

# Frequently asked questions

## Why are people homeless?

Overall, the most common reason for becoming homeless is the end of a tenancy.

Another common reason is relationship breakdown between family members. Further reasons include job loss, mental or physical illness, and bereavement.

## Who becomes homeless?

Anyone can become homeless. People with happy homes can lose their job, health, or a loved one, and so lose their home. If they have a support network they are less likely to end up on the street. Others are not so fortunate.

Young people who have been in care, ex-service personnel, and people who have been in prison are more likely to become street homeless; as are those fleeing domestic or sexual abuse.

People with learning or physical disabilities, mental health issues, or addictions are also more likely to become homeless.

## Why is the problem increasing?

Zero-hour employment contracts, increased living costs, debts, benefit cuts, and sanctions all lead to growing poverty, which results in rent arrears and evictions.

Family support, citizen's advice, social care, and mental health services have been cut. Consequently relationship, debt, or health issues can result in homelessness that previously could have been avoided.

We do not have enough affordable housing. Millions of people now have to rent their home privately, which is usually more expensive than repaying a mortgage. Furthermore, they can be evicted for no reason with two months' notice.

## Do they choose to sleep on the street?

Local councils need only provide housing to those who are vulnerable or in priority need. This means that anyone without dependent children, or a

disability, is likely to be refused help. This is why there are so many young people and single men without homes.

Some people have literally nowhere else to go. For others, being on the street is safer or easier than their other options, such as returning to an abusive or overcrowded household.

## **Should I give homeless people money?**

Usually it is not a good idea to give money. Many rough sleepers have addictions, and giving them money will feed this addiction. In particular, synthetic psychoactive drugs are cheap and readily available. They are completely destroying thousands of lives, as users become violent, often towards themselves, and may suffer permanent brain damage. Some addicts spend £80-£100 a day on drugs, all gained through street begging.

Keep a stock of chocolate bars, non-perishable food, bottles of water, and new socks and underwear to give out instead.

## **Why aren't homeless people moved on?**

It is not illegal to sleep rough, but it is illegal to beg in a public place. Rough sleepers can also be moved on for antisocial behaviour. If someone becomes aggressive when asking for money, report them to the police. Contact local police on 101.

## **How can I help homeless people?**

It isn't easy, but it is possible to transform lives.

We give advice on our website, or we can send you a free 'How to Help Homeless People' guide (contact details below).

Please also consider making a donation to our work. We give around £6,000 a week in small grants to homeless people to help them rebuild their lives. We help homeless people of all ages, faiths, and nationalities. We fund the training, items, activities, counselling and skills people need to rediscover their sense of purpose and feel part of society again. The grants are small, usually between £50 and £300, but to people who have nothing they mean a second chance. They change lives.

**Thank you for your support.**

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