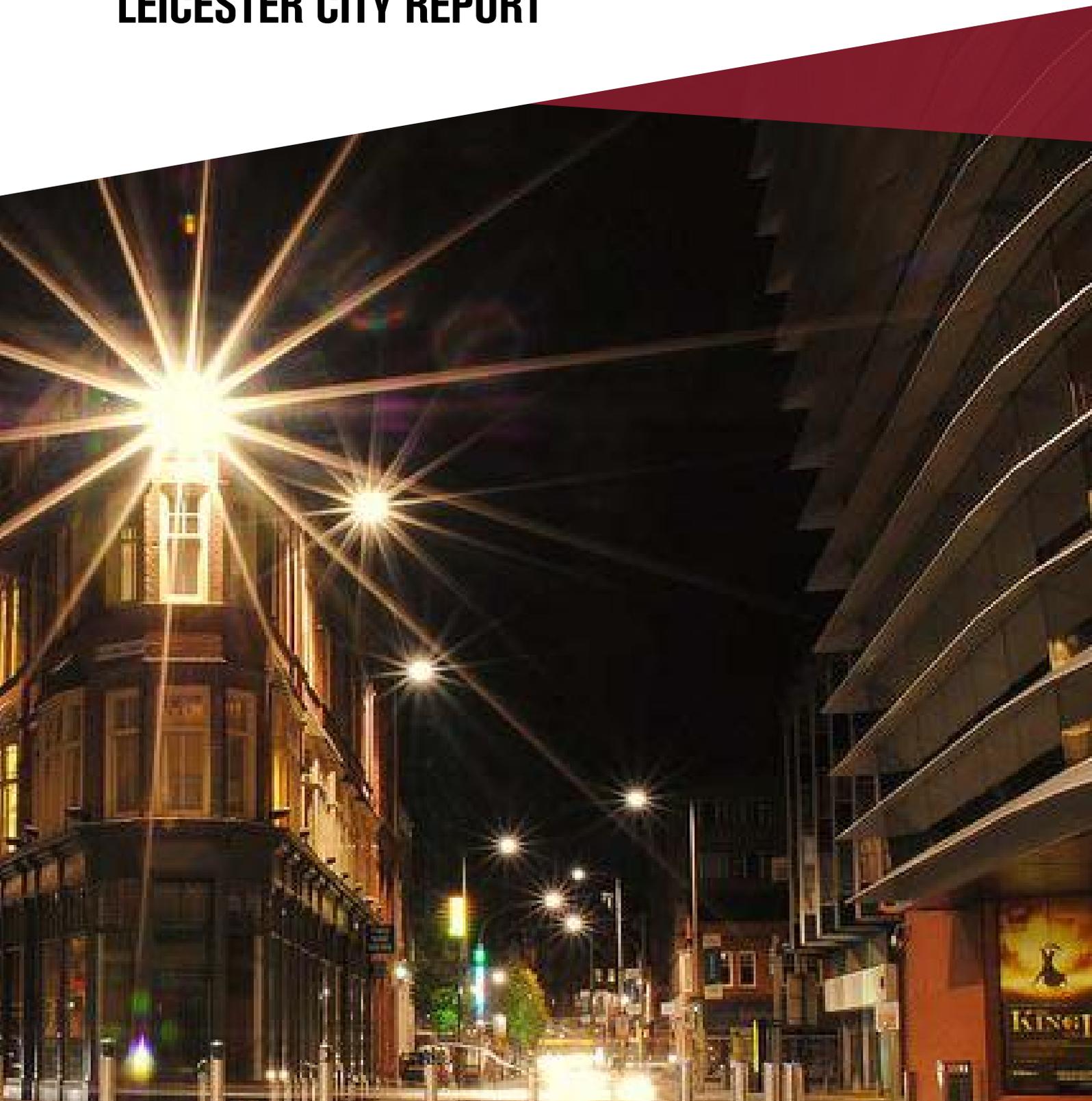




# The European End Street Homelessness Campaign

## LEICESTER CITY REPORT



This report has been written by Jo Richardson, Professor of Housing and Social Research and Director of the Centre for Comparative Housing Research at De Montfort University Leicester.

Electronic copies of this report can be found on the research project webpage [www.dmu.ac.uk/ESHLeics](http://www.dmu.ac.uk/ESHLeics)

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# Executive Summary

## Context

- In 2016 the city council reported an estimate of 36 rough sleepers in Leicester in its return to the Department for Communities and Local Government.
- A national picture (Shelter 2017) of rising street homelessness is indicative of the motivation of cities like Leicester to get involved in a campaign like the European End Street Homelessness Campaign.

## The Approach

- A range of agencies, including De Montfort University (DMU), Action Homeless, the city council and other statutory and charitable bodies came together to sign up to the campaign and to plan for a 'Connections Week' in early November 2017.
- This included a survey and parallel street homelessness count, run with student volunteers from DMU and others overnight on 7<sup>th</sup> November across 18 zones mapped across Leicester.
- The survey is used across European cities and will enable further research and comparison. Some small contextual changes were made to be appropriate for Leicester, but it largely kept to the original. All volunteers undertook mandatory training at DMU before the survey.

## Findings

- Ninety-three homeless people were surveyed in Leicester across Connections Week between 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> November. The findings in the report are based on the ninety-one (91) responses collected in the main exercise from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> November.
- Eighty-three respondents were male and ten were female. The majority were from the UK.
- The majority (95%) of homeless people interviewed had medium to high vulnerability scores.
- The commonest answer in response to the question on where people slept (48 respondents) was 'outdoors'.
- Homeless people in Leicester face multiple and complex health needs with the most severe cases involving physical health, mental health and substance use issues.
- Forty percent (40%) of respondents replied that their homelessness had followed a traumatic episode or experience.
- There was a mixed picture of 'aspiration' and 'hope' with no clear link between levels of hope, age or length of homelessness.

## Conclusions

- Homelessness is a complex issue and requires a multi-layered partnership response.
- The campaign approach and methodology during 'Connections Week' seemed to work well and provide momentum for all the partners to stay on board.
- Homeless people who answered the survey questions were provided with a bed and hot food if they wanted to come in from the street – but longer term solutions are needed for those who have been through the 'revolving door' of hostels and street in previous homeless episodes.

## Recommendations

- The campaign partner agencies continue to work together to maintain momentum and involve the Leicester community in the aim to end street homelessness.
- If the survey runs again next year, the same questions should be asked for comparison, but with some consideration for a few additional open-ended questions, for richer qualitative results.
- The partners work with the social housing sector (specifically emh to start) to trial the model of 'Housing First' and report on progress in future.
- Leicester partners disseminate their results to the wider Leicester community, but also with other Campaign cities.
- Leicester partners follow up with visitors from Glasgow and Sheffield to see how their Connections weeks went, having observed the approach in Leicester.
- The Leicester campaign partners continue to engage with the media (and through social media) to get the positive messages out and to demystify and destigmatise homelessness in our city.
- Observation and research to focus on longer term issues related to behaviours and preferences, and to examine why people may be returning to the streets even where an alternative is offered. Some research on potential issues of loneliness and disconnection, culture and community, would be pertinent in the future.

## Contents

About the End Street Homeless Campaign.....	6
The Context for Homelessness in Leicester.....	8
The Survey.....	10
Methodological approach.....	10
Survey participation and numbers.....	12
Vulnerability Scores.....	16
Homelessness and Vulnerability Scoring.....	16
Demographic Profile of Homeless Respondents.....	18
Histories of Housing and Homelessness.....	21
Figure Ten: Length of Time as Homeless.....	21
Risks and Challenges for People who are Homeless.....	23
Interaction with emergency services.....	23
Risk of harm, exploitation and legal issues.....	24
Getting By – Money, Meaning and Self-care.....	26
Money Management.....	26
Meaningful Daily Activity.....	26
Self-care.....	26
Social Relationships.....	26
Wellness – Physical and Mental Health.....	27
Physical Health.....	27
Substance Use.....	27
Mental Health.....	27
Medications.....	28
Abuse & Trauma.....	28
Homelessness and Health.....	28
Aspirations for the Future.....	29
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	33
Next Steps.....	34
Looking beyond ‘Connections Week’.....	34
De-mystifying Homelessness.....	34
Housing sector offer.....	35

## Table of figures

Figure One: Rough Sleeping in Leicester up to 2016	7
Figure Two: The Zones	12
Figure Three: Data collected between 6 and 10 November 2017	13
Figure Four: Agencies collecting data	13
Figure Five: Survey Locations	13
Figure Six: Vulnerability Scores/ Profile	16
Figure Seven: Gender by overall score	18
Figure Eight: Age by overall score	19
Figure Nine: Country of origin by overall score	20
Figure Ten: Length of Time as Homeless	21
Figure Eleven: Where respondents sleep most frequently	22
Figure Twelve: Interaction with emergency services	23
Figure Thirteen: multiple interactions with emergency services	24
Figure Fourteen: Word-cloud of 'hope for the future'	28
Figure Five: Responses on 'hope'	29
Figure Sixteen: Comparing aspiration codes to amount of time homeless	30
Figure Seventeen: Comparing aspiration codes to age	30
Figure Eighteen: Comparing aspiration codes to gender	31

## About the End Street Homeless Campaign

The End Street Homeless Campaign was developed by *World Habitat*<sup>1</sup> following a peer exchange visit to Los Angeles in 2014 to find out more about their 100,000 Homes Campaign delivered by Community Solutions. World Habitat also cite one of their 2014 award winners – The Y Foundation in Finland – as inspiration. Following partnership discussions with the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless – *FEANTSA*<sup>2</sup> - the End Street Homeless Campaign was born with four cities undertaking a pilot in 2015. In 2016 more cities joined the campaign with ten across Europe involved to date. Leicester should consider itself at the vanguard in terms of looking to new ways to understand and resolve homelessness.

World Habitat state clearly that cities who join the campaign must agree to work to six campaign principles:

- **Housing First:** Ensuring homeless people are housed in permanent, safe, appropriate and affordable housing with the support necessary to sustain it.
- **Knowing who's out there:** Getting to know every homeless person by name by going onto the streets to find them and understand their needs.
- **Tracking progress:** Regularly collecting and sharing person-specific data to accurately track progress toward ending homelessness.
- **Involving the community in solutions:** Many people are concerned about the individuals in their communities who have no roof to sleep under and they want to play a meaningful part in helping to find solutions.
- **Improving local systems:** Building coordinated housing and support systems that are simple to navigate, while targeting resources quickly and efficiently to the people who need it the most.
- **Learning from and sharing with others:** There must be a willingness to contribute to sharing knowledge with other cities whilst also learning from their campaign.

Leicester joined the campaign in 2017 and ran its Connections Week from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> November with some further survey collection on 11<sup>th</sup> November at the Saturday Stop By a project based in St James Church. During this week, teams of professionals and community volunteers went out across the City to engage with rough sleepers and carry out a survey questionnaire. A variety of activities were undertaken and surveys were run across the city all week in hostels, breakfast services and other homeless outreach services.

Staff and Volunteers visited The Bridge Homelessness to Hope's breakfast drop in three times during the week. Surveys were also undertaken throughout the week at the day services provided by the Y Support Project and the Anchor Centre. The Centre Project and the Sound Café also participated in the week's activities.

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly the Building and Social Housing Foundation (BSHF) See further <https://www.world-habitat.org/>

<sup>2</sup> See further <http://www.feantsa.org/en/about-us/what-is-feantsa>

In addition, surveys were carried out in the Dawn Centre and Mayfield House, the main direct access hostels in the city. At both, audits of the residents who had recently slept rough were undertaken and they were also asked to complete the survey.

The week's main event was a city-wide street count on the night of the 7<sup>th</sup> November (between 12am and 3am) run with De Montfort University student volunteers, joined by professionals from a range of agencies, local politicians, plus observers from cities recently joined to the campaign – Glasgow and Sheffield. Over 100 volunteers covered an area of approximately 3 square miles split into 18 zones. The teams used existing knowledge and intelligence (including reports from Streetlink), to survey well-known "hot spots" including car parks, parks and other secluded areas. The zones went north as far as the Space Centre and included Abbey Park to the north and the edge of Victoria Park and Narborough Road in the south of the city. In addition, any reported locations of rough sleepers outside of the area were also included as well as the A&E Department at Leicester Royal Infirmary. On the night of the street count two individuals were given accommodation and others are currently being assessed for accommodation.

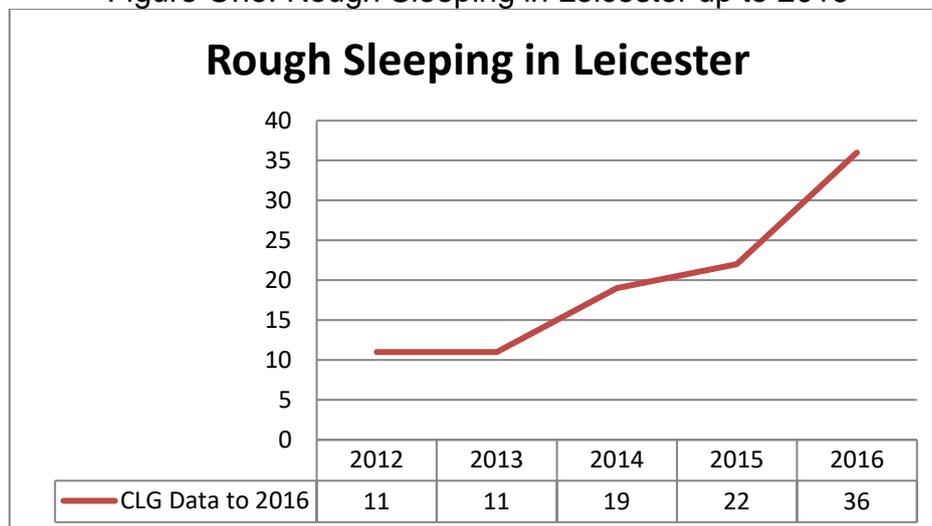
During the wider Connections Week, professional staff also went into abandoned or derelict buildings, parks and other out of the way places to find those who were not visible on the night of 7<sup>th</sup> November. For reasons of student safety, volunteers on the night were not expected to seek out such hidden and derelict places, but they were included in the wider survey during the week with appropriate professionals undertaking the work.

## The Context for Homelessness in Leicester

Homelessness is on the rise across the UK and Leicester city has been no exception. Figures show a year-on-year rise in street homelessness in recent times. The National Audit Office report (2017) referenced national Department for Community and Local Government (CLG) figures showing that: ‘*The number of rough sleepers stood at more than 4,000 in the autumn of 2016, having increased from fewer than 1,800 in the autumn of 2010*’<sup>3</sup>. However, organisations like Shelter would argue this figure doesn’t reflect the current reality. In a report published on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017, the organisation estimated 307,000 people were either sleeping rough or inadequately housed in Britain; the headline of their research was that this equated to one in every 200 people<sup>4</sup>.

The CLG rough sleeping data<sup>5</sup> showed a rise across England; which was also reflected in Leicester:

Figure One: Rough Sleeping in Leicester up to 2016



(CLG Rough Sleeping Statistics, Autumn 2016)

In 2016 the city council reported an estimated figure, based on the data from interactions that various agencies had with homeless people in the city, to Government, that there were 36 rough sleepers in the city. The data itself is not straightforward – different agencies have varying records and estimates of the number of rough sleepers in the city.

Crisis/JRF Monitor (2017)<sup>6</sup> outlined the impact of social policy measures on homelessness across the country, and the recent National Audit Office (2017) report shows the impact of welfare reform measures on increasing homelessness. This is a pressing issue across the country and in our city – such a complex challenge needs a co-ordinated response and the campaign allowed a partnership between DMU, Action Homeless, statutory and civic agencies and, importantly, the wider community

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Homelessness.pdf> pg 5

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/nov/08/one-in-every-200-people-in-uk-are-homeless-according-to-shelter>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness#homelessness-summary-local-authority-level-tables>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/homelessness-monitor-england-2017>

to work together to better understand the issues and to try to find solutions towards the aim to end street homelessness.

The charity Action Homeless has stated that over the past few years, there has been a growing realisation that the approach for getting individuals, who are chronically homeless, off the streets needs to be rethought:

*Too often, we expect people, who have complex and challenging needs, to jump through our hoops to prove that they are ready for housing. In actuality what they really need first is a roof over their heads and a place to call home. There is also a growing recognition that in order to tackle homelessness the whole community must come together to help those in need. The aim is to get to know every street homeless person by name, to understand their needs and background and to build up a picture of what support they need to get off the streets. The City wide survey gives us the most accurate picture of just how many people need our help and is the first full count in Leicester for 16 years. (Mark Grant, CEO, Action Homeless)*

Over the past six months, organisations and groups have been coming together to respond to the crisis and have adapted the principles of the European End Street Homeless campaign. The 'Connections Week' undertaken in November is seen as just the first step in this journey and it is hoped and anticipated that the partnership that has developed between the charities, statutory agencies and De Montfort University will continue into future years collecting and analysing data for this project.

## The Survey

Numbers of homeless people nationally have been on the rise. Participation in a survey and an actual count, rather than an estimate, in Leicester was an important step to better understanding who was homeless in Leicester. There was a determination in Leicester that, in working together across organisations and groups, there was a better chance of resolving the problems in the city.

The European End Street Homelessness Campaign cities use a common survey framework to allow for future comparative analysis and peer learning from findings across cities. The Leicester approach adapted questions so that they sounded right in the context of Leicester, but stuck closely to the frame. The survey consisted of 36 questions, nearly all closed multi-choice or yes/no responses, save for the final question on hopes for the future.

In addition to the survey which was used throughout the 'Connections Week' from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> November, there was a parallel count taking place during the night of 7<sup>th</sup> November, with a CLG verifier present. The definition for the official government count data, from CLG<sup>7</sup>, is quite narrow:

*Rough sleepers are defined for the purposes of rough sleeping counts and estimates as:*

- *people sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments)*
- *people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or 'bashes').*

*The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or travellers.*

During Connections Week, those who had not been seen sleeping rough on the night of the count were also captured in the other service that they use, such as day centres where they can access or food or advice. Those who were also in hostel, but had slept rough in the past 6 months were also surveyed by the campaign. Running the official overnight street count alongside the broader Connections Week survey allowed for a fuller, more realistic picture.

## Methodological approach

On the night, the city of Leicester was divided into 18 zones, devised by the council and other agencies and taking the survey area as wide as possible and including the latest intelligence on where homeless people had been sighted. Each zone had a team leader who was a professional from one of a number of agencies, but who had expert practical knowledge of working with homeless people. With each team leader was a small group of volunteers comprising largely of students from De Montfort

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions>

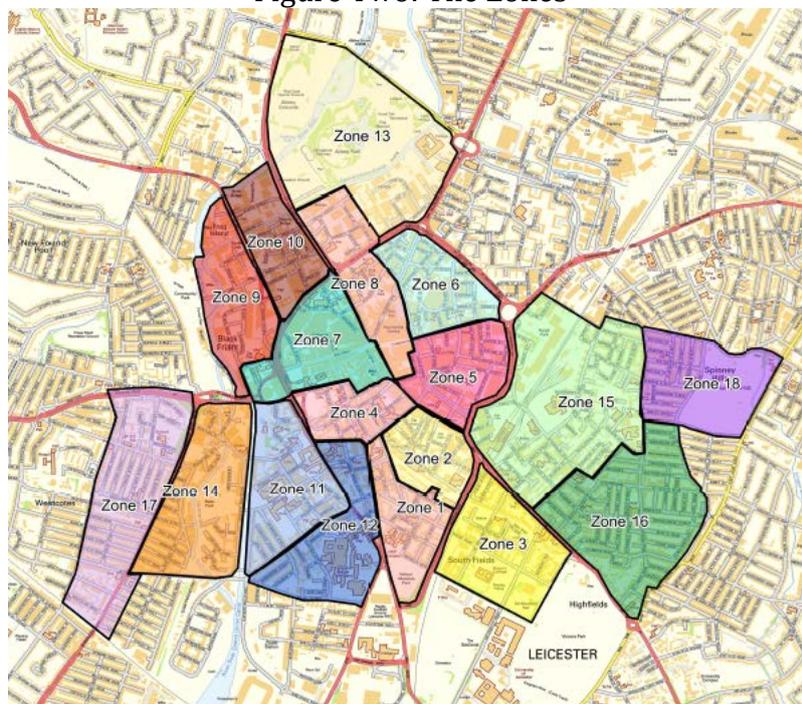
University, but also professionals from housing associations, local councillors, including the deputy Mayor. Such wide participation was crucial to a key aspect of the campaign – to embed the principles and understanding into the community and to work on a community response. Students volunteered through the #DMULocal project team and were asked in what capacity they wanted to work (survey on the night, or data inputting during the week).



Student volunteers undertaking mandatory training session at DMU.

All team leaders undertook mandatory training over a two hour session, to familiarise themselves with the survey, the zones, the consent form and the principles of the campaign. Additionally health and safety information and double checking on risk mitigation measures was also part of the training. Student and community volunteers were required to attend one of two training session dates where they practiced asking survey questions, asked questions about homeless issues, and watched a campaign video.

Figure Two: The Zones



Survey data was input onto a spreadsheet held by Action Homeless during the week, it was analysed during the weekend and a report was written up in time for a community dissemination event hosted by De Montfort University on 15<sup>th</sup> November. The qualitative analysis tool NVIVO was used to further evaluate the data and feed into key findings in this report.

## Survey participation and numbers

Overall there were 91 surveys completed across the Connections Week from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> November. In addition, two more surveys were completed during a Saturday morning club; many of the services users on the morning of Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November were from the wider European Union countries with no local connection. The data pictured overleaf, and in the remainder of the report is based on the 91 responses collected between 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> November.

Figure Three: Data collected between 6 and 10 November 2017

Date	00:00 – 05:59	06:00 – 11:59	12:00 – 17:59	18:00 – 23:59	Total
6th	20				20
7th	10	1	1	3	15
8th	9	1	4	1	15
9th	11	5	0	8	24
10th	15	2	0	0	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>91</b>

Figure Four: Agencies collecting data

Interviewer's Agency	Volunteer	Staff	Total
Action Homeless	4	10	14
The Bridge	3	0	3
Anchor Centre	0	8	8
Dawn Centre	0	12	12
DMU	9	0	9
LCC	0	3	3
THE Y (Leicester YMCA)	0	2	2
Y Support Project	8	12	20
Not mentioned	10	10	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>91</b>

Figure Five: Survey Locations

Survey Location	Total
Action Homeless (Accommodation)	9
The Bridge	9
Anchor Centre	8
Dawn Centre	5
Restart	11
The Y (Accommodation)	4
Y Support Project	30
Street Count	3
Not mentioned	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>

Additionally, the official street count took place on 7<sup>th</sup> November and found the figures to be close to the estimate provided in 2016. 31 people were counted by the campaign team as sleeping rough on the night of 7<sup>th</sup> November, and a few of those approached were 'brought in' on their request to get some hot food and a bed for the night. It was vital to the character of the Leicester campaign that offers to bring people in off the street were made that night, to provide immediate temporary solutions, as well as to find facts.

7<sup>th</sup> November was a rainy day, right into the evening up to 9pm, it was also cold and very wet on the ground. It is possible that in such weather conditions that people with nowhere to stay had found places tucked away in empty buildings and other hidden places. 'Hotspots' and sightings were recorded in the lead up to the week and it was planned into the campaign that team leaders throughout the Connections Week would visit the spaces that might not have been accessible or safe for volunteers to enter overnight on 7<sup>th</sup> November.

31 homeless people were counted in the city; this shows a slight decline on the 2016 figures submitted by the council to DCLG – 36 – but it should be noted that figure was an estimate. It should also be noted that the conditions on the night of 7<sup>th</sup> November were very wet underfoot and this may have had an impact on the number of people counted that night. A number of people who are known to the agencies to be rough sleeping were not officially counted on the night, as they were still walking around or not bedded down; this is more to do with strict guidance around the actual count parameters than actual numbers of homeless people in Leicester.

Few respondents wanted to complete a full survey that night. In many cases the full reasons for non-participation were not recorded, team leaders fed back verbally to base at the end of the night that in most cases people were about to bed down and did not want to be disturbed. During the remainder of the week, surveys were administered at a day centre and there was surveying undertaken on breakfast mornings in venues across the city; this was found to be a better opportunity to ask more detailed questions than surveys of individuals on the dark, wet night on 7<sup>th</sup> November.

Many of those counted in the official figure of 31 were asleep, leaflets were left for those who were sleeping to let them know we had visited and where they could access core service support. One group completed 4 surveys in their zone and all respondents were offered accommodation for the evening, of those offered one said he was going to get some socks and never returned, Two people - a male and female - said they were going to see if they could access a squat (not identified) and if not would be interested in coming in for the night, they did not return and the assumption made was that they did enter the squat for the evening. Additionally, one women was found at 1.15am by another group in a city centre zone near a main transport hub; this Eastern European national had been sitting in a taxi cab with the driver - who had offered this option while he was not working to keep warm and who alerted the survey team to her plight. This homeless woman was offered overnight accommodation at the Dawn Centre Women's dormitory, she was picked up by the roving HUB team, and offered a hot meal and drinks before going to bed that night; she was already known to services and had accessed a dormitory bed at the Women's dormitory before.

One man was found, who is a known rough sleeper by the services, wandering the streets and was asked if he wanted to come in for the night. He accepted and was offered a bed at 1.45am at Action Homeless Mayfield House. After spending three hours getting warm having a hot meal and drink he left the hostel to return to the streets. This man is known to the services and has stayed in hostels before. There is a separate piece of work which is needed, and which this report recommends, to focus on longer term issues related to behaviours and preferences, and to examine why people may be returning to the streets even where an alternative is offered. Some research on potential issues of loneliness and disconnection, culture and community, would be pertinent in the future.

The team administering the surveys did find people, say at a day centre morning provision who had also been to an alcohol project where they had completed a survey. Surveys were not administered twice, in order to avoid double counting, but this finding does show that people are accessing and are able to access many services across the city each day.

The survey and the Connections Week was not just about data collection, but instead about really listening to homeless people and involving the community. The campaign in Leicester was also proactive – offering help and support to anyone who wanted it:

*Anyone found during the week who wanted to come off the street was offered accommodation and support and we hope this will be the first step in achieving the target of ending rough sleeping in Leicester by 2020. (Mark Grant, CEO, Action Homeless)*

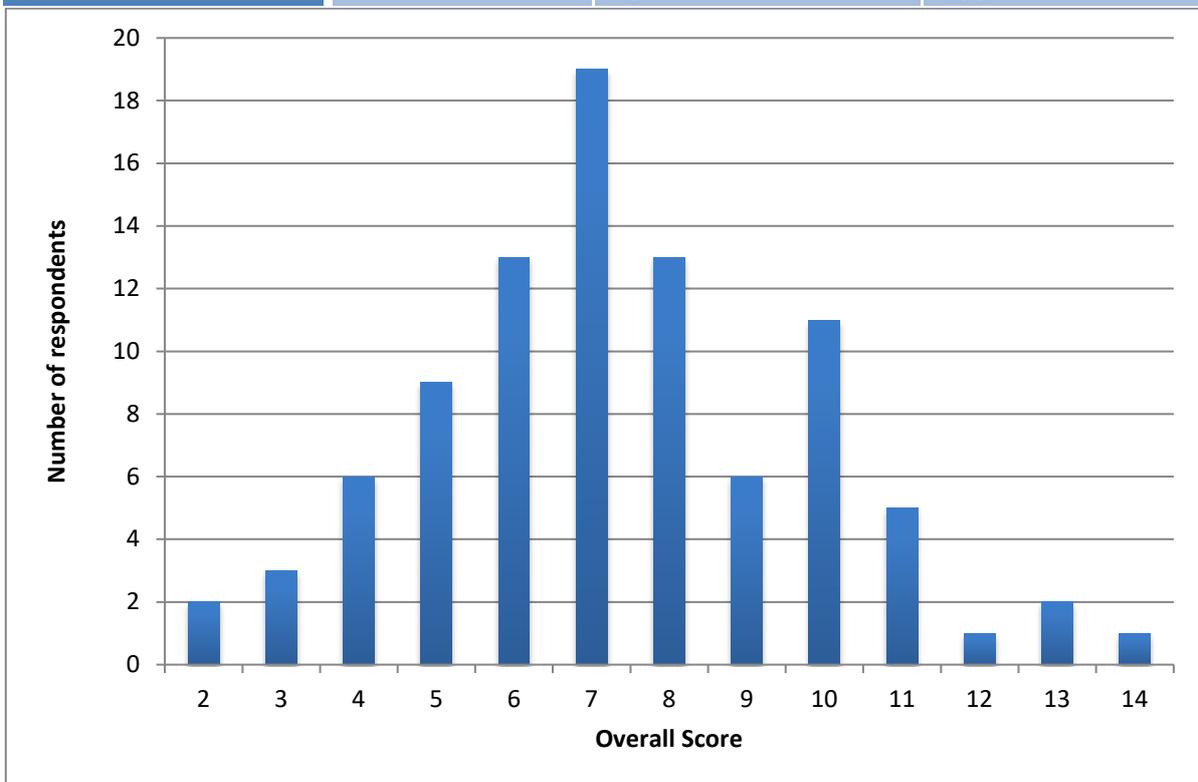
# Vulnerability Scores

## Homelessness and Vulnerability Scoring

The Campaign survey includes a method for scoring the vulnerability of respondents in order to prioritise resources and agency responses to need. The table and figure below show that in Leicester, only a handful of respondents were of low vulnerability. The large proportion of responses showed either medium (47) or high (39) levels of vulnerability.

Figure Six: Vulnerability Scores/ Profile

Overall Score		Number of respondents	%
0-3		5	5%
4-7		47	52%
8 +		39	43%



Leicester has been involved in proactive approaches to prevent entrenched homelessness. *No Second Night Out (NSNO)* was launched in December 2013 for all the services to work together to deal with the homelessness problem in the City. Action Homeless and The Leicester YMCA took the lead in applying to the fund to implement NSNO in Leicester with the City Council coming on board following pressure from Central Government to reduce rough sleeping in the City.

The NSNO – Leicester project brings together Leicester City Council, Leicestershire Constabulary and several voluntary sector organisations<sup>8</sup> together to form the Homeless Leicester Partnership (HeLP) Board under the leadership of Action Homeless.

Together the services involved, developed a NSNO Pathway for Leicester that:

- Ensures rough sleepers can access shelter and support,
- Ensures an effective assessment of need, and;
- Ensures a Single Service Offer (SSO) via the Single Point Of Access and Referral located within the Dawn Centre.

The NSNO approach in Leicester provides one explanation for the relatively low numbers of low vulnerability respondents. The partnership approach and single service offer are providing a response to individuals who become newly homeless, to try to prevent a second night out.

The figures above do show a high proportion of homeless people in Leicester have medium to high vulnerability issues, requiring a partnership response to helping people with complex and multiple needs off the streets in sustainable accommodation.

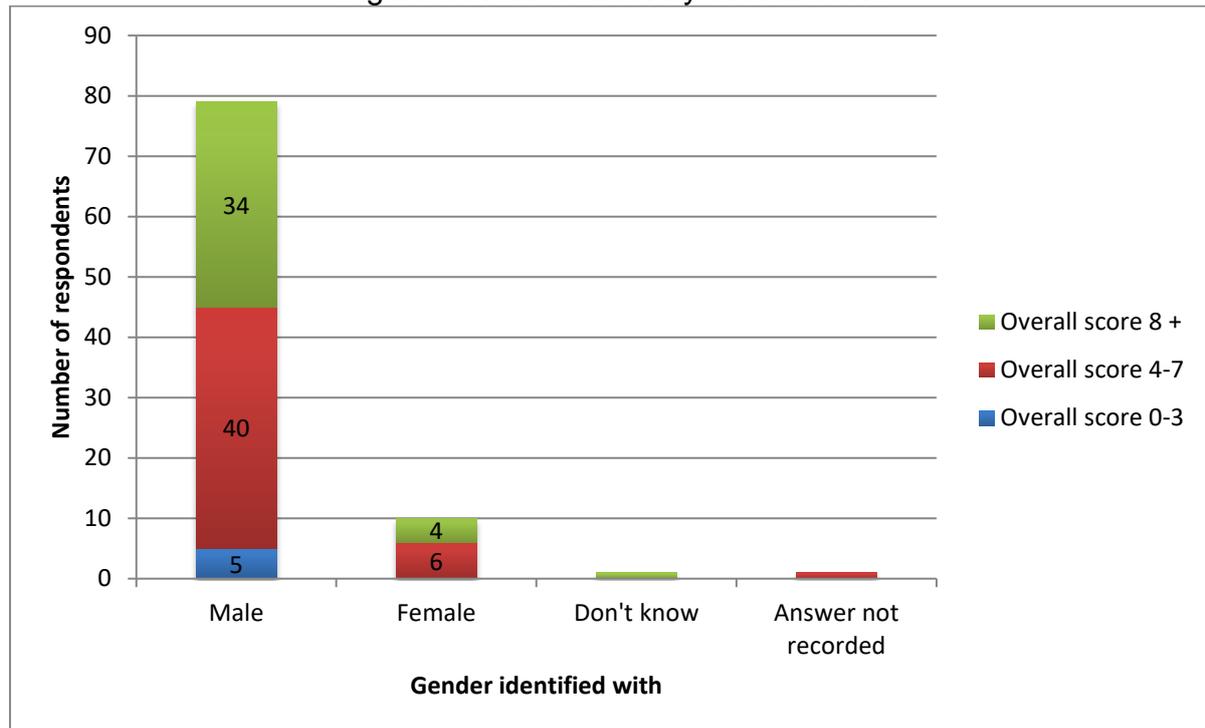
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<sup>8</sup> Action Homeless, Leicester YMCA, LCPT (NIEBO Project), Leicestershire Cares, Inclusion Healthcare. LCC & SHARP

## Demographic Profile of Homeless Respondents

The majority of Leicester survey respondents were men over the age of 30 who originated from the UK. 79 respondents were male, 10 female, with two not responding to this question. The two further surveys completed at the Saturday morning club were both men, over the age of 30, from the UK, both with entrenched patterns of homelessness and reporting two years and three years respectively since their last stable accommodation.

Figure Seven: Gender by overall score

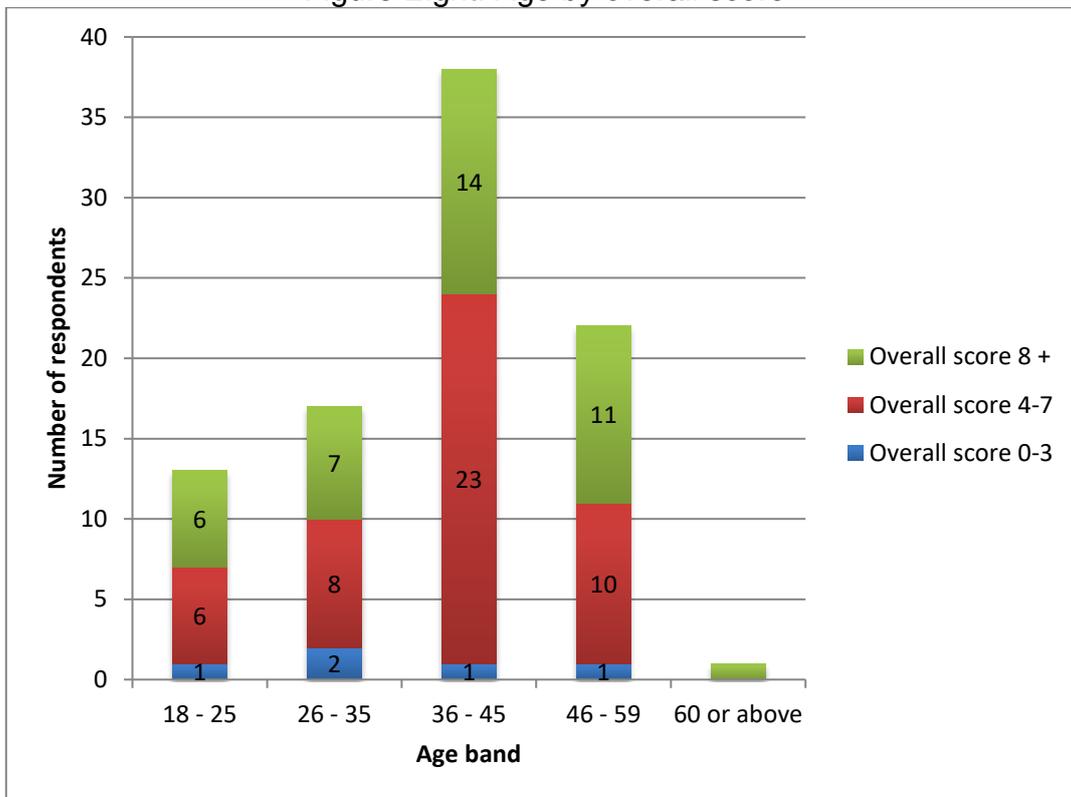


What gender do you identify with	Overall score 0-3	Overall score 4-7	Overall score 8+	
Male	6%	51%	43%	87%
Female	0%	60%	40%	11%
Don't know	0%	0%	100%	1%
Answer not recorded	0%	100%	0%	1%
	5%	52%	43%	100%

The survey also asked respondents how they defined their sexuality. 85 of the 91 said they identified as heterosexual, 4 as bisexual, 1 responded as 'don't know' and another declined to answer.

The chart below shows the distribution of respondents by age, but also includes stratification within each age band of the overall vulnerability scoring.

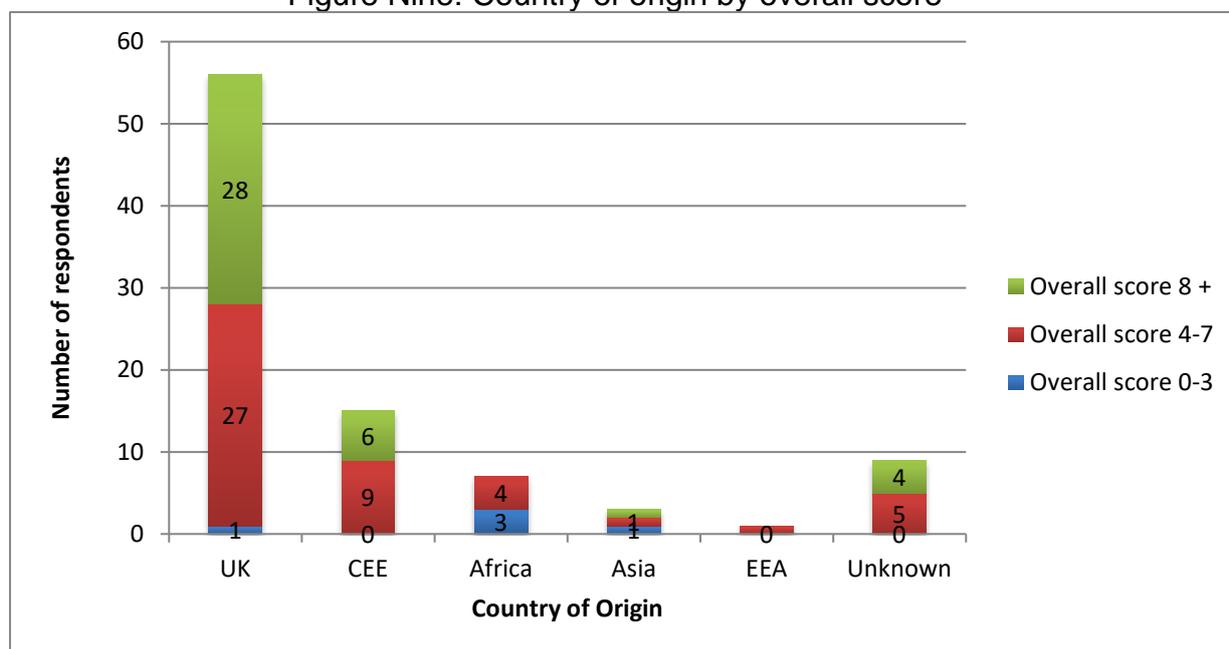
Figure Eight: Age by overall score



Age band	Overall score 0-3	Overall score 4-7	Overall score 8+	
18 - 25	8%	46%	46%	14%
26 - 35	12%	47%	41%	19%
36 - 45	3%	61%	37%	42%
46 - 59	5%	45%	50%	24%
60 or above	0%	0%	100%	1%
	5%	52%	43%	100%

The majority of respondents to the survey were from the UK.

Figure Nine: Country of origin by overall score



Country of origin	Overall score 0-3	Overall score 4-7	Overall score 8+	
<b>UK</b>	2%	48%	50%	62%
<b>CEE (Central &amp; Eastern Europe)</b>	0%	60%	40%	16%
<b>Africa</b>	43%	57%	0%	8%
<b>Asia</b>	33%	33%	33%	3%
<b>EEA (European Economic Area)</b>	0%	100%	0%	1%
<b>Unknown</b>	0%	56%	44%	10%
	5%	52%	43%	100%

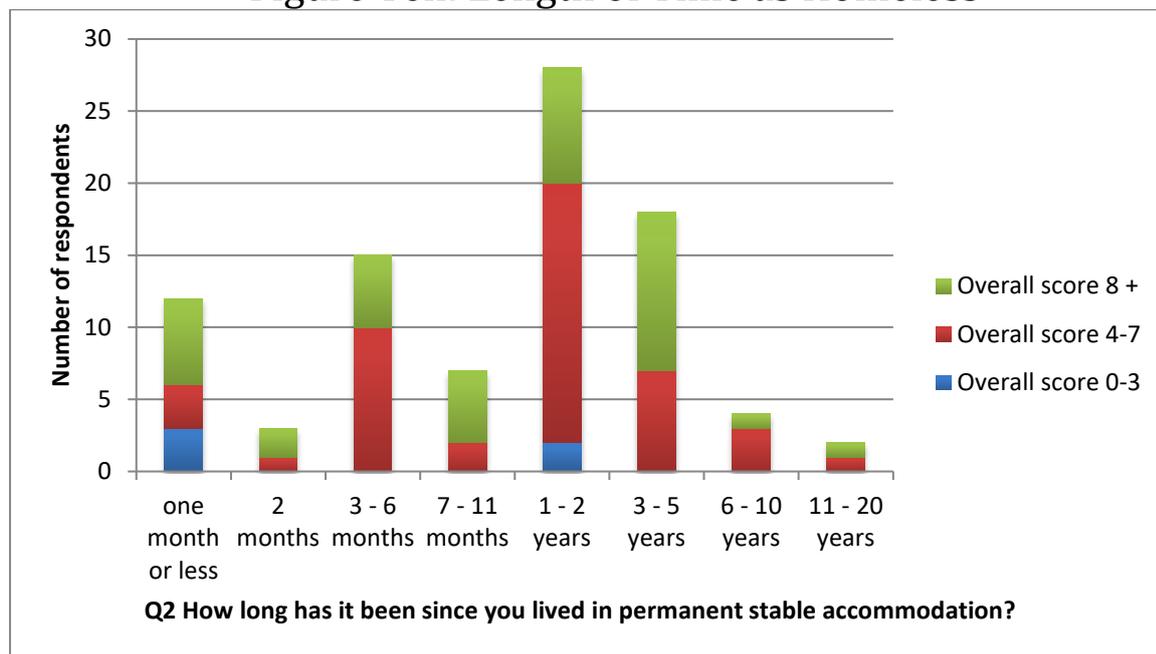
Of those who responded that they were not from the UK, eight were from Poland, four from Latvia, three from India, three from Kenya, two from Slovakia, two from Somalia, one from South Sudan, one from Tanzania, and one from Portugal. These figures on country of origin are further stratified against vulnerability scores above. Respondents originating from outside the UK tended to have medium to high vulnerability scores.

People were also asked whether they were a recent immigrant or refugee to the UK. Of the 91 responses, seven said yes, one said they didn't know and five people did not have a recorded response for this question. All of the seven people who said they were recent immigrants or refugees stated that they had been in the country for at least three years.

## Histories of Housing and Homelessness

The campaign survey asked basic questions about the length of time it had been since the respondent had stable accommodation. Each individual's understanding of stable accommodation may be different of course, in many cases this will be rented or owned accommodation in the private or social sector. For some though, stable accommodation in the context of a chaotic life, could be interpreted as a shorter term hostel arrangement.

Figure Ten: Length of Time as Homeless



How long? (time bands)	Overall score 0-3	Overall score 4-7	Overall score 8+	
one month or less	25%	25%	50%	13%
2 months	0%	33%	67%	3%
3 - 6 months	0%	67%	33%	16%
7 - 11 months	0%	29%	71%	8%
1 - 2 years	7%	64%	29%	31%
3 - 5 years	0%	39%	61%	20%
6 - 10 years	0%	75%	25%	4%
11 - 20 years	0%	50%	50%	2%
Unknown	0%	100%	0%	2%
	5%	52%	43%	100%

People were also asked where they slept most frequently. The commonest answer was 'outdoors' (48 respondents) but some responses gave more detail as shown in the chart below.

Figure Eleven: Where respondents sleep most frequently

Where do you sleep most frequently?	Number of respondents
Outdoors incl. parks, cars or public transport	48
Homeless hostel	15
Temporary structure incl. squat, derelict factory	11
Housing that is not your home	7
Supported housing & private rent	6
Winter/Night Shelters	2
Hospital	2

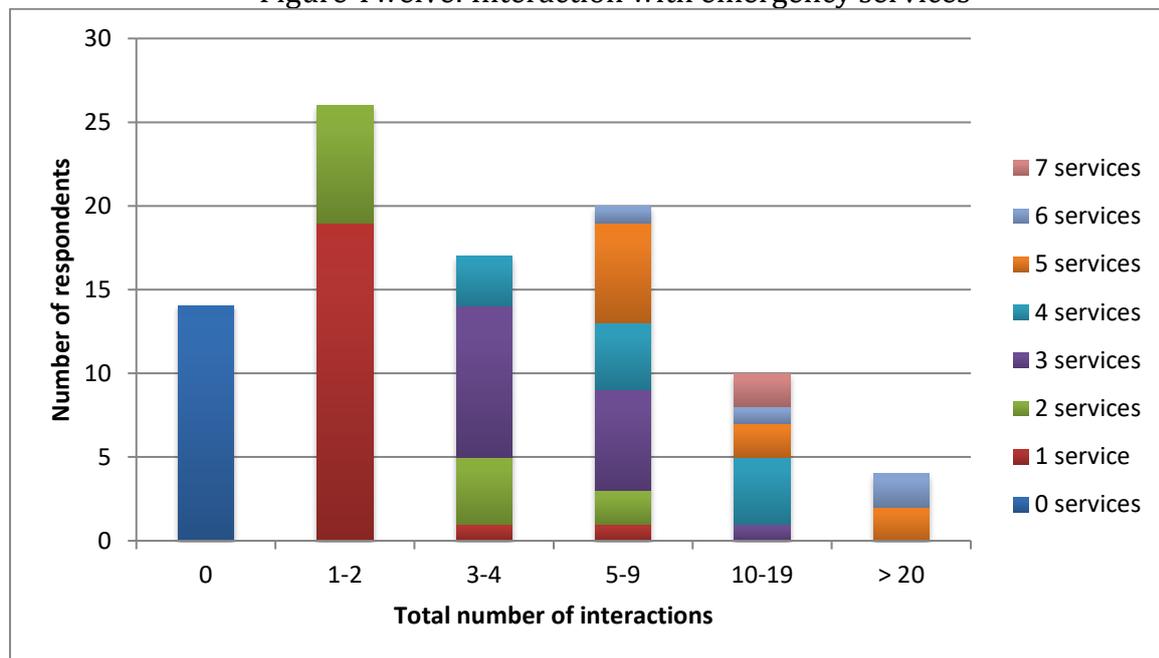
Respondents were also asked how many times they had been homeless and how many times they had slept rough. Answers varied – one person said it had been seven months since they had stable accommodation, they'd been homeless once - most frequently sleeping in homeless hostels in that period of homelessness, but had slept rough 30 times. Another said it had been up to four years since they'd had stable accommodation and that they'd slept rough through-out that period, mostly often in a squat or derelict factory and another said it was over 7 years since they had been in stable accommodation and during that time they had mostly slept rough.

## Risks and Challenges for People who are Homeless

There are a number of risks and challenges faced by people who are homeless. A broad understanding of the issues related to complexity and vulnerability can be seen in the collected/ group scores on vulnerability. However, it is important to drill down into the data and the individual question responses for the most accurate picture on vulnerability to risk.

### Interaction with emergency services

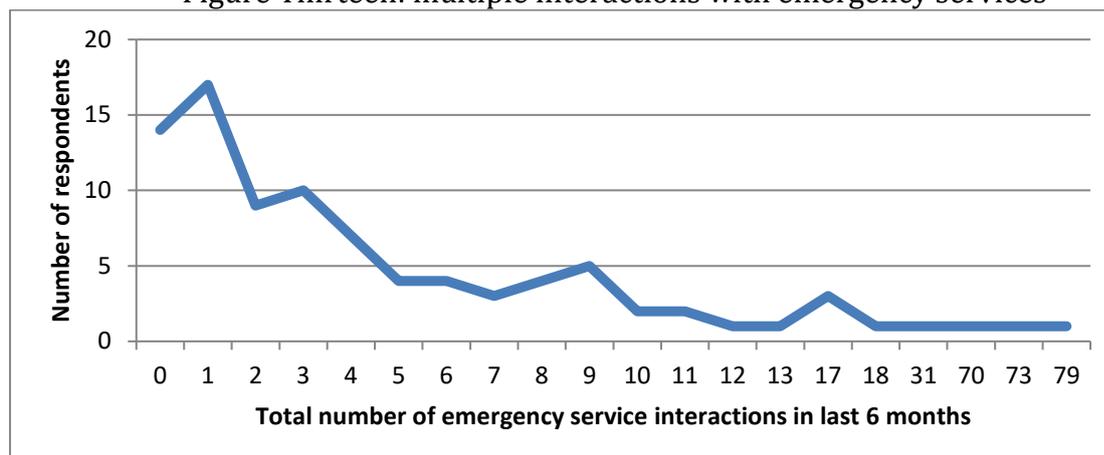
Figure Twelve: Interaction with emergency services



The survey had seven questions about numbers of times a service has been used in the last six months and scores one (1) if the total number of interactions is 4 or more. This chart shows the distribution of the number of interactions and whether these were spread over many services.

Fourteen respondents had zero interactions. Twenty-six (26) respondents had fewer than three interactions, Seventeen (17) had between three and four interactions, Twenty (20) respondents replied that they had 5-9 interactions, Ten people had between 10-19 interactions over the last six months, and four respondents had many interactions with emergency services, separate responses amongst these four showed 31, 70, 73 and 79 interactions respectively. The chart shows that with the exception of these last four respondents, the interactions were spread across a reasonable number of services.

Figure Thirteen: multiple interactions with emergency services



The graphs above show a more detailed picture of complexity of need, in relation to interaction with emergency services, based on individual survey responses, compared to the wider banding shown in the vulnerability scores in the earlier section of this report.

Within the survey question on interaction with emergency services, the agencies specifically included are: Accident and Emergency in hospital, ambulance to hospital, mental health services, domestic violence services, police related to being a witness or a victim or a perpetrator of crime, in police custody or prison, or moved along by police. Within the overall figures are illustrations of some chaotic lives. One respondent had been homeless ‘too many times’. He said he had been in hospital as an inpatient multiple times in the last six months and on many of those occasions had been taken in an ambulance; he had long term health conditions, had not been attacked on the street but had been threatened with harm. This was one of the more severe cases of interactions with emergency health services in the homeless cohort in Leicester who responded to the survey.

## Risk of harm, exploitation and legal issues

A third of respondents said they had been attacked or beaten up since they’d become homeless/ started rough sleeping: 34% said yes to this question, with 66% replying no. A similar pattern emerged in response to the question of whether a respondent had tried to harm themselves or anyone else in the last year with 31% replying yes, and 68% replying no. In terms of criminal history, 80% said they did not have a previous criminal history which was making it difficult for them to find housing.

The survey also asked about pressure and risk. 81% of respondents said that they did not think anyone forced or pressured them to do things they didn’t want to do. There were a couple of non-responses to this question. 17% though answered yes – that they were forced or pressured to do things they didn’t want to. Related to this, on risky behaviour, whilst the majority said they did not do things considered to be risky, 12% did reply yes – they undertook risky behaviour, such as the exchange of

sex for money, running drugs, having unprotected sex with a stranger, sharing a needle or similar behaviour.

## Getting By – Money, Meaning and Self-care

This part of the report brings together a number of sections on the survey form which deal with socialisation and daily function, including money management.

### Money Management

When asked whether there was a person to whom the respondent thought they owed money (examples given in the question were previous landlord, business, bookie, dealer or government group like the DWP) the responses were broadly split with 47% saying yes, they owed money and 53% saying no.

People were also asked about income, either through benefits, cash in hand work, or regular employment. 70% responded that they did receive benefits or other income and 30% said no.

### Meaningful Daily Activity

The survey asked homeless people if they were involved in any planned activities that made them feel happy and fulfilled. Just one-third (33%) of respondents said yes they were involved in meaningful daily activities; and two-thirds responded in the negative to this question. This is not uncommon (similar response rates found in other campaign cities, e.g. Westminster) and reflects the survival nature of homelessness; reflecting on Maslow's (1943)<sup>9</sup> theory of human motivation it would seem very challenging to feel fulfilled without secure shelter.

### Self-care

In spite of earlier answers in the survey denoting survival approaches to daily life, the majority of respondents (89%) said that they were able to take care of their basic needs like bathing, changing clothes, using a toilet, getting food and clean water. However 11% of those questioned were not able to take care of such basic needs.

### Social Relationships

When asked about possible causal relationship factors contributing towards homelessness, the response again was broadly split. 58% said that they felt a relationship break-down or an abusive or unhealthy relationship, or the actions of a friend or family member resulting in eviction had been a precursor to their homelessness. 42% said 'no' – previous relationship issues had not in their opinion been a cause of homelessness.

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<sup>9</sup> Maslow, A. H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-96.

## Wellness – Physical and Mental Health

The survey responses showed a range of physical and mental health issues and there were some examples of tri-morbidity where respondents had physical, mental and substance abuse issues. One such example – a person who felt they would have difficulty maintaining housing because of substance misuse issues and who had previously been evicted from accommodation because of mental health issues. Another respondent had physical health issues and had previously been evicted because of mental health. A number of people had varying mixes of health issues – three respondents said yes to a number of questions denoting complex cases of physical and mental health issues, alongside substance misuse issues.

### Physical Health

Nine percent (9%) of people surveyed said they had had to leave a flat, hostel or other place they were staying because of their physical health (90% replied that they had not). Over a quarter of respondents (26%) reported long term physical health issues like asthma, arthritis, diabetes, or problems with liver, kidneys, stomach, lungs or heart (73% did not). When asked whether they had any physical disabilities that would limit the type of housing they could access, or would make it difficult to live independently because they would need help – 19% replied yes this was the case, with 81% saying no. One notable response related to health in the survey was in response to the question on whether a person, when feeling sick or unwell, would avoid asking for help – 55% said they would avoid asking for help with 44% saying they wouldn't avoid asking for some form of help or intervention.

A specific question for women on the form asked: are you currently pregnant? Only ten respondents overall were women. Of these, one female respondent replied that she was pregnant. Analysing across the responses, this person also had issues with mental health, had been prescribed medication that she was not currently taking and felt that her homelessness had been triggered by a traumatic experience such as domestic violence, physical or emotional abuse. This was another example of a complex case requiring a joined up response to a variety of issues.

### Substance Use

When asked about substance use, nearly a quarter (21%) said they had been evicted from a hostel or other accommodation because of drinking and drug use. In a further question, 15% said they thought it would be difficult to stay housed, or to afford housing because of drinking or drug use.

### Mental Health

Just over a quarter of respondents (27%) said they had either had trouble maintaining their housing, or they'd been evicted from accommodation, because of a mental health issue or concern. Further detailed questions were asked related to this – including whether there had been trouble maintaining housing because of a past head injury: Nine percent of respondents answered yes to this question; and in a similarly worded question asking about learning difficulties that might have made

maintaining accommodation or avoiding eviction problematic, 11% responded yes. In a final question linked to mental health, people were asked if they had any mental health issues that would make it hard for them to live independently because they would need help – nearly a third of people (28%) replied yes.

## Medications

Homelessness was shown to be linked to the ability of people to take care of their own health issues through medication. When asked if there were any medications that a doctor said they should be taking that, for whatever reason, they were not – over a quarter replied yes. 26% of people responded that they were not taking medication that they ought to be. Additionally, a number of people (9%) said that they did take prescription medication but not in the way it had been prescribed, or indeed sold the medication they had been prescribed and were therefore not taking it.

## Abuse & Trauma

Forty percent (40%) of respondents said that their current period of homelessness had been caused by a traumatic experience, such as domestic violence, or some other kind of physical or emotional abuse.

## Homelessness and Health

The causes and consequences of homelessness are clearly multi-faceted and when looking at the links with health, it is evident that health issues (particularly mental health issues) can be a trigger (particularly when linked to substance use) to homelessness. It is also clear that homelessness causes poor health and exacerbates existing health conditions.



More details on the 'hope' responses can be seen in the figure below:

Figure Fifteen: Responses on 'hope'

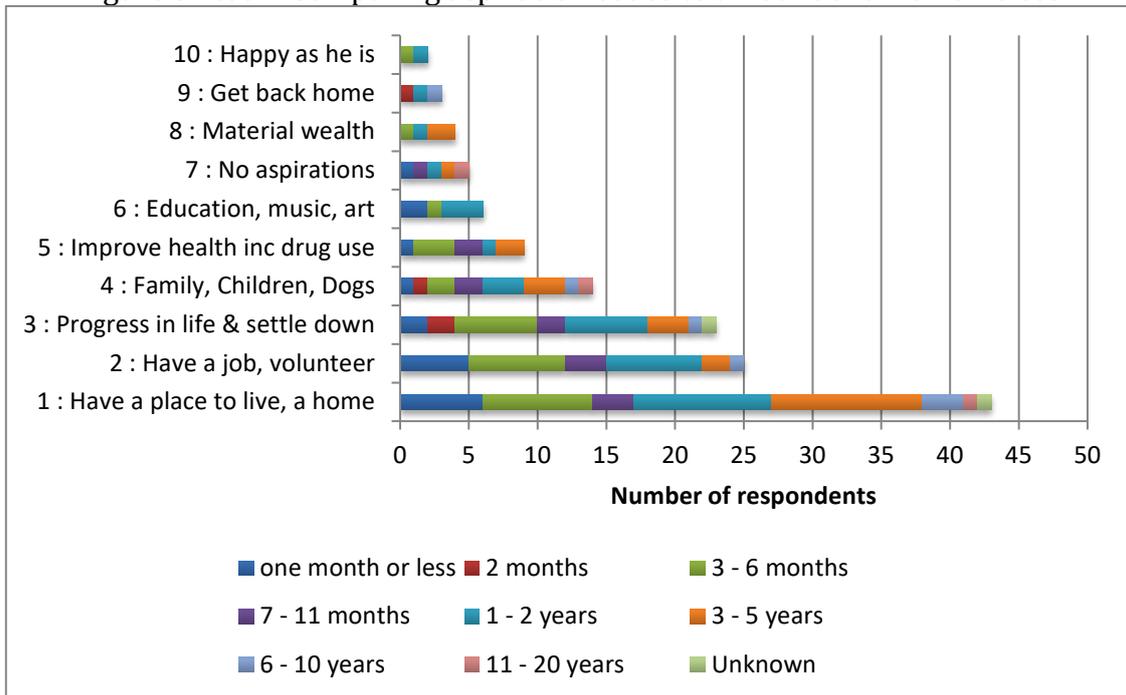
	Q36
1 : Have a place to live, a home	43
2 : Have a job, volunteer	25
3 : Progress in life & settle down	23
4 : Family, Children, Dogs	14
5 : Improve health incl. drug use	9
6 : Education, music, art	6
7 : No aspirations	5
8 : Material wealth	4
9 : Get back home	3
10 : Happy as he is	2

Some direct quotes in response to this question were recorded on the survey forms. Not all responses were hopeful:

- Get happy life off the street /house/home, things like that (Male, 46 – 59, 7 – 11 months homeless)
- Get a house, get a job and stay clean. (Male, 18 – 25, 3 – 6 months homeless)
- Get my Flat and get back to work and I'll be a Happy Bunny (Male, 36 – 45, 6 – 10 years)
- Get my own place for my little girl. (Male, 36 – 45, one month or less homeless)
- Safe warm home for children and myself (Male, 46 – 59, 11 – 20 years homeless)
- To get secure housing. To be stable in my health (Female, 46 – 59, 3 – 5 years homeless)
- I'd like to get normality back, to lead normal healthy happy life. (Male, 36 – 45, 3 – 6 months homeless)
- There isn't any hope. 5 years I have been here. Cleaned my act up still not hope. Been to rehab. (Male, 18 – 25, 3 – 5 years homeless)

'No aspiration' can be seen in context in the table below.

Figure Sixteen: Comparing aspiration codes to amount of time homeless



Another point to note in this section of the survey, although numbers are relatively small, is that getting and maintaining a job would seem to be of more importance and relevance to those who have been homeless for two years or less.

Interestingly, there does not seem to be a link between length of time a respondent is homeless and their aspirations or hopes for the future. There is a similar pattern with age (see below).

Figure Seventeen: Comparing aspiration codes to age

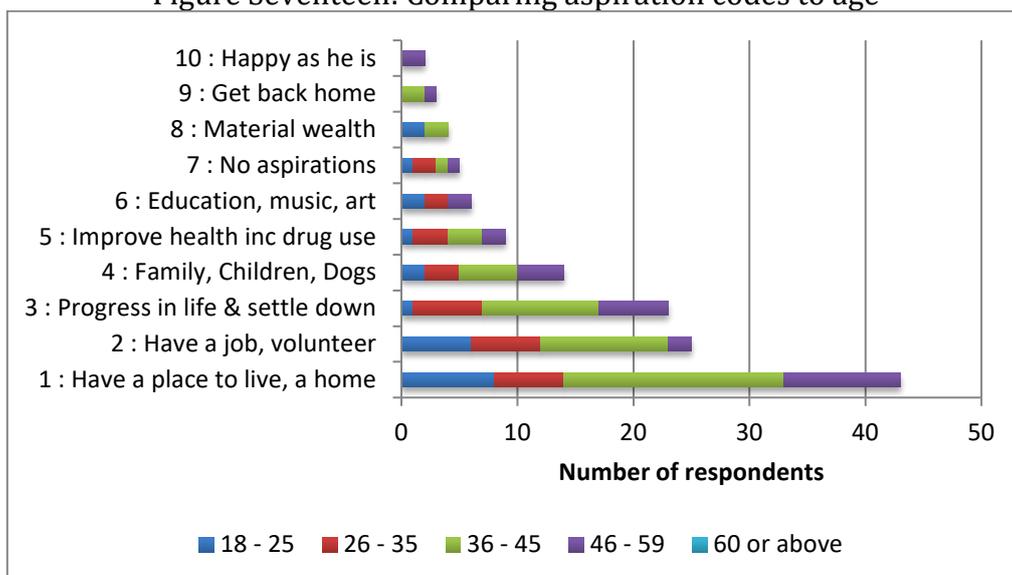
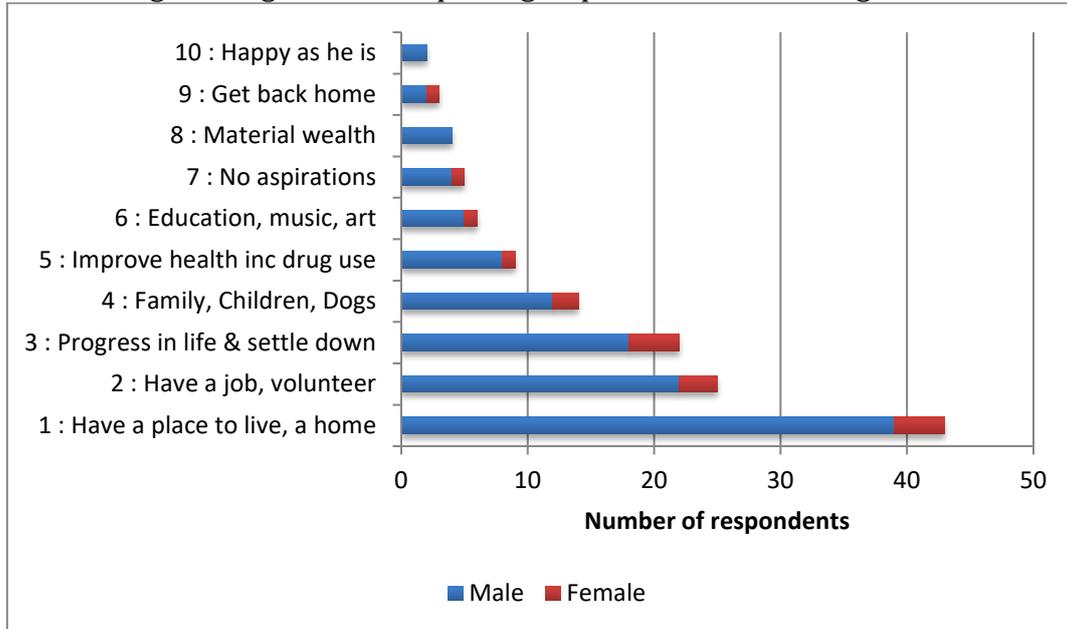


Figure Eighteen: Comparing aspiration codes to gender



Whilst the above graph presents some interesting points, it should be remembered that only ten of the respondents were women and that these numbers are too small to draw any concrete conclusions on a gendered dimension.

# Conclusions and Recommendations

## Conclusions

- Homelessness is a complex issue and requires a multi-layered partnership response.
- The campaign approach and methodology during 'Connections Week' seemed to work well and provide momentum for all the partners to stay on board.
- Homeless people who answered the survey questions were provided with a bed and hot food if they wanted to come in from the street – but longer term solutions are needed for those who have been through the 'revolving door' of hostels and street in previous homeless episodes.

## Recommendations

- The campaign partner agencies continue to work together to maintain momentum and involve the Leicester community in the aim to end street homelessness.
- If the survey runs again next year, the same questions should be asked for comparison, but with some consideration for a few additional open-ended questions, for richer qualitative results.
- The partners work with the social housing sector (specifically emh to start) to trial the model of 'Housing First' and report on progress in future.
- Leicester partners disseminate their results to the wider Leicester community, but also with other Campaign cities.
- Leicester partners follow up with visitors from Glasgow and Sheffield to see how their Connections weeks went, having observed the approach in Leicester.
- The Leicester campaign partners continue to engage with the media (and through social media) to get the positive messages out and to demystify and destigmatise homelessness in our city.
- Observation and research to focus on longer term issues related to behaviours and preferences, and to examine why people may be returning to the streets even where an alternative is offered. Some research on potential issues of loneliness and disconnection, culture and community, would be pertinent in the future.

## Next Steps

### Looking beyond 'Connections Week'

Connections week is just one part of Leicester city's part in the European campaign to end street homelessness. The partners have worked together for quite some time in agreeing to sign up to the campaign and then in the planning and preparation ahead of the week in November. This professional relationship between agencies in the city will be further built upon to maintain momentum. Lead partners will reflect on whether the connections week approach could work in future years for gleaning an accurate picture of homelessness in Leicester.



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### De-mystifying Homelessness

One of the great successes of the Leicester connections week was the engagement between De Montfort University (DMU), Action Homeless, the agency partners and the public via the media. Partners used a range of approaches, embracing social media to get information out there to volunteers and to residents of the city of Leicester. Traditional media outlets were also engaged – for example BBC East Midlands Today conducted a live piece for their night time regional news programme, at DMU on 7<sup>th</sup> November to highlight the issue of homelessness in Leicester and to discuss the campaign.



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Engagement with people and communities across the city is a vital component of the campaign, to demystify the issue and to involve all residents in a discussion about ending street homelessness. The Leicester campaign partners will continue to engage with the people of the city, starting with the dissemination event on 15<sup>th</sup> November to present the findings in this report.

## Housing sector offer

As one of the largest providers of affordable housing and care in the East Midlands, emh group is committed to ending homelessness. They continue to work with local partners in the delivery of much needed affordable housing and support to address the critical need in communities, including Leicester. The emh group's involvement in this campaign was not only about providing volunteers to identify the nature and scale of street homelessness but also about delivering longer-term sustainable solutions for eradicating this by working closely with De Montfort University, Action Homeless, Leicester City Council and other partners.

One of the options emh group has proposed is to pilot a 'Housing First' approach, which has seen success in parts of Europe and the US. The idea is that emh group would provide suitable accommodation to get people off the streets into permanent housing in the first instance and then with partners shape a package of personalised support based on an assessment of individual needs. In addition, emh group is discussing opportunities with local authority partners to design a range of options suitable for the complex needs of a diverse population.



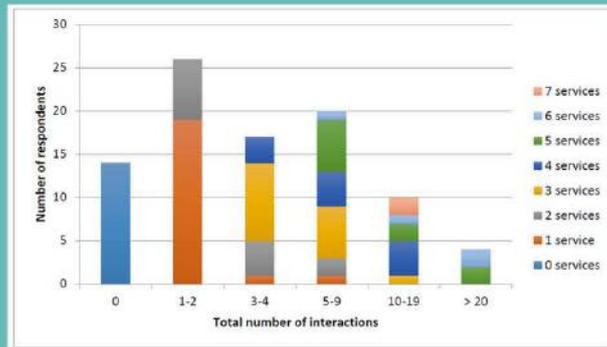
93 HOMELESS  
PEOPLE WERE  
SURVEYED  
(83 MEN/ 10  
WOMEN)

95% HAD MEDIUM  
TO HIGH  
VULNERABILITY  
SCORES

55% <sup>Ⓛ</sup>  
RESPONDENTS  
HAD BEEN  
HOMELESS FOR  
OVER ONE YEAR  
(2% HOMELESS  
FOR MORE THAN  
TEN YEARS)



Homeless people in Leicester had multiple & complex health needs - at least five had physical, mental and substance issues which require a sophisticated multi-level response.



The survey heard from individuals encountering a number of emergency service interactions, with a handful reporting more than 20 in a six month period.

Over 80 DMU students volunteered to help the campaign.



A range of agencies were involved, including health, fire and police + city council & charities. Public engagement was key.

The social housing sector has responded with an offer for a small-scale trial of 'Housing First'

The partners are committed to rethinking approaches to homelessness in Leicester & conducting more research in the future.



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