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**Press release**

**13/10/2023**

**Shocking new figures show a 33% increase in homelessness among young people leaving care in the last four years**

Today’s new figures published in the government’s annual Statutory Homelessness in England report show a steep rise numbers of young people leaving care aged 18-20 who experience homelessness or the threat of homelessness.

The government’s own research shows that during the financial year 2022/23:

* The number of care leavers aged 18 – 20 facing homelessness has increased by at least 33% since 2018. The figure for 2018-19 was 2,790 compared to 3,710 for 2022/23.
* That means the number of care leavers aged 18 – 20 facing homelessness has risen more than three times as fast as the overall number of households facing homelessness, which rose by only 10.7% over the same period.
* The number of care leavers aged 18-20 facing homelessness has increased by over 9% in the last year – up from 3, 390 in 2021/22.
* There were 2,270 care leavers aged 18 – 20 presenting as homeless, and a further 1,440 as threatened with homelessness.
* This means that most care leavers (61.2%) aged 18 – 20 were already homeless by the time they received support from their local authority.
* 10.7% of all care leavers aged 18 to 20 in England presented as homeless or threatened with homelessness. That’s up significantly from 8.9% in 2018/19.
* 19% of care leavers aged 18 – 20 presenting as homeless or threatened with homelessness were in the North West of England, 15% were in the South West, and 13% were in the South East.

From our work with care-experienced young people, we know that this is just the tip of the iceberg and beyond these statistics are many more who are ‘hidden homeless’, sofa surfing or rough sleeping, who may be unaware of their rights and entitlements and haven’t been in touch with their local authority for support.

**Katharine Sacks-Jones, CEO of Become, the national charity for children in care and care leavers says:**

“This data is depressing but sadly not surprising. Each year, thousands of 18-year-olds face a care cliff where important support and relationships disappear and they are expected to leave care and become independent overnight, often well before they feel ready. Being pushed into adulthood without the right support in place puts young people at risk. Trying to access safe and suitable housing, manage bills and the cost-of-living crisis, whilst also continuing their education or starting work without a safety net to fall back on is a huge struggle.

It’s a scandal that our care system is leaving young people at risk of homelessness, but this can be fixed. We want to see an end to the care cliff so that all young people have a positive start to adulthood and make the move into independence when the time is right for them.”

**Become is calling on the government to #EndTheCareCliff so that no young person needs to leave care before they’re ready**. **That means:**

* Enabling young people to stay in their homes or connected to support by fully funding and making the Staying Put and Staying Close schemes an opt out legal entitlement for all care-experienced young people up to 25
* Providing proper housing support including the introduction of consistent guarantor and tenancy deposit schemes to remove barriers for care leavers taking up private-rented tenancies.
* Amend homelessness legislation to:
* extend automatic ‘priority need’ to all care leavers up to the age of 25, regardless of vulnerability;
* exempt care leavers, up to the age of 25, from homelessness intentionality rules so they don’t miss out on support into long-term accommodation
* require local authorities to remove the local area connection test for all care leavers up to the age of 25

**As the national charity for children in care and young care leavers, we have young people with experience of homelessness wanting share their story, as well as an interview with our CEO, Katharine Sacks-Jones.**

For more information or to make a media enquiry, please contact Become’s Press and Media Officer 07951 155246 / suzy.barber@becomecharity.org.uk

**Notes to Editors**

**Note on comparisons to 2018/19**

In 2018/19, the 2,790 ([source](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6527cccb2548ca000dddf1c9/StatHomeless_2022-23.ods), newly revised figure) care leavers aged 18 to 20 in England who were assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness represented 8.9% of the care leavers aged 18 to 20 in England. That’s based on the total of [31,290](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019) care leavers who were aged 18-20 in 2018/19.

According to the figures released today, that figure reached 10.7% in 2022/23. This means that there has been a marked increase in terms of the *rate* of care leavers aged 18 to 20 in England assessed as facing homelessness during the year, not just an increase in terms of the *absolute number*.

This constitutes a shocking 19.7% increase in the *rate* at which care leavers aged 18 – 20 in England are facing homelessness.

**Note on calculations**

The statistic “10.7% of all care leavers aged 18 to 20 in England presented as homeless or threatened with homelessness” was calculated using the following figures:

1. the total number of care leavers aged 18 to 20 assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness (3,710) in 2022-23, and
2. the total number of care leavers aged 18 to 20 in England (34,760), taken from the most up-to-date [government data](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions/2022) available, for the year 2021-22.

Since these figures refer only to a snapshot of one year in the life of each young person who appears in the statistics, and since these figures do not include those who haven’t been in touch with their local authority, we know that the percentage of care leavers who face homelessness in the first three years after leaving care is significantly higher.

The fact that (a) relates to the year 2022-23 and (b) relates to the year 2021-22 may give rise to a small margin of error. However, given that we do not expect the overall number of care leavers to have changed significantly, we expect this to be negligible.

**Note on Care Leavers aged 21+**

Statistics are also provided in the latest statistical release for care leavers aged 21+.

A total of 4,200 care leavers aged 21+ across England were assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness during 2022-23.

Due to a lack of publicly available data on the total number of care leavers aged 21 and over in England, it is not possible to provide the percentage of all care leavers aged 21 and over that this represents.

**Regional Table for Care Leavers aged 18-20**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Region** | **Number presenting as threatened with homelessness (‘prevention duty’)** | **Number presenting as currently homeless (‘relief duty’)**  | **Number presenting as homeless OR threatened with homelessness (either duty)** | **% of TOTAL for England** |
| **ENGLAND** | **1,440** | **2,270** | **3710** | **100%** |
| **North East** | 100 | 140 | 240  | 6% |
| **North West** | 240 | 460 | 690  | 19% |
| **Yorkshire and the Humber** | 100 | 180 | 280  | 8% |
| **East Midlands** | 100 | 130 | 230  | 6% |
| **West Midlands** | 170 | 230 | 410  | 11% |
| **East of England** | 150 | 260 | 410  | 11% |
| **London** | 200 | 200 | 390  | 11% |
| **South East** | 190 | 300 | 490  | 13% |
| **South West** | 190 | 380 | 570  | 15% |

**About Become**

[**Become**](http://www.becomecharity.org.uk/)is the national charity for care-experienced children and young people. We put young people at the heart of everything we do, supporting them to get the help they need now and empowering them to bring about change in their own lives, the care system and society.