

Homelessness Data England: understanding more about the causes of homelessness and how well services meet people's needs

This research is being carried out by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Aim of the study

The Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) want to collect a range of information to improve our understanding of the causes and factors related to homelessness. This will help us improve homelessness services.

By carrying out this research, DLUHC aims to find out whether:

1. Housing services help prevent homelessness
2. People return for help and/or move regularly
3. Homelessness programmes, such as Housing First, and the temporary accommodation provided during covid have reduced homelessness and rough sleeping in the longer term
4. There are other causes of homelessness and outcomes, such as poor health
5. Understand more about the contact households have with public services.

To do this, DLUHC wants to link information about you and others in your household together with other information, including your homelessness application and past and future information on your use of other public services and benefits.

DLUHC will use your personal details - name, date of birth, gender, last known address, National Insurance number (if known) - to gather the right data held by government departments and agencies.

Any information you provide will not be used to make any decisions about what benefits you get, services you use, now or in future, or used to identify fraud. It can only be used for research.

Researchers looking at the data on homelessness and data from other departments and agencies will not know whose data they have – as the data will be anonymised (i.e. not include any personal identifiers such as names, date of birth, etc., only a unique reference number created for the project).

Whose data are you collecting?

DLUHC want to collect data on all people asking for help with homelessness and rough sleepers accommodated during covid.

What's involved?

At your assessment you will be asked questions about:

- Your experiences of homelessness
- Your support needs
- Whether you have spent time in local authority care, and your current employment status.

What will happen to the information provided?

Your information will only be used for research and will be anonymised so the researchers will not know whose data they have.

We will send your information to DLUHC's partner for the evaluation, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) using a secure IT system – the DLUHC DELTA System. ONS will keep your data secure and safe. ONS will provide your information to other government departments and health agencies to be matched to data they hold, but this can only be used for the research.

Your personal identifiers (name, date of birth, gender, last known address) will be used to identify data collected as part of your assessment and linked to information held by DLUHC and other government departments or health agencies, for example:

- Interventions for Rough Sleepers
- Troubled Families Evaluation Data
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) – to see what benefits you have received and whether you have been employed
- Ministry of Justice (MoJ) – to see what contact you may have had with the criminal justice system
- Department for Education (DfE) – to see when your child has been in school, how well they are doing at each Key Stage and whether they are a Child in Need
- Public Health England (PHE) – to find out whether you have received treatment for drug or alcohol misuse
- NHS Digital – to find out whether you have been to A&E, and used in-patient and out-patient health services.

DLUHC may have policy questions which require matches to other datasets in the future. ONS has developed a secure research service in which to carry out this work in a way that will not identify individuals or households.

Any information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your name, date of birth, gender, address and National Insurance number will be kept separately from all the other information in a secure, password-protected document on a computer system. You will be assigned a unique reference number, so that even though a researcher will see all your information, they will not be able to know it is your data..

Sending data overseas and automated decision making

DLUHC will not send your data overseas or use it for automated decision making, e.g. using statistical modelling to decide whether or not to provide services.

How long will my information be kept for?

The Office for National Statistics (DLUHC's partner on this project) will keep your personal identifiers and store them securely – this is to track the longer term outcomes for those who have been homeless or at risk of homelessness. A review will be carried out every 5 years to ensure the data is still required. If it is not required it will be securely deleted.

Other government departments and health agencies (e.g. DWP, NHS Digital) will only keep your personal identifiers for a month and will not keep records showing you were part of this research.

DLUHC will only use your data within the terms of data protection laws and will only keep it as long as we have a lawful basis to do so. DLUHC will delete your data securely and only keep it for as long as necessary for our work as a public body. DLUHC will review dates for keeping personal identifiers and data in the future and if necessary ask local authorities to update their privacy notices.

Can you legally share my data?

To legally share data for this research, local authorities will rely on the Localism Act 2011. To legally share data for this research, DLUHC will rely on common law powers.

The collection of personal identifiers by DLUHC for this project is compliant with data protection legislation.

The local authority will collect your personal identifiers and data to fulfil their duties (in this case to provide housing services) and agree to share this data with DLUHC to help them fulfil their duties (in this case to reduce homelessness). DLUHC will

rely on the following reasons for processing personal data and additional special category and criminal offence data. The processing of data is necessary for DLUHC to fulfil its duties and for reasons of public interest:

A. Lawful basis for processing personal data under Article 6(1)e GDPR

The processing is necessary for DLUHC to fulfil its duties and for reasons of public interest:

(e) public task: the processing is necessary for you to perform a task in the public interest or for your official functions, and the task or function has a clear basis in law.

B. Additional condition for processing special category data under Article 9(2)g GDPR

Special category personal data may be processed for reasons of public interest:

(g) processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest, on the basis of Union or Member State law which shall be proportionate to the aim pursued, respect the essence of the right to data protection and provide for suitable and specific measures to safeguard the fundamental rights and the interests of the data subject;

C. To process criminal offence data DLUHC will meet the conditions in Article 10 of the GDPR and Section 10(5) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

What are my rights?

You can talk to staff at your local authority about whether your data is being used for this project without it affecting your legal rights or routine care. You can also see copies of all the data DLUHC hold about you and ask for it to be corrected or deleted.

What if I want more information?

If you want more information you can ask a member of staff at your local authority and/or contact DLUHC researchers at HomelessnessPersonalData@communities.gov.uk.

You can contact DLUHC's Knowledge and Information Team about seeing your data or withdrawing from the research by emailing DLUHC's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@communities.gov.uk

If you are unhappy with the way your personal information is being handled you can contact the independent Information Commissioner at:

ico.org.uk/livechat

helpline number 0303 123 1113.

What will happen to the results of this research?

Aggregate level results of this research will be published, e.g. the characteristics of those who are homeless across England. DLUHC will publish reports on the gov.uk website. You will not be identified in any research report.