

2026 Women's Rough Sleeping Census: Official Survey

This survey is to be completed between 21st September and 27th September 2026 (inclusive). Submissions should be finalised by Friday 2nd October 5pm at which point this form will close.

What is the survey for?

We're conducting research to get a better understanding of women's experiences of having nowhere safe to stay, including rough sleeping and hidden homelessness, to help improve support and services for women.

We have about 12 short questions to ask you - it takes less than 10 minutes to complete and is entirely voluntary. You are welcome to answer all or just some of the questions if you prefer.

Do you want to take part?

Homelessness can look different for everyone, especially for women. In this survey, rough sleeping means that sometimes you have nowhere safe to go at night, or nowhere to go at all. When that happens, you might sleep outside or in a stairwell or somewhere hidden, or perhaps you might walk around all night, sit on public transport, in a station or at McDonald's. You might also stay with strangers for a night or two, but then leave and have nowhere to go, or you might be sex working at night in hotels or people's homes but then leave and not have anywhere to go. You might move between different places and circumstances, perhaps sometimes staying in accommodation and sometimes staying outside or on transport.

In this survey, hidden homelessness means staying with a friend, family member, partner, acquaintance or stranger(s) on an insecure or transitory basis, where you may have to leave at any time, or where you don't feel safe. Not feeling safe might mean you feel controlled by someone who is providing you with accommodation, or at risk of violence and abuse. It might mean you have to do something in exchange for the place you are staying, and that you don't have a safe place to call your own. You might be staying in a place you feel uncomfortable, but you have no other alternative.

Is this something you've experienced within the last three months? If so, would you like to complete the survey?

Do you think you might have completed this survey already in the last week? Because if so, you don't need to do it again.

How will we use your data?

Researchers will collect the results, and write a report about the number of women who completed the survey and their answers. We use this information to ask for better support and accommodation services for women who are rough sleeping. You do not need to tell us your name, and all answers are completely anonymised.

Thank you for your time.

Please note, this survey is open to all women and people who feel the gender themes of this survey apply to them.

Required

About your recent experience of having nowhere safe to stay

In this section, we will ask about your recent experiences of housing and homelessness. This is to help us understand patterns of rough sleeping and how to support people. We won't be able to identify where you are rough sleeping from your answers, and your answers will be anonymised.

1. At any point in the last three months, have you experienced rough sleeping, being homeless or not having a safe place to stay? *

Select one option

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

2. Where have you stayed or slept in the last 3 months? *

Select all that apply

- ☐ Slept outside on the street (including in a tent, park or car park)
- ☐ At a bus or train station
- ☐ On a bus or a train
- ☐ Walked around all night
- ☐ Services that are accessible to the public (e.g. McDonald's or other fast food places, library, airports)
- ☐ A&E waiting room
- ☐ In a car, van or other vehicle
- ☐ In a squat
- ☐ Slept rough - other (please describe in the 'other' option)
- ☐ In hospital as an inpatient
- ☐ In custody
- ☐ With a friend or partner
- ☐ With a relative
- ☐ With a stranger/new acquaintance (including sex working)
- ☐ Night shelter
- ☐ Inside a church/religious building/place of worship
- ☐ Homelessness service (hostel/supported housing)
- ☐ B&B / hotel / temporary accommodation
- ☐ Refuge accommodation
- ☐ Home Office/NASS accommodation
- ☐ Housed - owned, rented or social rented
- ☐ A non-residential building (bin sheds, stairwell, public toilets, abandoned buildings)
- ☐ Question not answered
- ☐ Question not asked
- ☐ Other

3. When did you last sleep rough? *

By sleeping rough we mean having nowhere safe to go to shelter/sleep in the day/night. You might not do this every day/night and sleeping rough might not mean sleeping outside. (Worker refer to definition to help give examples)

- ☐ Last night
- ☐ In the last week
- ☐ In the last month
- ☐ In the last 3 months
- ☐ Question not answered
- ☐ Question not asked
- ☐ Other

4. Approximately how many times have you slept rough in the last 3 months? *

This doesn't have to be an exact number

- ☐ 1 time
- ☐ 2-5 times
- ☐ 6-10 times
- ☐ 11-20 times
- ☐ 21-30 times
- ☐ More than 30 times
- ☐ More than 60 times
- ☐ Every day/night
- ☐ Question not answered
- ☐ Question not asked

5. Where were you staying most recently before sleeping rough? *

This question is to find out about the respondent's last place they lived in. Select one option

- ☐ Sofa surfing (with a friend, relative or acquaintance)
- ☐ Hostel (with no support)
- ☐ Supported housing (e.g. hostel with support)
- ☐ Refuge accommodation
- ☐ Asylum accommodation
- ☐ Emergency accommodation
- ☐ Other temporary accommodation from the council
- ☐ Private rented sector housing
- ☐ Social rented housing
- ☐ Home owned by respondent / close family / partner
- ☐ In another country
- ☐ Prison
- ☐ Hospital
- ☐ Detox or Rehab
- ☐ Squatting
- ☐ Caravan
- ☐ Question not answered
- ☐ Question not asked
- ☐ In care (e.g. foster care/residential care)
- ☐ Other

6. Which services are you currently accessing support from? *

(Prompt for worker: if respondent is uncertain which category their service falls into, try to establish this with them and select the most relevant option/s, or enter in 'other').

Select all that apply

- ☐ Homelessness organisation
- ☐ Supported housing/accommodation
- ☐ Housing officer or council housing department
- ☐ Housing association
- ☐ Night Shelter
- ☐ Day Centre
- ☐ Drug or alcohol support service
- ☐ Physical Health service
- ☐ Mental Health Service
- ☐ Women's centre/service
- ☐ Domestic abuse or sexual violence support service
- ☐ Sex work support service
- ☐ One-stop shop
- ☐ Food bank
- ☐ Soup kitchen
- ☐ Job Centre
- ☐ Citizens Advice
- ☐ Social worker / social services
- ☐ Police
- ☐ Probation
- ☐ Prison service
- ☐ Religious or faith group / church, mosque or temple
- ☐ Migration support service
- ☐ Education
- ☐ None
- ☐ Question not answered
- ☐ Question not asked

☐ Other

About you

Thank you for the information you've shared. To help us understand about the people who are responding to this survey, we'd like to ask some questions about you. This includes your age, ethnicity and gender - this is to help us understand how different people experience rough sleeping. Each question has an option not to answer, or to give an answer which we may not have provided as an option.

7. Now that we've answered a few questions, does this survey seem familiar? Has someone at this service or another service already done this survey with you this week? *

It's ok if you've already answered this survey this week but it's important for us to record this so that our research is as accurate as possible.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Question not answered
- ☐ Question not asked

8. How old are you?

If you prefer not to answer, please leave this question blank.

(Prompt for worker: Please follow your usual safeguarding processes if the respondent is under 18).

- ☐ Under 16
- ☐ 16-17
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65+

9. When was the first time you experienced some form of homelessness or rough sleeping?

(Prompt for worker: You do not need to read out the options; just pick the one that reflects their answer.)

- ☐ Within the last week - this is the first time I've experienced homelessness
- ☐ Within the last 3-6 months
- ☐ Within the last year
- ☐ Within the last 2 years
- ☐ Within the last 5 years
- ☐ Within the last 10 years
- ☐ Within the last 20 years
- ☐ More than 20 years ago

10. How would you describe your ethnicity?

If your ethnicity isn't included in the options, please self-describe.

- ☐ Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- ☐ Asian or Asian British - Chinese
- ☐ Asian or Asian British - Indian
- ☐ Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- ☐ Asian or Asian British - other
- ☐ Black or Black British - African
- ☐ Black or Black British - Caribbean
- ☐ Black or Black British - other
- ☐ Mixed White and Asian
- ☐ Mixed White and Black - African
- ☐ Mixed White and Black - Caribbean
- ☐ Mixed - other
- ☐ White - British
- ☐ White - Irish
- ☐ White - other
- ☐ Romany Gypsy/Gypsy (or self-describe below)
- ☐ Irish Traveller
- ☐ Roma
- ☐ Arab
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Question not answered
- ☐ Question not asked
- ☐ Other

11. What is your gender? *

This survey is open to all women and people who relate to the gender themes of this survey in their experience of homelessness. If your gender isn't included in the options, please self-describe.

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Gender fluid
- ☐ Questioning
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Question not answered
- ☐ Question not asked
- ☐ Other

12. Is your gender the same as registered at birth?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Question not answered
- ☐ Question not asked
- ☐ Other

13. *If you answered 'no' to the question above and would like to add anything about how your gender has impacted your experience of rough sleeping, you are welcome to do so here. You don't have to add anything if you don't wish to.*

14. Is there anything else you would like to tell us? This may include anything else you feel is important for us to know about your situation that wasn't covered in the questions

This question is for respondents and/or staff and volunteers. Note - Do not include identifying information here and please only include information which is relevant to this survey.

This is the last question on the form, thank you very much for your time.

Questions for people conducting the census (staff and volunteers)

This section is only for the worker filling in the form - the respondent does not need to answer questions in this section.

15. What type of service do you deliver? *

Select the most relevant option or enter in 'other'.

- ☐ Homelessness organisation
- ☐ Supported housing/accommodation
- ☐ Housing officer or council housing department
- ☐ Housing association
- ☐ Night Shelter
- ☐ Day Centre
- ☐ Drug or alcohol support service
- ☐ Physical Health service
- ☐ Mental health service
- ☐ Women's centre/service
- ☐ Domestic abuse or sexual violence support service
- ☐ Sex work support service
- ☐ One-stop shop
- ☐ Food bank
- ☐ Soup kitchen
- ☐ Job Centre
- ☐ Citizens Advice
- ☐ Social worker/social services
- ☐ Police
- ☐ Probation
- ☐ Prison service
- ☐ Migration support service
- ☐ Religious or faith group / church, mosque or temple
- ☐ Education
- ☐ None
- ☐ Question not answered
- ☐ Question not asked
- ☐ Other

16. Which local authority is your service in? *

If your service operates in more than one borough/local authority, please answer as relevant to this survey response, i.e. where you conducted this survey or the area where the respondent was most recently rough sleeping.

17. Date survey was conducted *

 

18. How did you conduct the survey?

- ☐ At your service (in person or on the phone)
- ☐ On a gender-informed census outreach shift
- ☐ On another outreach shift
- ☐ Other

Further Information

Note for worker: for data security, a paper version of the survey should only be used if you are not able to use the online survey. For example, where there is no access to the internet or a device, or where a translated version is needed.

Please transfer answers to the online survey platform as soon as possible if using the paper form, and shred or delete any information recorded outside the online survey platform.

Surveys conducted after 23:59 on Sunday of census week, or submitted online more than 7 days after the census, will not be included in the final report.

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