12 CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

Behind every statistic is a real person

1. Relationship Breakdown - In England, relationship breakdown is a well-recognised pathway into homelessness, consistently identified as a significant trigger for housing loss

2.Addiction - Drugs, alcohol and gambling - Research indicates these issues often precede homelessness and significantly increase the risk of losing housing.

3. Unaffordable rents - UK rents are still rising and remain at historically high levels, despite a recent slowdown. Average UK monthly rent reached £1,377 in March 2026 ONS data shows.

4. Bereavement - Most of those who come through ALABARÉ's doors state that grief, bereavement and loss were the catalyst that led to their situation.

5. **Changes to the benefits system** - Ongoing changes to the benefits system are leaving many people who rely on support struggling to keep up with rent and essential living costs, with growing evidence of rising shortfalls, arrears, and financial hardship.

6. Unemployment or Low Income - With national minimum wages failing to keep ahead of inflation people struggle with basic necessities.

7. Lack of job security - Zero-hour contracts among 16–24-year-olds have continued to rise, reaching record levels in 2024–25, with over half a million young people now affected. Because these contracts provide no guaranteed income, many young workers struggle to meet landlords' affordability requirements and secure stable housing.

8. Cuts in mental health and welfare services - Around one in four people waiting for NHS mental health care wait more than 12 weeks to begin treatment. Evidence shows that during these delays many experience worsening mental health, along with knock-on effects on housing stability, family life, and employment.

9. Fleeing domestic abuse - 40% of women experiencing homelessness state domestic abuse as a contributing factor. Single-parent households are almost four times more likely to experience homelessness than households with two adults.

10. **The hostile migration environment** - In London, around half of people experiencing rough sleeping are not UK nationals. Migrants moving to the UK face high visa costs, and even with legal status, many encounter significant barriers to accessing social housing.

11. **The housing crisis** - Social housing has declined sharply since 1980, with around 1.4 million fewer households in the sector today. In 2023/24, England lost 650 social rent homes overall.

12. Youth homelessness - Around 11,000 young people aged 16+ leave foster or local authority care every year in England; often without the necessary skills, support and advice needed to find housing and stability.

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10 EFFECTS OF HOMELESSNESS

DISPLACEMENT
People assume that people who are homeless sleep rough, however that only accounts for 1% of all people considered "homeless". The other 99% are sofa-surfing, living in temporary housing or sleeping in unsuitable properties such as cars, vans or even sheds.

Here are 10 effects we know people who are homeless struggle with.

RELATIONSHIP BREAK DOWNS
As people lose connection with family and friends when they become homeless, and those who stick around become strained due to the difficult situation.

SLEEP DEPRIVATION AND FATIGUE
Homelessness often prevents restorative sleep due to noise, harsh weather, and needing to stay alert for safety.

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS
The trauma and stress associated with homelessness leads to a fast decline of mental health which can lead to severe conditions such as PTSD, anxiety and depression

BARRIERS TO INCOME & EMPLOYMENT
Lack of an address makes it nearly impossible to be employed, claim benefits or even set up a bank account.

INCREASE RISK OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE
Substance abuse is rarely a cause for homelessness, but a coping mechanism for the trauma and stress of sleeping in unsafe environments.

PHYSICAL HEALTH RISKS
Serious health risks such as respiratory illness or chronic diseases are common due to the often unsanitary living conditions as are nutritional deficiencies through poor diet .

VIOLENCE AND ABUSE
Living in exposed environments makes people who are homeless vulnerable to violent crime, abuse and exploitation, which can cause severe long term trauma.

EDUCATIONAL DISRUPTIONS
Young people facing homelessness face greater barriers for enrolment into education, and once enrolled struggle to keep up attendance due to their instability

LACK OF ACCESS TO SERVICES
With past trauma leading to anti-social behaviour or substance abuse, people are often rejected from the very healthcare services they desperately need.

ISOLATION FROM SOCIETY
The stigma and social exclusion of homelessness leaves many desperate for help, leading to isolation and depression

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