

St Mungo's

Leading London's services for people
who are homeless and vulnerable

St Mungo's Big Survey into the problems and lives of Homeless People

50:50
The**BIG**Stat

November 04



Introduction¹

This survey is the most comprehensive ever survey of the problems homeless people in the UK. The survey looks at the problems of 1,534 homeless people.

And 1,372 homeless people answered a separate question about how long they have been homeless and contact with next of kin.

1 in 4 homeless people are over 50.

Key figures

Data from the older homeless population (50 and over)

- A survey was completed for 1,534 homeless men and women.
- 24% are 50 or over.
- 36% are parents and of these, over 50% have no contact with their children.
- 74% have no next of kin (from a separate question asked of 1,380 homeless people, 317 of whom were 50 or over).
- 43% have 4 or more problems as well as their homelessness or housing problem.
- Over 50% have problems with alcohol.
- 50% have physical health problems.
- Nearly 50% have mental health problems.
- 50% have been homeless more than two years, (nearly 1 in 3 have been homeless more than 5 years).

Data from the general homeless population

- 1 in 4 have children, of these 44% have no contact with their children.
- 50% have no next of kin (from a separate question asked of 1,380 homeless people).
- 42% have 4 or more problems as well as their homelessness or housing problem.

¹ **Note:** further details and statistics are available on request.

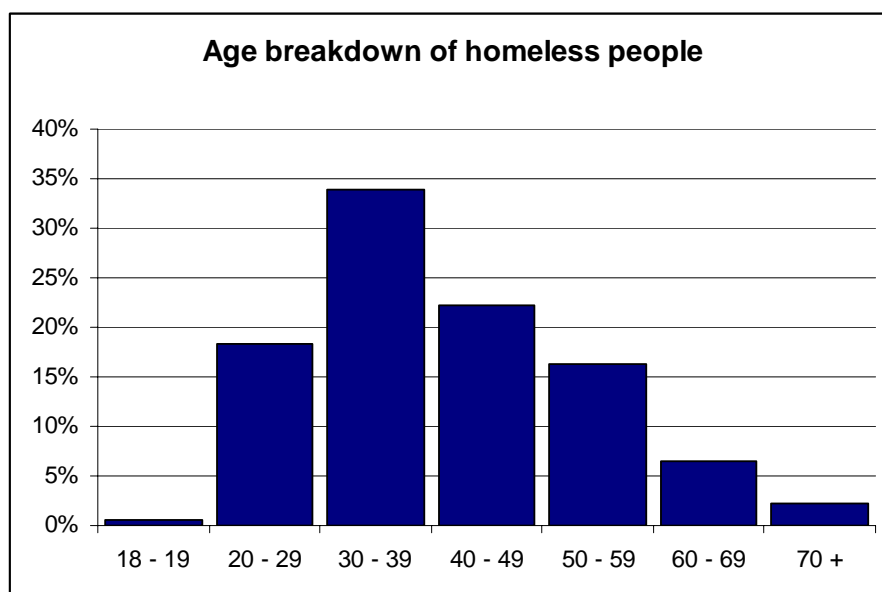
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Survey Details

Age Breakdown of participants

In total, details on problems were obtained for 1,534 homeless people. Of these, there were age details for 1,451 (95%).



25% of the homeless people in the survey for whom there were age details are 50 & over (365 homeless people).

Description of the problems experienced by homeless people

The problems looked at were:

1. Substance use problems:

- Alcohol
- Depressant drugs
- Hallucinogenic drugs
- Stimulant drugs

2. Health problems:

- Diagnosed mental health
- Undiagnosed (suspected) mental health
- Physical health
- Learning disabilities
- Recent hospital stay
- Pregnancy

3. Behavioural problems:

- Challenging behaviour
- Socially isolated: extremely withdrawn, incapable of social behaviour
- Socially excluded: no social network, no active social group
- Self harming
- Suicide risk
- Gambling addiction

4. Educational problems:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- English language issue
- No basic living skills

5. Problems related to current status:

- Asylum seeker or refugee
- Couple
- Sex worker

6. Problems related to past:

- Ex-offender
- Ex-forces
- Ex-care home
- Domestic violence (homelessness affected by)
- Relationship breakdown (homelessness affected by)
- Abuse history

7. Any other problems

For the purposes of counting the numbers of problems, similar problems were counted as one (e.g. the three drugs categories).

Part 1: Survey results from general homeless population

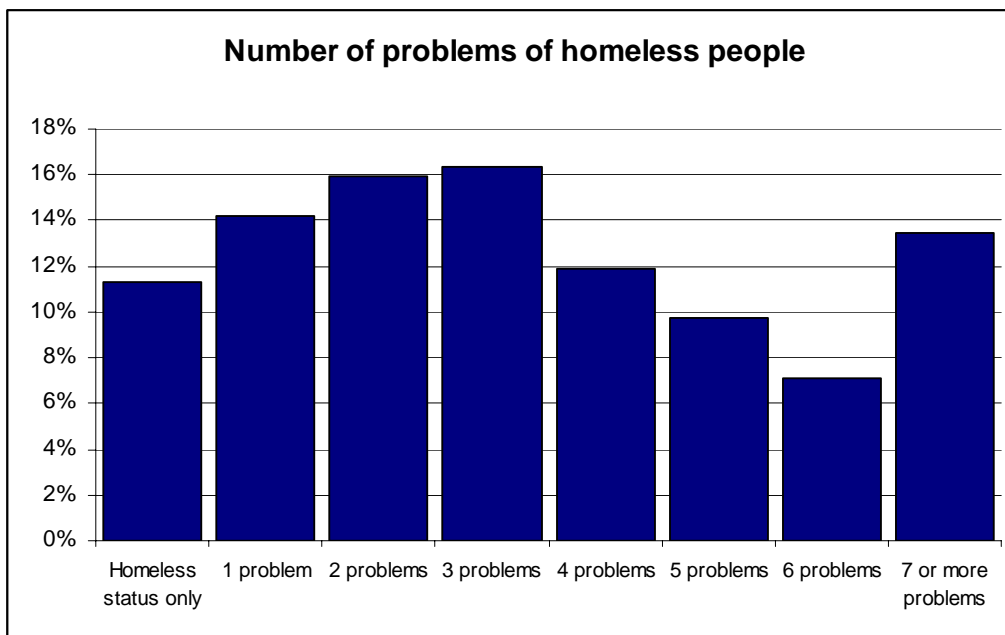


Part 1: Survey results from the general homeless population

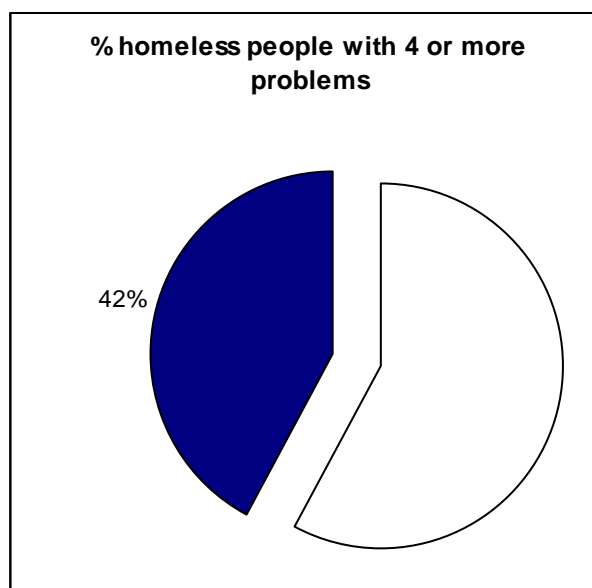
Next of kin and children

- 26% of homeless people are known to be parents. Of these, 44% have no contact with their children.
- In a separate question, out of 1,380 homeless people, 50% had no next of kin details. .
- Out of those homeless people who did have next of kin details, at least 19% named someone who was not related to them e.g. a friend, social worker or priest.

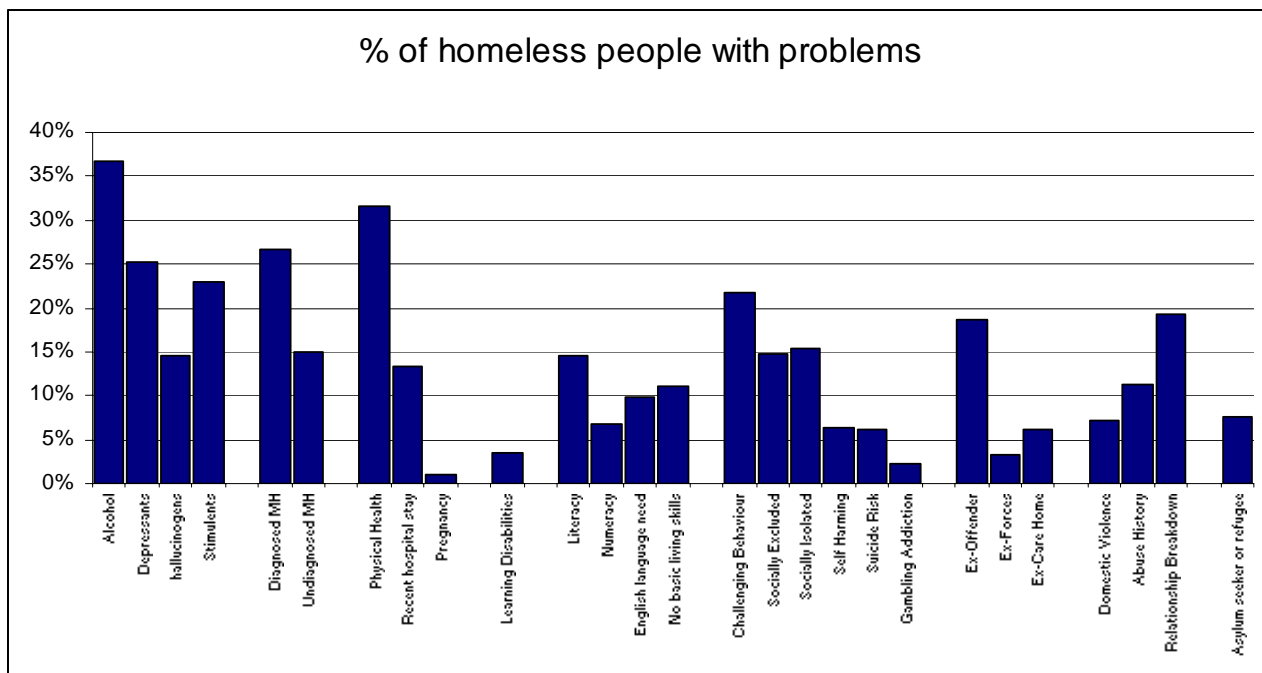
Total numbers of problems of homeless people



- 42% of homeless people have 4 or more problems as well as the fact they are homeless.



Breakdown of all problems²



Drugs and Alcohol use

- Alcohol and drugs problems are the most common problems of homeless people: alcohol = 37% and drugs = 36%.
- 26% of homeless people with a substance use problem have both an alcohol and a drug problem.
- 71% of homeless people with a drugs problem are using depressants, 40% hallucinogens and 64% stimulants.
- 41% of homeless people with a substance use problem also have a mental health problem.
- 41% of homeless people with a substance use problem also have a physical health problem.

Mental Health

- 40% of homeless people have a mental health problem.
- 59% of homeless people with a mental health problem also have a substance use problem.
- 37% of homeless people with a mental health problem also have a physical health problem.
- Homeless people who have no diagnosis for their mental health problems are more likely than homeless people with a diagnosed mental health condition to:
 - Have a substance use problem.
 - Have a physical health problem.
 - Exhibit challenging behaviour.
 - Be affected by a relationship breakdown.
 - Engage in street life activity.

² 75% of people will be in more than one category.

Physical Health

- 32% of homeless people have a physical health problem.
- 71% of homeless people with a physical health problem also have a substance use problem.
- 51% of homeless people with a physical health problem also have a mental health problem.

Learning Disability

- 3% of homeless people have a learning disability.
- 77% of homeless people with a learning disability also have a substance use problem.
- 77% of homeless people with a learning disability also have a mental health problem.
- 44% of homeless people with a learning disability also have a physical health problem.

Educational need

- 23% of all homeless people have a known educational need (literacy, numeracy or basic skills).
- In addition, 10% have an English language problem.
- 51% of homeless people with an educational need also have a mental health need.
- 22% of homeless people who have an educational need are socially excluded and have no social network.
- 22% of homeless people who have an educational need are socially isolated.

Behavioural Problems

- 22% of homeless people exhibit challenging behaviour.
- 15% of homeless people are socially excluded and have no social network.
- 15% of homeless people are socially isolated.

Challenging behaviour

- 84% of homeless people exhibiting challenging behaviour have substance use problems.
- 58% of homeless people exhibiting challenging behaviour have mental health problems.
- 41% of homeless people exhibiting challenging behaviour have an educational need (literacy, numeracy or basic skills).
- Only 6% of homeless people exhibiting challenging behaviour have no substance use or mental health problem.

Institutional Background

Ex-offenders

- 19% of homeless people are ex-offenders; 91% of homeless ex-offenders have a substance use problem.
- 42% of homeless ex-offenders exhibit challenging behaviour.

Ex-forces

- 3% of homeless people are ex-forces.
- 64% of homeless people who are ex-forces have an alcohol problem.
- 58% of homeless people who are ex-forces have a physical health problem.

Ex-care home

- 6% of homeless people are ex-care home.
- 74% of homeless people who are ex-care home residents have a substance use problem.
- 46% of homeless people who are ex-care home residents are also ex-offenders.

Relationship History

- 7% of homeless people have been affected by domestic violence; 19% by a relationship breakdown and 11% have an abuse history.
- There are large overlaps between homeless people who have been affected by domestic violence, affected by a relationship breakdown and who have an abuse history.
- 71% of homeless people whose homeless status has been affected by a relationship breakdown have substance use problems.

Asylum Seekers

- 8% of homeless people are asylum seekers or refugees. .
- 42% of homeless people who are asylum seekers or refugees are studying or training.

Employment/ Training

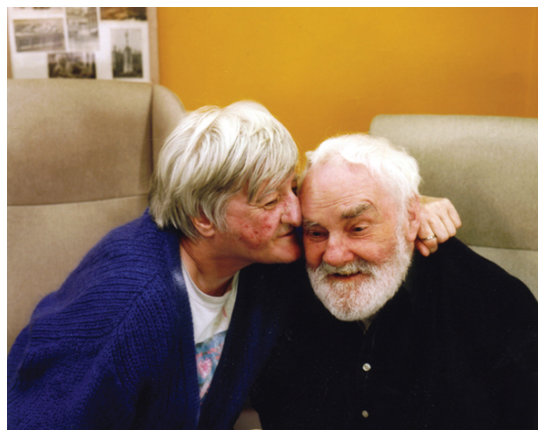
- 7% of homeless people are employed.
- 13% of homeless people are taking part in some studying or training.
- 38% of homeless people take part in some sort of regular activity (this could be social or work related).

Time spent homeless

In a separate question out of 1,194 homeless people, 43% had been homeless more than 2 years prior to entering temporary accommodation.

Time spent homeless	% homeless people
< 2 years	57%
2 – 5 years	23%
5 – 10 years	12%
More than 10 years	8%

Part 2: Survey results from older homeless population

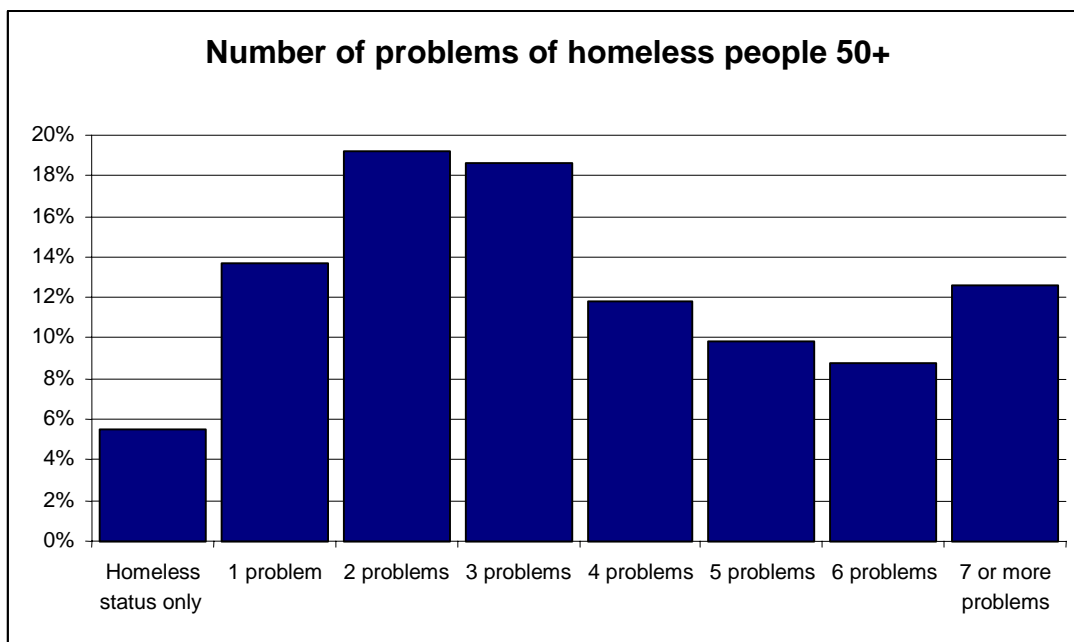


Part 2: Survey results from the older homeless population (50 and over)

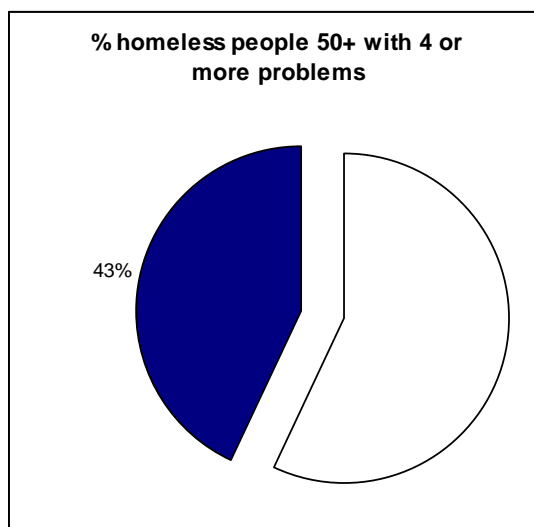
Next of kin and children

- 36% of homeless people who are 50 and over are known to be parents. Of these, 52% have no contact with their children.
- In a separate question, out of 317 homeless people aged 50 and over, 74% had no next of kin details. .
- Out of those homeless people who had next of kin details, at least 13% named someone who was not related to them e.g. a friend, social worker or priest (an additional 11% did not specify their connection to the person named).

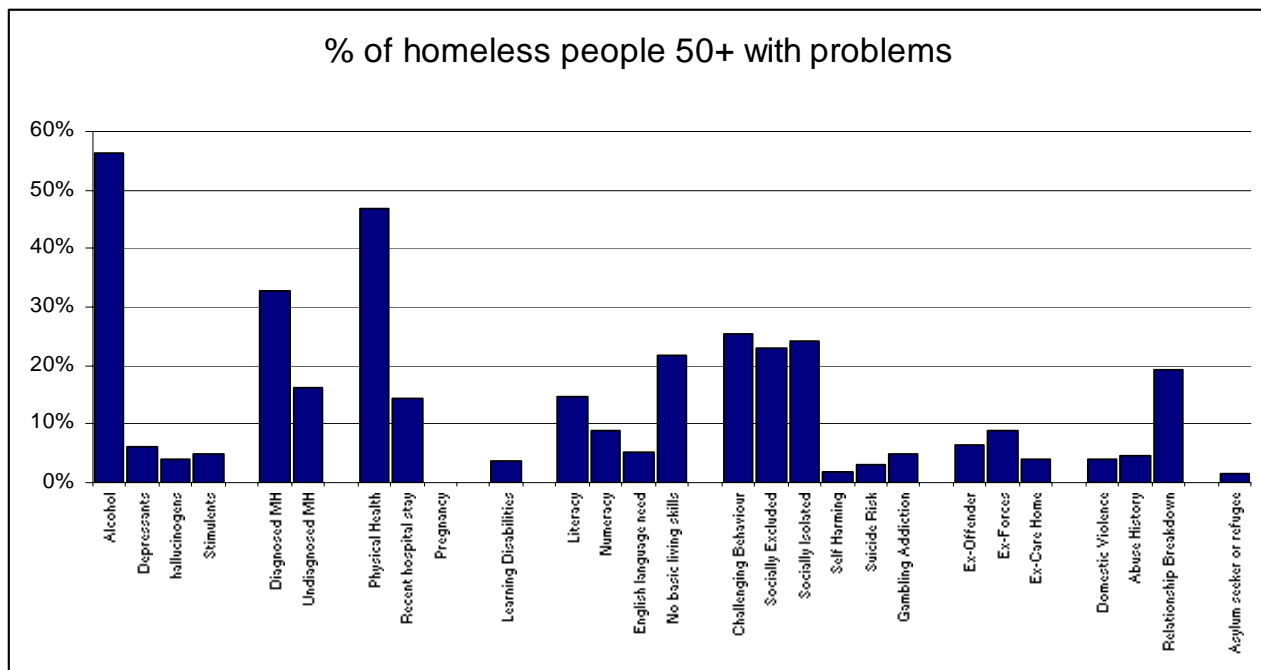
Total numbers of problems of homeless people



- 43% of homeless people aged 50 and over have 4 or more problems as well as the fact they are homeless.



Breakdown of all problems³



Drugs and Alcohol use

- Alcohol problems is the most common problem of homeless people aged 50 and over: alcohol = 56% and drugs = 10%.
- 48% of homeless people aged 50 and over who have a substance use problem also have a mental health problem.
- 56% of homeless people aged 50 and over who have a substance use problem also have a physical health problem.

Mental Health

- 48% of homeless people aged 50 and over have a mental health problem.
- 61% of homeless people aged 50 and over who have a mental health problem also have a substance use problem.
- 50% of homeless people aged 50 and over who have a mental health problem also have a physical health problem.

Physical Health

- 47% of homeless people aged 50 and over have a physical health problem.
- 68% of homeless people aged 50 and over who have a physical health problem also have a substance use problem.
- 45% of homeless people aged 50 and over who have a physical health problem also have a mental health problem.

³ 81% of people will be in more than one category.

Learning Disability

- 4% of homeless people aged 50 and over have a learning disability.
- 100% of homeless people aged 50 and over who have a learning disability also have a substance use problem.
- 100% of homeless people aged 50 and over who have a learning disability also have a mental health problem.
- 62% of homeless people aged 50 and over who have a learning disability also have a physical health problem.

Educational need

- 32% of all homeless people aged 50 and over have a known educational need (literacy, numeracy or basic skills).
- In addition, 5% have an English language problem.
- 61% of homeless people aged 50 and over who have an educational need also have a mental health problem.
- 32% of homeless people aged 50 and over who have an educational need are socially excluded and have no social network.
- 32% of homeless people aged 50 and over who have an educational need are socially isolated.

Behavioural Problems

- 25% of homeless people aged 50 and over exhibit challenging behaviour.
- 23% of homeless people aged 50 and over are socially excluded and have no social network.
- 24% of homeless people aged 50 and over are socially isolated.

Challenging behaviour

- 81% of homeless people aged 50 and over who exhibit challenging behaviour have substance use problems.
- 60% of homeless people aged 50 and over who exhibit challenging behaviour have mental health problems.
- 58% of homeless people aged 50 and over who exhibit challenging behaviour have an educational need (literacy, numeracy or basic skills).

Institutional Background

Ex-offenders

- 6% of homeless people aged 50 and over are ex-offenders.
- 52% of homeless ex-offenders aged 50 and over exhibit challenging behaviour.

Ex-forces

- 9% of homeless people aged 50 and over are ex-forces.
- 69% of homeless people aged 50 and over who are ex-forces have an alcohol problem.
- 69% of homeless people aged 50 and over who are ex-forces have a physical health problem.

Ex-care home

- 4% of homeless people aged 50 and over are ex-care home.
- 60% of homeless people aged 50 and over who are ex-care home residents have a substance use problem.

Relationship History

- 4% of homeless people aged 50 and over have been affected by domestic violence; 19% by a relationship breakdown and 5% have a known abuse history.
- There are large overlaps between homeless people who have been affected by domestic violence, affected by a relationship breakdown and who have an abuse history.
- 66% of homeless people aged 50 and over whose homeless status has been affected by a relationship breakdown have substance use problems.

Asylum Seekers

- 2% of homeless people aged 50 and over are asylum seekers or refugees.

Employment/ Training

- 4% of homeless people aged 50 and over are employed.
- 6% of homeless people aged 50 and over are taking part in some studying or training.
- 35% of homeless people aged 50 and over take part in some sort of regular activity (this could be social or work related).

Time spent homeless

In a separate question out of 1,194 homeless people, 48% of older homeless people (aged 50 and over) more than 2 years prior to entering temporary accommodation.

Time spent homeless	% homeless people
< 2 years	52%
2 – 5 years	20%
5 – 10 years	12%
More than 10 years	17%