

Homeless Watch 2008

A Snapshot Survey of Homelessness in
Derbyshire

29th September to 10th October 2008



Chesterfield Borough Report

HLG Resource Service
March 2009

Copies of this report are available on the Internet at:

www.hlg.org.uk

Background

The Derbyshire Homeless Watch Survey 2008 is the first annual snapshot survey of homelessness in the County. The survey records details of everyone who presented as homeless to participating agencies 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).

Agencies across the County who regularly come into contact with homeless people were invited to participate by completing survey forms for homeless people presenting to them during the survey period.

500 agencies across Derbyshire were approached and of those, 97 agencies took part in this year's survey by submitting returns. Participating agencies completed a survey form for each individual who presented to them as homeless in the survey period. 34 agencies gave nil returns and the overall response rate was 19.4%. It is important to bear in mind that this is the first time that the survey has been carried out in Derbyshire, and should the survey be repeated in future years it can be expected that the response rate will increase.

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

This report provides an analysis of survey findings concerning homelessness in the Chesterfield borough. 15 agencies in the Chesterfield area took part in the survey.

For the purpose of the district reports, figures on the number of presentations by 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 Borough 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 Chesterfield area **or** recorded as seeking advice whilst in another Derbyshire area but as having a local connection to Chesterfield.

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 is the first annual survey of its kind carried out across Derbyshire and as such the findings drawn from the survey can only be initial and tentative. At this stage, the survey data provides an initial snapshot of levels of homelessness across the County, and in the case of this report in Chesterfield specifically and can provide a baseline for the analysis of trends and changes in homelessness and related issues in future years.

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 Derbyshire
- 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 new Chesterfield Borough Council Homelessness Strategy 2008-13 has the following aims and objectives:

- Prevention of homelessness - key to tackling 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 sets out a comprehensive Action Plan detailing the key actions that will be taken to deliver the goals of the strategy. The action plan is split into three themes:

- Housing Options
- Homelessness Prevention
- Engaging with the private sector and other agencies

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.

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.

It comments that the number of homelessness claims and acceptances has tended to fluctuate in recent years. The document highlights an increase in the number of households becoming homeless as a result of the termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancies.

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

SURVEY ANALYSIS FOR CHESTERFIELD BOROUGH

Table One: Homeless People in Chesterfield or reporting a local connection to the area

Category	Number Adjusted Figure to Take Account of Repeat Presentations
Adults	104
Children	33
Total	137

Table One shows a total of 137 presentations by homeless people in Chesterfield or with a connection to the borough comprising 104 adults (after repeat presentations have been removed) and 33 dependent children.

Please note: there were a total of 129 presentations to the 2008 Homeless Watch Survey by homeless adults in Chesterfield or reporting a connection to the borough including 25 repeat presentations.¹ Most of the data tables set out below have been adjusted to remove repeats and use the 104 adults as the total figure except where it is useful to show the picture for all presentations e.g. to indicate potential changes in the circumstances of those presenting during the survey period.

Table One (a): Presentations and Local Connection

	All in Chesterfield	Chesterfield – Rough Sleepers Only
Actual Presentations in Chesterfield	113	25
Actual Presentations Outside Chesterfield	16	5
Presented in or with a local connection to Chesterfield	129	30

¹ 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.

Table One (a) shows that of the 129 total adult presentations made in Chesterfield or by those with a connection to the borough including the 25 repeats, 113 were made in Chesterfield itself and 16 in other areas.

The table also provides a breakdown of rough sleepers presenting in or with a connection to Chesterfield. **The total number of rough sleepers recorded for the borough by the 2008 Homeless Watch Survey was 30**; 25 of whom presented to the survey in Chesterfield itself and five in other areas. Rough sleepers therefore made up just over 23% of all presentations in or with a connection to the borough. Chesterfield recorded a higher number of rough sleepers reporting to the Derbyshire Homeless Watch Survey 2008 than any other area in the County.

Table Two: Area where presentation made to participating agency

Local Authority Area	Male		Female		Not Stated		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Amber Valley			1	2			1	1
Bolsover	3	4					3	2
Chesterfield	70	91	42	82	1	100	113	88
Derby County			1	2			1	1
Derbyshire Dales			1	2			1	1
Erewash			1	2			1	1
High Peak			1	2			1	1
North East Derbyshire	2	3	2	4			4	3
South Derbyshire			1	2			1	1
Nottinghamshire			1	2			1	1
Not Stated	2	3					2	2
Total	77	100	51	100	1	100	129	100

Table Two provides a more detailed breakdown of where those presenting as homeless in Chesterfield or with a local connection to the borough actually presented for advice during the survey fortnight. It shows that the majority, 113 or 88% presented in Chesterfield itself with small numbers presenting in other areas.

Please note that the following tables have been adjusted to remove repeat presentations, using the number of actual homeless adult individuals (104) rather than total presentations unless otherwise stated.

Table Three: Age

Age Range	Male	Female	Gender Not Stated	Total
16 &17 Years Old	2	4		6
18-24 Years Old	15	15	1	31
25-40 Years Old	26	13		39
41-59 Years Old	13	8		21
60 years old and over	2	1		3
No Date of Birth Supplied	3	1		4
Total	61	42	1	104

Table Three shows the age of people who presented as homeless during the survey period (not including dependent children). The data indicates that six presentations were made by young homeless people under 18; four of whom were young women. Homeless people under 25 made up over 35% of those presenting to the survey.

The Chesterfield Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2008-13 identifies the continuing development of services specifically for young people as a key action.

Table Four: Gender

Gender	Number	%
Male	61	59
Female	42	40
Not Stated	1	1
Total	104	100

Table Four shows that 59% of those presenting to the survey as homeless in Chesterfield or with a connection to the borough were men and 40% were women. This is roughly the same as the proportions of men and women within presentations across Derbyshire as a whole as set out in the main Derbyshire Homeless Watch Survey Report 2008.

Table Five: Ethnic Origin

Ethnic Origin	Number	%
Asian/Asian British:Bangladeshi	1	1
Gypsy/Traveller	1	1
Mixed: White & Black Caribbean	1	1
White: British	95	91
White: Other	3	3
Other	2	2
Not Stated	1	1
Total	104	100

The data at Table Five shows that eight people of an ethnic origin other than White British presented as homeless in Chesterfield or with a connection to the borough. This represents almost 8% of the total of presentations (after invalid data is removed ie 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 - however, since the numbers involved are low and this is the first year of the survey it is unsafe to draw any firm conclusions concerning homelessness amongst ethnic minorities in the borough.

Homeless Households

Table Six: Household Type

Household Type	Number	Percentage - Chesterfield	Percentage - Derbyshire
Single Person (No Children)	75	72	70
Single Parent With Children	11	11	14
Couple With Children	8	8	6
Childless Couple	8	8	9
Not Stated	2	2	1
Total	104	100	100

Table Seven: Age & Number of Dependent Children

Age of Children	Number of Children in this Age Range
0 - 4 Years Old	14
5 – 10 Years Old	8
11 – 15 Years Old	8
16 & 17 Years Old	2
18 Years Old and Over	1
Total	33

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

The data within Table Six shows that 72% of presentations were made by single people and 19% by households with children – these figures compare with 70% and 20% for Derbyshire as a whole.

Table Seven sets out data on the number of children recorded by the survey according to the age of the child and shows 33 dependent children presented as homeless to the 2008 survey. 14 of the 33 children (over 42%) were aged four or under.

Homeless Care leavers in Chesterfield

Table Eight: Age of Care Leavers

Age	Number of This Age With Care History
16 & 17 Years Old	1
18 – 21 Years Old	6
22 Years Old and Over	8
Not stated	
Total	15

Table Nine: Where People Were in Care

	Number of This Age With Care History
Derbyshire	8
Outside Derbys	6
Not Stated	1
Total	15

Tables Eight and Nine provide data on homeless people with a history of care presenting in Chesterfield or with a connection to the borough. The data shows that there were 15 presentations by care leavers, one of whom was under 18 and just under half aged 21 or under. Table Nine indicates that of the 15 care leavers eight had been in care in Derbyshire.

It is difficult to avoid the question as to why young people and in particular 16 and 17 year olds leave care to homelessness or experience homelessness soon after leaving care. There is a clear homelessness prevention issue here that needs to be addressed.

Table Ten: Support Needs

Support Needs	Number	Percentage of Presentations- Chesterfield	Percentage - Derbyshire
Drug problems	45	35	23
Ex-Offender	32	25	20
Alcohol problems	22	17	13
Mental Health	17	13	13
Domestic Violence	9	7	6
Physically Disabled	6	5	3
Learning Difficulties	1	1	4
Other	11	9	10
Not Stated	1	1	1
Total	144	N/A	N/A

Table Ten records the support needs of people who presented during the survey period. It sets out needs reported for Chesterfield alongside the support needs recorded for Derbyshire as a whole. Please note that people could record more than one support need and that 42 presentations were made by homeless people in Chesterfield or with a connection to the borough who reported no support needs.

The data shows that 45 presentations (35%) were made by people who reported a support need related to drug misuse. This compares with 23% reporting such a need across Derbyshire as a whole. 32 presentations were made by those who reported support needs related to offending and 22 by those with a need related to alcohol problems. The Chesterfield Homelessness Strategy 2008-13 Action Plan highlights the need to further develop services for people with chaotic lifestyles – which will include those with drug and alcohol problems. The Action Plan also calls for the further development of services for people with mental health problems. The data at Table Ten shows that a support need related to a mental health issue was reported by 17 presentations to the survey.

Domestic violence was reported as a support need by nine presentations - seven percent of the total needs reported. The Homelessness Strategy highlights domestic violence as one of the main causes of homelessness and the Action Plan identifies as a priority the further development of a Sanctuary scheme across the North Derbyshire region for victims of domestic violence.

Table Eleven: Previous Night's Accommodation

Where Person Spent the Previous Night	Number	Percentage - Chesterfield	Percentage - Derbyshire
Friend's Home	38	29	23
Slept Rough	30	23	18
Own Home	19	15	15
Other Relative's Home	15	12	10
B&B Lodgings	8	6	5
Parents' Home	6	5	12
Hostel	2	2	3
Partner's Home	1	1	2
Custody	1	1	2
Emergency Bed	1	1	0
Grandparents' Home			2
Hospital			1
Childrens Home or Foster care			0
Other	7	5	4
Not Stated	1	1	2
Total	129	100	100

Table Eleven provides a breakdown of where those presenting as homeless in Chesterfield or with a local connection to the borough (excluding dependent children) spent the previous night. 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 129 adult presentations including repeats.

The table indicates that 38 or 29% of presentations spent the previous night at a friend's home which compares closely with the 23% for the County and 30 (23%) spent the night sleeping rough. Chesterfield recorded the highest number of rough sleepers of any area in Derbyshire. 19 presentations were made by those who reported spending the previous night in their own home and 15 at the home of a relative. Such data might reflect the finding set out in the Homelessness Strategy that the main causes of homelessness in Chesterfield are:

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

Rough sleeping in Chesterfield

Table Twelve: Type of Rough Sleeping

Slept Rough Type	Number	Percentage - Chesterfield	Percentage - Derbyshire
Building/Structure Not For Habitation	10	33	36
Sleeping In Open Air	17	57	45
Squat			3
Don't Know	2	7	12
Not Stated	1	3	4
Grand Total	30	100	100

Table Thirteen: Time Spent Rough Sleeping

Time Rough Sleeping	Number in This Category	Percentage - Chesterfield	Percentage - Derbyshire
1 night	2	7	16
More than a night up to 1 week	9	30	30
More than 1 week and up to 1 month	3	10	6
More than 1 mth and up to 3 mths	7	23	20
More than 3 mths and up to 6 mths	3	10	7
More Than 6 mths and up to 12 mths	2	7	4
More than 12 mths	4	13	7
Don't Know			7
Not Stated			1
Total	30	100	100

The data at Tables Twelve and Thirteen provide more detail on rough sleeping in Chesterfield recorded by the Derbyshire Homeless Watch Survey 2008.

As highlighted above, the total number of rough sleepers recorded for the borough by the 2008 Homeless Watch Survey was 30 – the highest number for any area in Derbyshire. 25 of the rough sleepers presenting for advice did so in Chesterfield and the remaining five in other areas.

The data at Table Twelve indicates that the majority of rough sleepers (57%) slept out in the open air. Table Thirteen indicates a chronic and entrenched problem of rough sleeping with 16 of the 30 rough sleepers (53%) reporting sleeping rough for more than one month and four for more than 12 months.

The Homelessness Strategy Action Plan identifies a feasibility study of accommodation provision and support for rough sleepers as a high priority for the borough.

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	Childrens Home or Foster care	Other	No Data Supplied	Totals
Where Person Slept The Night Prior To Seeing Agency For Advice	B&B Lodgings	6													2	8	
	Custody		1													1	
	Emergency Bed			1												1	
	Friend's Home		1		29					1		4			3	38	
	Grandparent's																
	Hospital																
	Hostel							1							1	2	
	Other Relative's	1			1				13							15	
	Own Home	1							2	13					2	1	19
	Parent's Home									6						6	
	Partner's Home											1				1	
	Sleeping Rough	2		1	2							1	24			30	
	Childrens Home or Foster care														7	7	
	Other																
No Data Supplied															1	1	
Totals	10	2	2	32			1	15	13	7	2	28		9	8	129	

Table Fourteen provides data on where the homeless adults who presented to the survey in or with a connection to Chesterfield spent the night before contacting a participating agency and where they expected to spend the night after making contact. It includes all 129 adult presentations including the 25 repeats.

The data indicates that:

- 30 people slept rough the night before presenting to the survey and 28 expected to do so the following night

- eight people spent the previous night in B&B accommodation and 10 expected to be in B&B the following night
- 38 people were at the home of a friend the night prior to completing a survey form and 32 expected to be staying with a friend the following night
- seven young people had spent the previous night in a children's home or foster home.