



# HARROW'S HOUSING EVIDENCE BASE HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING NEEDS

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## HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING NEEDS



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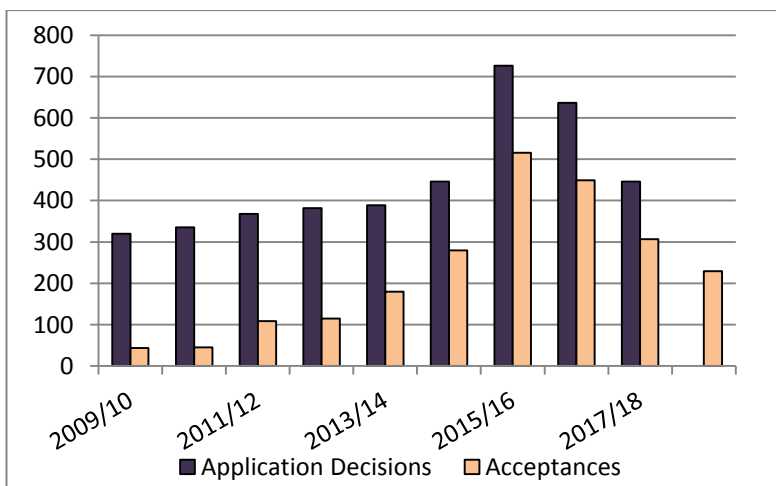
## HARROW'S HOUSING EVIDENCE BASE – HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING NEEDS

Welfare reform, a very limited supply of social housing, increased property prices and a buoyant private rented market have steeply increased homelessness, and the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA17) has increased the burden on local authorities. Changes in reporting requirements from the P1E to H-CLIC have resulted in some indicators being difficult to compare with previous years.

### Homeless Applications and Acceptances

Several thousand people in housing need contact the Council each year. Most do not have a recognised priority need and are not eligible for social housing. They are offered advice and often assistance to either remain in their current home or to find alternative accommodation. Of those that applied, the number accepted as being eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need during 2018/19 was 229, over 5 times the number in 2009/10. The highest annual number of acceptances during the last 10 years was in 2015/16 at 726 (fig 4.1).

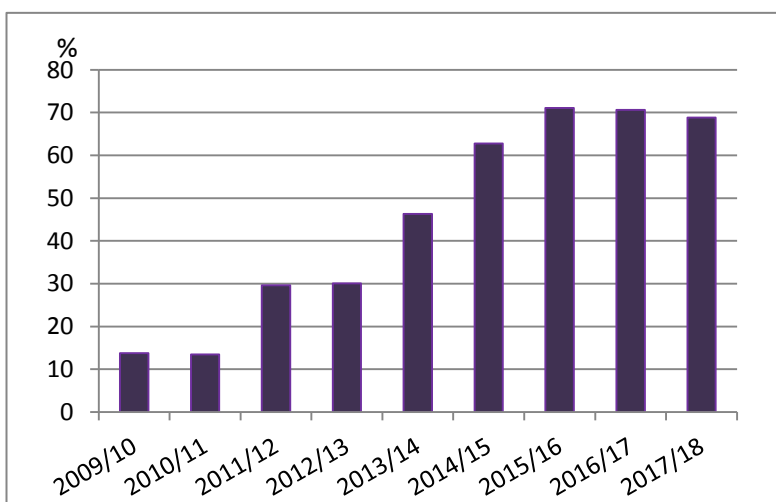
Fig 4.1 Homeless Applications & Acceptances



Source: P1E

Homelessness prevention work carried out by the Council ensures most families find suitable housing in the private rented sector (PRS) and limits the number of applications. However, the percentage of acceptances to decisions made has risen from just 14% in 2009/10 to 69% in 2017/18 (fig. 4.2).

Fig 4.2 Homelessness Acceptances as a Percentage of Decisions

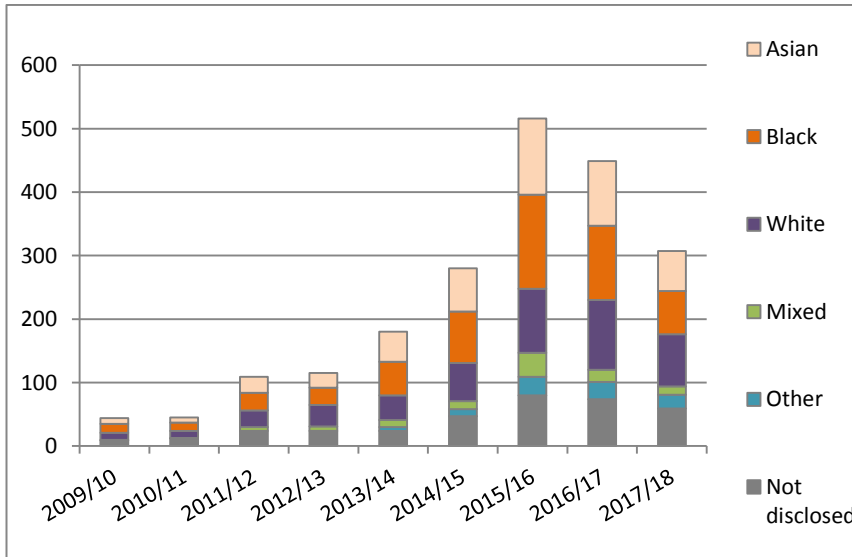


Source: P1E

### Protected Characteristics

Homelessness affects all communities regardless of ethnicity (fig 4.3). However, it seems that a disproportionately large number of Black households are affected each year. In 2017/18, 8.6% of Harrow's population were Black but they constituted 27% of homeless acceptances. This may reflect particular issues of housing need within this group. 2018/19 indicative data suggests this figure to be around 30%.

Fig 4.3 Number of Homeless Acceptances by Ethnic Group



Source: P1E

Other protected characteristics<sup>1</sup> that are recorded for applicants include age and sex (fig 4.4 and 4.5).

Fig 4.4 Age of Applicant When Accepted as Eligible

2017/18	Number	%
Aged 16-45	209	68.1%
Aged 45-64	84	27.4%
Aged 65+	14	4.6%

Source: P1E

Fig 4.5 Applicant Households Accommodated by Household Type and Sex

	Couple with dependent children *	Lone parent household with dependent children		One person household		All other household groups	Total	of which: Minority ethnic
		Male Applicant	Female Applicant*	Male Applicant	Female Applicant			
2017/18	1,255	55	1,041	370	181	192	3,094	2,943

Source: P1E

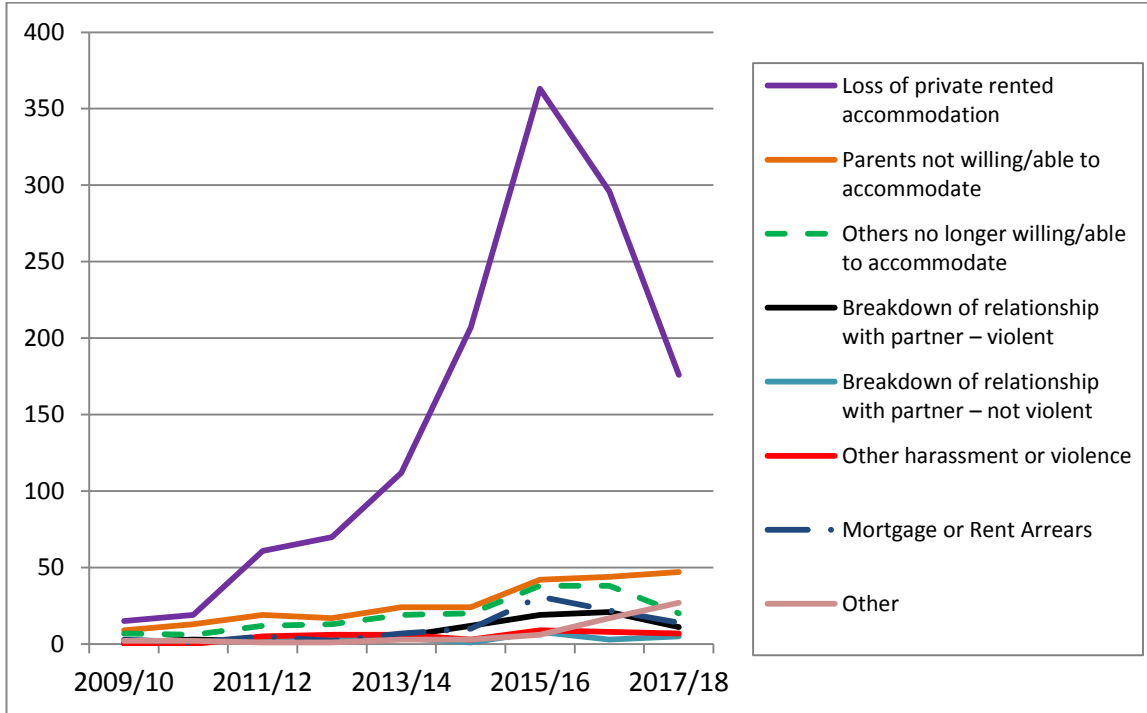
### Reasons for Homelessness

Homelessness triggered by the loss of a private tenancy has soared since the Local Housing Allowance cuts and caps began in 2011 and this is the most common reason for homelessness acceptances. The next most common is family or friends no longer willing to accommodate, and other reasons include domestic abuse and relationships ending.

<sup>1</sup> It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of age, ethnicity, religion, disability, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, sex, sexual orientation or gender reassignment, and these are called 'protected characteristics'

Loss of housing within the private rented sector was the cause for 57% of those accepted as being eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need of assistance in 2017/18, with 176 households affected. This has increased from just 15 households in 2009/10 (fig 4.6). Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate accounted for 22%, and 67 households were accepted for this reason in 2017/18, up from 16 in 2009/10.

Fig 4.6 Reasons for Homelessness Acceptances

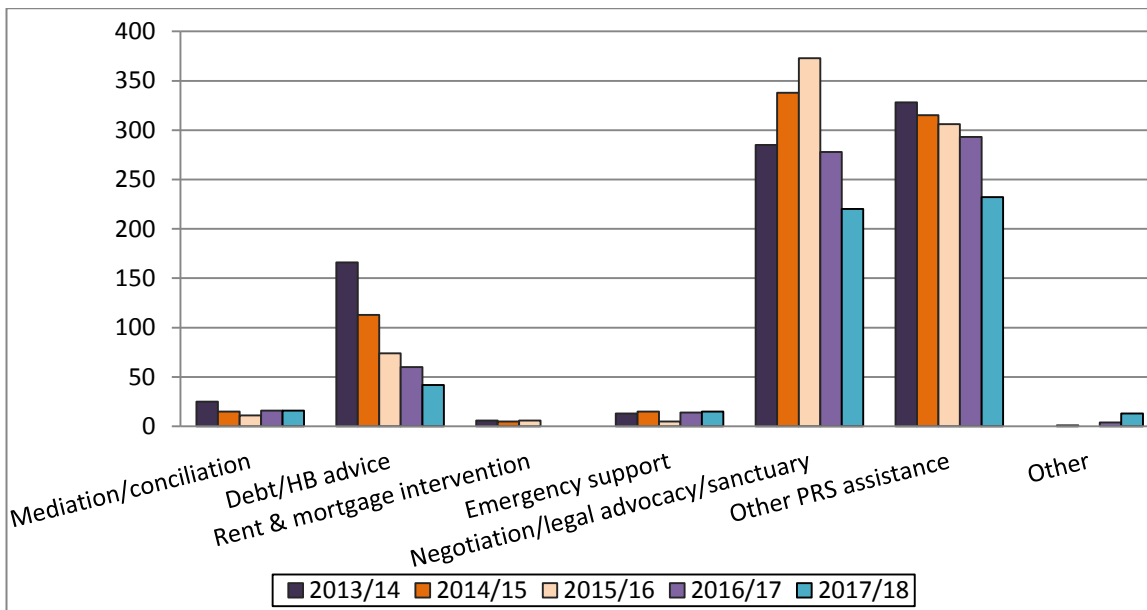


Source: P1E

### Homelessness Prevention Activity

HRA17 includes specific Prevention and Relief duties, but the Council has always used a range of measures to enable people to remain in their existing home. These include the use of negotiation and legal advocacy, and offering 'other' private rental sector assistance, often financial (fig 4.7).

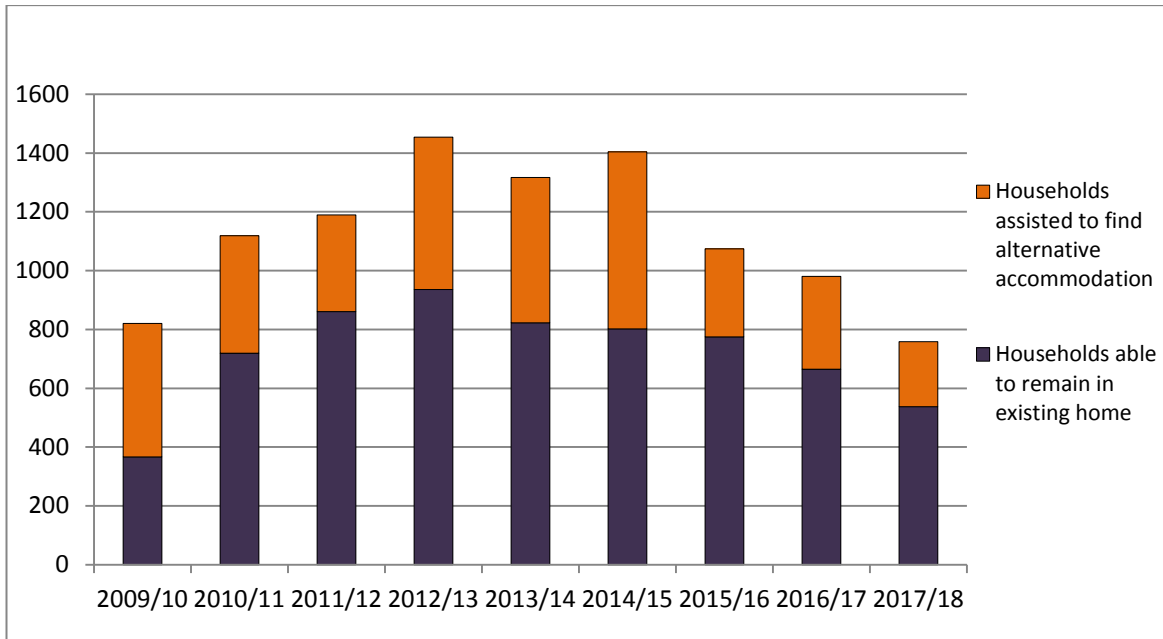
Fig 4.7 Homelessness Prevention Measures to Remain in Existing Home



Source: P1E

Where remaining in the current home is not possible, the Council supports people to find alternative accommodation and avoid homelessness, (fig 4.8) many through Harrow’s Help2Let service.

Fig 4.8 Homelessness Prevention

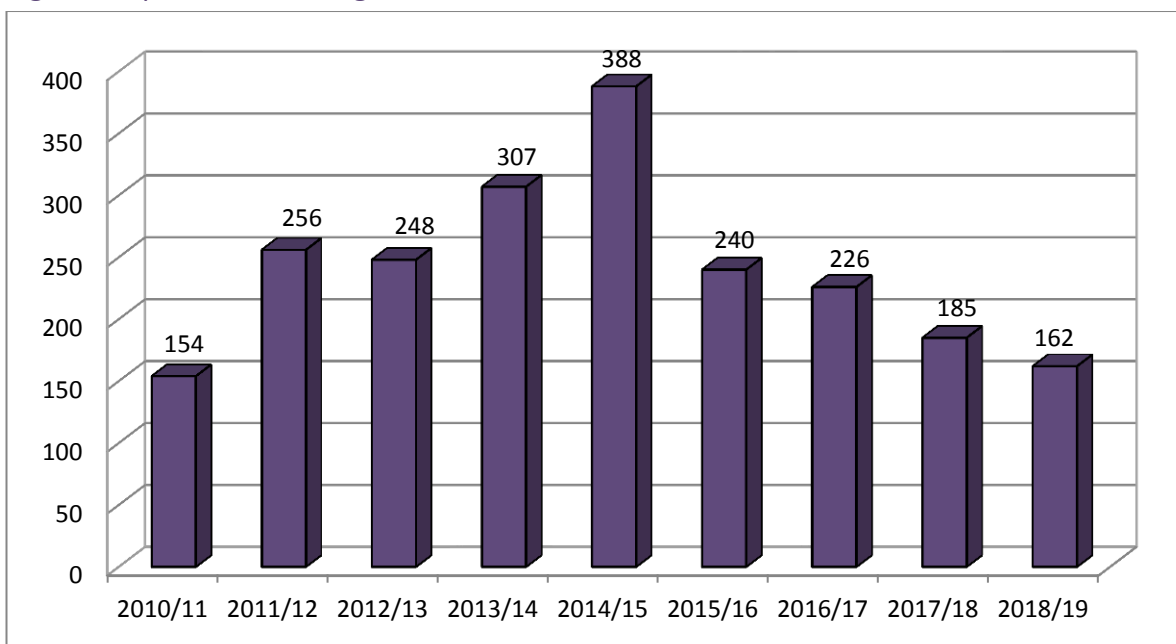


Source: P1E

### Help2Let

Harrow’s Help2Let Team works in partnership with landlords to assist those in housing need to rent in the private sector (fig 4.9). As well as enabling families to avoid homelessness it is particularly important in relieving homelessness and discharging the main homelessness duty by placing these households into PRS accommodation at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. Affordability of even the lowest rent PRS properties in Harrow is becoming more and more of a challenge and Help2Let is increasingly working with landlords outside of Harrow in order to offer families more affordable options.

Fig 4.9 Help2Let PRS Lettings

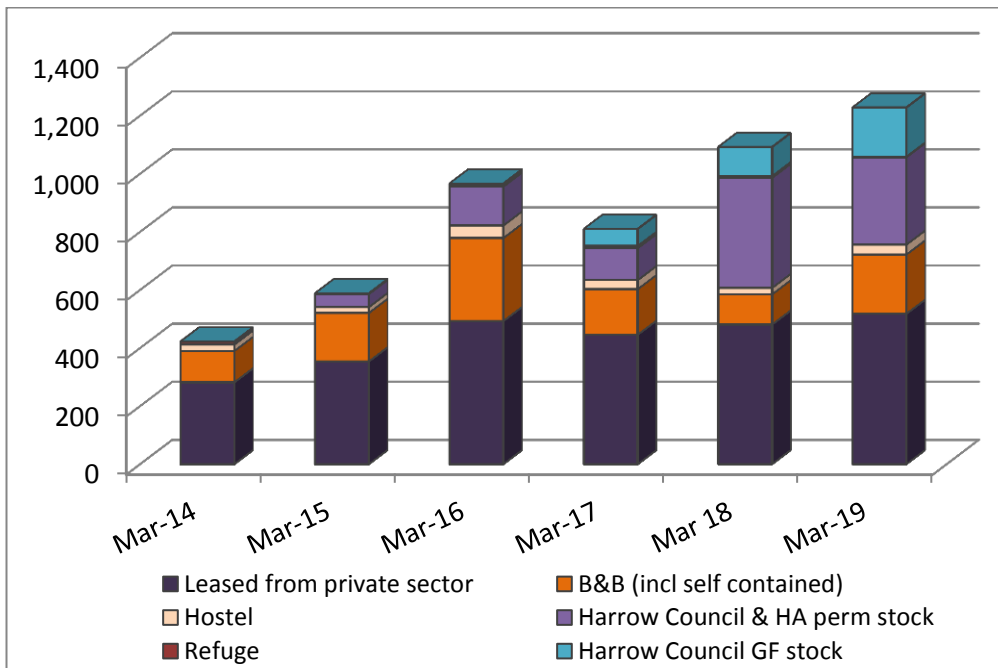


Source: P1E

### Temporary & Emergency Accommodation

Despite the huge emphasis on homelessness prevention, there were just over 1,100 households living in temporary and emergency accommodation in March 2019, more than 2½ times the number of 5 years previously. Around 50% were placed in properties leased from a private landlord by the Council or a Housing Association; just over 25% were placed in permanent Council stock, mostly on the Grange Farm Estate which is awaiting regeneration. 14% were living in homes bought by the Council's General Fund for use as TA and 18% were in Bed & Breakfast (fig 4.10).

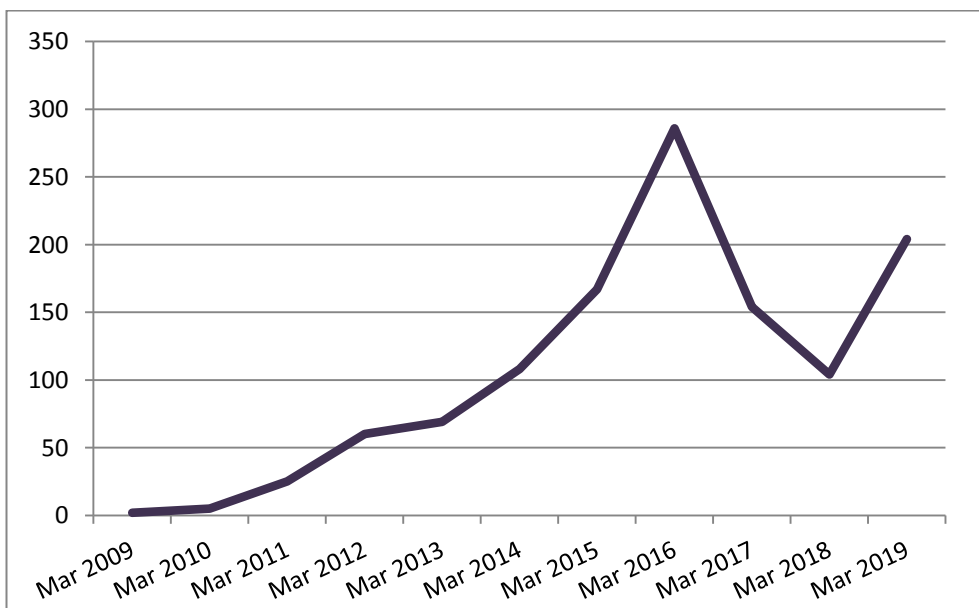
Fig 4.10 Homeless Households in Temporary Accommodation at Year-End



Source: P1E/Locata

With demand for TA far outstripping supply, use of Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation has become much more common over the last 10 years. In March 2009 only 2 households were living in B&B but in March 2019 there were over 200, with a peak of 286 in March 2016 (fig 4.11).

Fig 4.11 Bed and Breakfast Usage



Source: P1E

There was a steady reduction in the number of families needing to be placed in B&B between March 2016 and March 2018. This was due to the focus on prevention and relief of homelessness, as well as increasing the supply of properties via Grants to Move, Empty Property Grants and Help2Let plus the purchase of homes for use as temporary accommodation. However, despite all this, the effects of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, welfare reform and other pressures have meant this position was not sustainable and the number doubled to over 200 by March 2019.

Despite all efforts to secure more properties in Harrow, families often have to be housed elsewhere. In 2018/19 235 households (583 people) were placed in short- and long-term temporary and emergency accommodation outside of Harrow (fig 4.12).

Fig 4.12 Bed and Breakfast Placements Outside of Harrow

<b>2018-19</b>	<b>Households</b>
Aylesbury	75
Brent	31
Northolt	23
Hillingdon	18
Watford	17
Barnet	8
Ealing	8
Enfield	6
Wolverhampton	5
Luton	5
Hemel Hempstead	5
Telford	4
Worcestershire	4
Hounslow	4
Birmingham	3
Surrey	2
Oldbury	2
Bradford	2
Northampton	2
Hatfield	1
Huntingdon	1
Peterborough	1
Brighton	1
Shipley	1
Hartlepool	1
Egham	1
Leeds	1
Slough	1
Leicester	1
Slough	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>

Source: Northgate



## Rough Sleeping

Rough sleeping is defined as 'People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as, on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or 'bashes'). The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, sofa surfers, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protests, squatters or Travellers sites.'

### Annual Rough Sleeping Estimate

A single night snapshot of rough sleeping is taken annually in October or November in England using street counts, evidence-based estimates, and estimates informed by spotlight street counts. Local authorities decide on the best method in order to assess the number of people sleeping rough in their area. The count does not include everyone in an area with a history of sleeping rough, or everyone sleeping rough in an area. The figure is reported to MHCLG and the process is supported by Homeless Link.

Rough sleeping levels in Harrow (fig 4.13) are lower than in other local authorities, particularly those in central London, but services are being developed with partners to address the local level of rough sleeping.

Fig 4.13 Annual Rough Sleeping Estimate for Harrow

Year	Number of rough sleepers
2010	1
2011	1
2012	2
2013	4
2014	4
2015	6
2016	10
2017	10
2018	13

Source MHCLG

In 2018 there were 13 rough sleepers, representing a rough sleeping rate of 1.5 per 10,000 households. Of the 13 rough sleepers identified 10 were male and 3 were female, all were aged 26 or over and 5 were UK nationals, 6 were EU non-UK nationals, 1 was a non-EU national and 1 was 'nationality unknown'.

### National and Local Data Collection

There is currently no dedicated ongoing national data collection for the total numbers of people sleeping rough in England throughout the year.

In London, street outreach teams record all rough sleeping activity and produce regular reports. The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) is a multi-agency database recording information about rough sleepers and the wider street population in London. CHAIN is commissioned and funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA) and managed by St Mungo's Charity.

The CHAIN Annual Report shows the 'flow, stock, returner' model for the number of people seen rough sleeping in Harrow (fig 4.14) where flow means new rough sleepers, stock means those seen across at least two consecutive years and returner means those seen before but with gaps in their rough sleeping histories.

**Figure 4.14 Number of Rough Sleepers in Harrow**

Year	Flow	Stock	Returner	Total
2010/2011	-	-	-	5
2011/2012	-	-	-	21
2012/2013	-	-	-	32
2013/2014	-	-	-	48
2014/2015	-	-	-	45
2015/2016	60	1	4	65
2016/2017	32	6	5	43
2017/2018	29	0	4	33
2018/2019	21	4	5	30

Source: CHAIN

Of the 30 rough sleepers identified in Harrow in 2018/19, 24 were male and 6 were female. 4 were aged 18-25 years, 4 were aged 26-35 years, 9 were aged 36-45 years, 10 were aged 46-55 years and 3 were aged over 55 years.

In terms of nationality 13 were from the UK, 9 were from the CEE and 8 were from other countries. In terms of ethnicity 7 were White British, 4 were White Irish, 10 were White Other, none were Black, 8 were Asian and 1 was Mixed.

The rough sleepers identified had a range of support needs. 8 had support needs relating to alcohol, 3 had support needs relating to drugs, 8 had support needs relating to their mental health, 3 had no support needs relating to alcohol, drugs or mental health. 1 had an Armed Forces background, 1 had been in care and 8 had been in prison. 11 had no experience of armed forces, care or prison.

### FirmFoundation

FirmFoundation is a local charity based in Harrow working with homeless people. The services provided include the weekly signposting drop-in, the weekly day centre drop-in, the Winter Night Shelter (January to March), outreach and floating support and Hope Place supported housing.

47 people used the night shelter in 2019 (fig 4.15) and 39 of these had a local connection. Many of these individuals will not be included in CHAIN data so they are not 'verified' rough sleepers.

The Shelter provided bed spaces for a total of 38 men and 9 women. The youngest guest was aged 18 years and the oldest was 67 years old.

Guests from the UK made up just under 40%, a 20% decrease from the previous year. Non-UK rose by 18% and EEA Nationals by 2%.

21% of the Winter Shelter 2019 guests presented with mental health issues.

Fig 4.15 Firm Foundation Winter Night Shelter Use

<b>Year (Jan to March only)</b>	<b>Total Number Using the Shelter</b>	<b>Number with a Local Connection</b>
2011	31	15
2012	22	17
2013	17	13
2014	30	21
2015	20	12
2016	30	21
2017	39	27
2018	33	24
2019	47	39

Source: FirmFoundation

FirmFoundation data indicates an estimated 20 to 25 rough sleepers in Harrow on any given night, taking into account individuals using the drop-in services and those known to the organisations but who do not engage.

Many rough sleepers choose secluded locations and do not divulge their sleep sites so may not be included in estimated street counts and other data sources.