

HOMELESS ACTION WEEK

5 - 11 October

TAKE ACTION. RAISE FUNDS. RAISE AWARENESS.

Discussing Homelessness

This resource is to help prompt honest discussions about homelessness, to challenge conscious or sub-conscious prejudices and to encourage understanding of the current homelessness crisis in the UK.

We recommend you get together with friends or family members either from your household or online at a virtual event. Please follow and respect the latest government advice on social distancing and stay safe!

If you are taking part in our Virtual Sleep Out, why not use this resource to help explain to your network of friends and family why you are taking part and why they should sponsor you. You could even host a quiz on the night and ask for donations to take part!

Conversation starters

- What springs to mind when you think about homelessness?
- How do you feel when you walk past someone who is homeless?
- Do you have biases when you think about the homeless?
- How many people have you seen sleeping rough in the last week?
- How do you think UK society reacts to the issue of homelessness?
- What do you think should be done to tackle homelessness?
- How can you be part of Providence Row's fight against homelessness?

Talking about homelessness with children

Find out what your child understands about homelessness already and use this as a starting point.

What does it mean to not have a home?

Ask your child to think about what they might miss out on if they didn't have a home.

Prompts: a bed, shelter from the wind/rain/cold, somewhere to keep their belongings, clothes and food.

Discuss together reasons why someone might not have a home.

Prompts: no money, no job, no family, mental/physical illness, addiction.

Discuss how, as a family, you can help those who are homeless.

Prompts: support Providence Row's fight against homelessness, raise awareness at school/work. Be kind to people you see sleeping rough and direct them to a local homelessness support centre.

Quiz - Homelessness in the UK

1

How many people are estimated to be homeless?

- A) 150,000
- B) 220,000
- C) 280,000

2

What are the three main causes of homelessness?

3

What is the average life expectancy for someone who is homeless?

- A) 44 years
- B) 53 years
- C) 61 years

4

Only people who are sleeping on the streets are considered homeless. True or False?

5

What percentage has homelessness increased in London over the last year (2019-20)?

- A) 14%
- B) 19%
- C) 21%

6

What percentage of people experiencing homelessness in, London last year, were found to have alcohol or drug related addictions?

- A) 39% alcohol and 39% drug addictions
- B) 43% alcohol and 47% drug addictions
- C) 67% alcohol and 81% drug addictions

7

What percentage of people sleeping rough in London last year, do you think were sleeping rough for the very first time? (A point awarded to the closest answer).

8

How many people were found to be sleeping rough in London last year?

- A) 6,784
- B) 8,923
- C) 10,726

9

What percentage of people rough sleeping in London, last year, were found to have mental health support needs?

- A) 22%
- B) 47%
- C) 65%

10

Can you name three of Providence Row's frontline support services for homeless and vulnerable adults?

Quiz Answers

1

The correct answer is C – 280,000 people.

According to Shelter's report in December 2019, 1 in 200 people in the UK are estimated to be without a home. The widening net of poverty and the breakdown of mental health provision means numbers are growing.

People become homeless for lots of different reasons, the three main causes are:

- A lack of affordable housing.
- Poverty and unemployment.
- Life events such as relationship breakdown, domestic violence, mental or physical health problems or substance misuse.

2

3

The average age of death for someone affected by homelessness is just 44 years old.

- People sleeping on the street are almost 17 times more likely to have been victims of violence.
- More than 1 in 3 people sleeping rough have been deliberately hit or kicked or experienced some other form of violence whilst homeless.
- Homeless people are over nine times more likely to take their own life than the general population.

4

False - rough sleeping is just one form of homelessness.

Homelessness also includes those who are living in vulnerable or temporary accommodation such as hostels, bedsits and shelters. There are also many people who are 'hidden homeless' living with friends, sofa surfing or squatting out of sight. In addition are those who are at risk of homelessness due to various socio/economic factors.

5

The correct answer is C – 21%.

Homelessness in London has been on the rise for the last decade, barring one year in 2018-19. Overall, in the last 10 years it has rise more than 170%.

Since the pandemic has started this trend has accelerated. In the CHAIN report for London, from the period April –June 2020, people found rough sleeping was 33% higher than this same period in 2019.

The homelessness crisis is worsening; the time to act is now.

Quiz Answers

6

The correct answer is C – 10,736 people.
The highest count in a decade.

The correct answer is – 66%, award a point to the nearest answer.

This number shows that with help and support people who become homeless can move on from a life lived on the streets. However, the number of people that need our help is increasing. Unless the lack of affordable and available housing is addressed, this number is going to continue to rise.

This is also a pattern we are beginning to see emerge as the economic fall out of the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds.

7

8

Contrary to what most people believe, only 39% of people rough sleeping rough in London last year had alcohol or drug addictions.

The correct answer is B– 47%.

People experiencing homelessness are more likely to have a mental health support need than drug or alcohol addictions.

Poor or unstable mental health is one of the leading causes of homelessness. In addition to this, many people experiencing homelessness find their mental health deteriorates as they are subject to loneliness, isolation and stigma; life on the streets is debilitating, cold and dangerous and can have a severe effect on an individual's mental health.

9

Points awarded for any of the following:

10

- Advice and Support –providing immediate crisis relief for rough sleepers and support with housing, mental and physical health needs. Our teams work with individuals to guide a pathway to recovery.
- RESET – Drug and alcohol treatment services.
- Routes to Roots – Hospital discharge and homelessness prevention service.
- Outreach Psychotherapy – Providing professional mental health support to clients.
- Employability and Progression services - Supporting people to get back on their feet and closer to the workplace.