

BECOME.

THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS

Press release

03/10/2024

Shocking new figures show over 4,300 young care leavers facing homelessness, an increase of 54% in the last five years

Today, new official figures show a rise in the number of young care leavers facing homelessness with a particularly sharp increase in the last two years.

Analysis by Become charity of the Government's own data shows that:

- The number of young care leavers aged 18-20 who are homeless has increased by 54% over the last five years.
- 4,300 care leavers aged 18-20 were assessed as homeless in the last year – up from 2,790 in 2018-19 (1,510 additional young care leavers faced homelessness last year)
- Over the past two years the increase has been particularly sharp, with 910 more care leavers assessed as homeless in 2023-24 than in 2021-22 – an increase of 27%
- The number of care leavers aged 18 – 20 facing homelessness has risen more than twice as fast as the overall number of homeless households, and fifteen times faster than the overall number of young people facing homelessness.
- 15% of care leavers aged 18–20 assessed as homeless were in the North West of England, 15% were in the South West and 14% were in the South East.

These figures are just the tip of the iceberg. 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 aren't accessing support through their local authority. Many will be struggling to manage jobs, education and bills without a suitable roof over their heads.

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

“The stark reality of more care leavers becoming homeless is that society is failing these young people. Each year, thousands of children move out of their foster or children's homes at the age of 18, sometimes younger, and are forced to become independent overnight. Many young people are sofa surfing, living in hostels or unsuitable accommodation where they don't feel safe, struggling to stay afloat with little support.

But this can be fixed, homelessness can be avoided. The Government pledged last week to remove the local connection test for care leavers, which is a good start, but it must now End the Care Cliff, prioritise social housing for young people leaving care and make sure they have the support they need to make a positive start to adulthood.

Become is calling on the Government to

- **End the care cliff - Make [Staying Put](#) and [Staying Close](#) schemes fully funded, opt-out legal entitlements for all young people in care up to 25** so young people can stay in their homes or connected to support without facing a care cliff at 18.
- **Create a homelessness safety net for care leavers by amending homelessness legislation to:**
 - Urgently introduce the exemption to the local area connection test for care leavers so they can bid for social housing in the area they were moved to when in care
 - Make all care leavers a priority for social housing up to the age of 25
 - Exempt care leavers from [homelessness intentionality rules](#), which can deem a young person has made themselves homeless because for example they have left their given accommodation or fallen into rent arrears
- **Increase access to safe, appropriate homes by requiring all local authorities to provide a consistent rent guarantor and deposit scheme for care leavers.**

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

A link to the Government's stats are here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-financial-year-2023-24>

As the national charity for children in care and young care leavers, we have young people with experience of homelessness wanting to 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

[Become](#) 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.

Note on increase over time

In 2018/19, 2, 790 care leavers in England aged 18 to 20 were assessed as facing homelessness (either under the prevention or relief duty). New figures published today, show that 4, 300 care leavers aged 18-20 were assessed as facing homelessness in 2023-24. This is an increase of 1,510 more young people and 54% in the last five years.

In 2021/22, 3,390 care leavers aged 18-20 were assessed as facing homelessness.

At the same time, the number of total young people aged 18-24 assessed as facing homelessness has increased by 3.5% from 54,840 number in 2018/19 to 56,740 number in 2023/24.

The total number of households assessed as facing homelessness in England has risen from 269, 500 number in 2018/19 to 324, 990 number in 2023/24 – a 21% rise. The number of care leavers assessed as facing homelessness has risen at a much higher rate (2.5 times) than the overall number of households facing homelessness.

Note on increase in rate of care leavers aged 18-20 facing homelessness

Our analysis shows that the proportion of care leavers aged 18-20 facing homelessness has increased by a shocking 27% between 2018/19 and 2023/24.

In 2018/19, 2,790 care leavers faced statutory homelessness: a rate of 9.3% (there were 29,960 care leavers aged 18-20 on 31st March 2018). In 2023/24, this rate has increased to 11.8% of all care leavers aged 18-20 – a shocking 27% increase (in 2023/24, 4,300 care leavers aged 18-20 faced statutory homelessness, and there were 36, 320 care leavers in England on 31st March 2023).

Regional Table for Care Leavers aged 18-20

Region	Total number of care leavers aged 17-21 (2023)	% of care leavers in England	Number of care leavers aged 18-20 assessed as being homeless or facing homelessness in 2023/24	% of care leavers aged 18-20 in England facing homelessness
ENGLAND	48, 050		4,300	
North East	2, 220	5%	250	6%
North West	7, 010	15%	640	15%
Yorkshire and the Humber	4, 110	9%	330	8%
East Midlands	3, 490	7%	260	6%

West Midlands	5,270	11%	550	13%
East of England	4,780	10%	560	13%
London	9,920	21%	460	11%
South East	7,300	15%	610	14%
South West	3,960	8%	650	15%