	100	100

Table Eleven provides a breakdown of where those presenting as homeless in Ashfield or with a local connection to the district spent the previous night. As the place where a person was staying the previous night could change during the course of the survey period, the figures shown in the table are for all 119 presentations (excluding dependent children), rather than the 101 individuals who were homeless.

The figures in columns three and four provide comparisons between the situation for homeless people in Ashfield and the County as a whole. Consistent with the findings highlighted in last year's report, a notably higher proportion of homeless people in Ashfield spent the night before contact with an agency in their parents' home than for the County. The percentage of rough sleepers recorded by the survey this year at 21% compares closely with the figure of 24% for the County as a whole. This is a

change from last year when the percentage of rough sleepers was notably lower at only 13% compared to 24% for the County.

As highlighted above, the numbers recorded as sleeping rough in Ashfield or with a connection to the district are higher than last year when 14 presentations were made by rough sleepers including ten sleeping rough in Ashfield and four outside the district. The total number of rough sleepers recorded for Ashfield in 2006 was 17 and in 2005 the total was 31. However, whilst numbers of rough sleepers show an increase on last year there has been a decrease of around over 19% since 2005.

Rough sleeping in Ashfield

Table Twelve: Type of Rough Sleeping

Slept Rough Type	Number	Percentage - Ashfield	Percentage - Nottinghamshire
Building/Structure Not For Habitation	8	32	24
Sleeping In Open Air	10	40	51
Squat	1	4	9
Don't Know	3	12	9
Not Stated	3	12	7
Grand Total	25	100	100

Table Thirteen: Time spent sleeping rough

Time Rough Sleeping	Number in This Category	Percentage - Ashfield	Percentage - Nottinghamshire
1 night	3	12	9
More than a night up to 1 week	5	20	18
More than 1 week and up to 1 month	4	16	18
More than 1 mth and up to 3 mths	4	16	12
More than 3 mths and up to 6 mths	2	8	9
More Than 6 mths and up to 12 mths	1	4	12
More than 12 mths	3	12	14
Don't Know	1	4	5
Not Stated	2	8	3
Total	25	100	100

Tables twelve and thirteen provide data on rough sleeping in Ashfield. Please note that 9 of the rough sleepers presenting for advice did so in Ashfield and the remaining 16 in other districts.

As highlighted above, the numbers recorded as sleeping rough in Ashfield or with a connection to the district are higher than last year when 14 presentations were made by rough sleepers including ten sleeping rough in Ashfield and four outside the

district. The total number of rough sleepers recorded for Ashfield in 2006 was 17 and in 2005 the total was 31. However, whilst numbers of rough sleepers show an increase on last year there has been a decrease of around over 19% since 2005.

Table Twelve indicates that ten rough sleepers or 40% of those presenting reported sleeping in the open air compared with 51% for Nottinghamshire as a whole.

Table Thirteen shows that only one rough sleeper, representing 4% of presentations, reported sleeping rough for more than six months compared with 12% for the County as a whole. The table does however indicate a continued problem of chronic rough sleeping for Ashfield with ten rough sleepers reporting sleeping out for more than one month.

Table Fourteen: Comparison of Previous & Coming Nights 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	Social Services	Other	No Data Supplied	Totals
Where Person Slept The Night Prior To Seeing Agency For Advice	B&B Lodgings	1															1
	Custody		1									1					2
	Emergency Bed																0
	Friend's Home				14		1	1					1		1	1	19
	Grandparent's					1											1
	Hospital						1										1
	Hostel							3									3
	Other Relative's				1				11				1				13
	Own Home				1	1				14	1					2	19
	Parent's Home				2	1					20		1			2	26
	Partner's Home											1					1
	Sleeping Rough				2			1					22				25
	Social Services																0
	Other									1					3	1	5
	No Data Supplied									1			1			1	3
Totals	1	1	0	20	3	2	5	11	16	21	1	27	0	4	7	119	

Table Fourteen provides a comparison of where a person spent the night prior to reporting to the survey with data about their expected housing circumstances the coming night. Please note that these figures are for all presentations (excluding dependent children), rather than individuals.

Key points that can be drawn from the data include:

- 25 people slept rough the night before completing the survey and 27 expected to sleep rough the coming night
- three people had been in a hostel the previous night and five people expected to be in hostel the coming night – presumably as a result of contact with an agency
- 26 people had spent the previous night in their parents home whilst 21 expected to be at their parents' home the coming night
- only one person reported being in hospital the night before presenting to the survey as homeless. This compares with five last year.