



Oxford City Council

Official Rough Sleeper Street Count and Estimate

Combined Intelligence Report

November (Quarter 3) 2018-19

Report prepared by the Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Team

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Key Findings	3
3. Detailed Data Analysis and Data Tables	7

Appendices

1. Counting the number of people sleeping rough	2
2. Street Count: Definitions and Methodology	4
3. The Intelligence-Informed Estimate: Definitions and Methodology	9
4. Why are The Count and Estimate Figures Different?	14
5. Glossary	16

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the findings from the November 2018 official street count and intelligence-based estimate of the number of people sleeping rough in Oxford.
- 1.2 Key findings and headline figures for the street count are presented in Section 2. Detailed analysis and graphs are provided at Section 3, comparing the findings of the count and estimate with each other and with previous findings.
- 1.3 Appendices to the report explain in detail the methodologies used for the count and estimate, and the strengths and limitations of these, together with a glossary of terms used throughout this report.

2 Key findings from the November 2018 Street Count

The following paragraphs present the headline findings from Oxford City Council's street count, November 2018, noting demographics, trends and comparisons between this and previous years' data sets of rough sleepers in Oxford.

2.1 The Street Count Number

A total of **45** rough sleepers were counted and verified across Oxford in a 4 hour window from 00:00 - 04:00 hours. The count figure is a 26% decrease from 2017's figure of 61, and an 18% increase from the September count number of 37.

2.2 The Intelligence-Informed Estimate Number

The intelligence-informed estimate figure for 2018 is **94**, a slight increase (6%) up from 89 in 2017. The difference between the count and estimate findings is explained in section 4 of the appendices to this report.

We are delighted to see our rough sleeper count decreasing from the previous year as a result of the ongoing efforts of our commissioned services to engage with and support rough sleepers to find accommodation and support, but also the £1M funding secured from MHCLG's Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI). This has enabled OCC to commission additional services and supported accommodation for rough sleepers.

In line with the rise of rough sleeping nationally, reducing the numbers has remained a significant challenge even with additional service provisions and staffing. Our estimate shows that our rough sleeping services are engaging with more rough sleepers than we can find on a single night of the official street count.

2.3 Length of Time Sleeping Rough

The count revealed that there were **20 individuals that have been rough sleeping for less than six months** a decrease of **39%** from 33 in 2017. Of those, 7 were new and 13 were returning to rough sleeping. There were **15 long-term rough sleepers**

(6 months+) which was a **35% decrease** from last year's total of 23. The remaining 10/45 were still subject to verification. Last year, 5 were subject to verification.

2.4 Entrenched and Chronic Long-term Rough Sleepers

13/45 (29%) of the people identified by the count were people identified as 'hard to engage' rough sleepers who have been consistently rough sleeping over a long period of time and/or repeatedly decline offers of service interventions.

OCC commissions targeted support for long-term rough sleepers (including those who return to rough sleeping). This includes the Oxford Street Population Team (OxSPOT) Personalisation Worker whose dedicated client list is of long-term entrenched and chronic return rough sleepers. We also provide specialist supported accommodation for this group, through our Housing Led services that are delivered in partnership with Homeless Oxfordshire and Mental Health Pathway housing provider, Response.

2.5 Gender Breakdown

24% of rough sleepers found on the count were identified as **female (11/45)**, and **69% male (31/45)**. The remaining 7% (3/45) were unidentifiable as their faces were hidden.

This indicates a significant *increase in the proportion of rough sleepers that are female* from 16% in the previous year (10/61). This is representative of trends nationally showing increases of women both found to be rough sleeping, and presenting as homelessness at accommodation services.

OCC are currently piloting a new service for female rough sleepers, enabled by funding from the RSI fund, which will inform future service provision for women and other vulnerable groups. Women are also prioritised for emergency (sit-up) bed provision. In light of national trends, OCC is continuing to review how its service provision can best meet the needs of all rough sleepers including women.

2.6 Local Connection Status

The largest group of rough sleepers on the count were those which have their local connection subject to verification: 15/45 (33%). The count showed that **6/45 people (13%)** were confirmed as having a local connection to Oxford city. The proportion is slightly higher than that identified last year, with 6/61 people (10%).

The remaining **39 (87%)** have no evidenced connection to Oxford. There was a slight **reduction** from 2017 in the numbers of people with no *county-wide* local connection to *Oxfordshire* - down from 21 (34%) to 11 (24%).

In common with all other local authorities, OCC allocates supported accommodation to individuals who are considered to have a local connection to the City. This means that some rough sleepers are ineligible for Adult Homeless Pathway accommodation. However, this winter Oxford City Council has commissioned additional bed spaces for those with No Local Connection.

OxSPOT seeks to engage with all rough sleepers – regardless of local connection, to help them find sustainable solutions to rough sleeping including through reconnection to other areas where the person wants to do this.

2.7 Location

In this count, the majority of rough sleepers 32/45 (71%) were found in the city centre – a slight decrease from last year’s count of 47/61 (77%).

High concentrations of rough sleepers are consistently found in urban regions such as Oxford city centre where there is more night time economy and a higher density of rough sleeping services.

2.8 Nationality and No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

The majority of people found sleeping rough in the count were UK nationals, **29/45 (64%)**. This figure is a slight decrease from the previous November count with **46/61 (75%)** as the highest nationality category.

The second most frequent category of people rough sleeping are EU nationals with 7/45 (16%), where there is also a slight decrease from the previous year’s figure of 11/61(18%).

11/45, (24)% of people sleeping rough were found to have no recourse to public funds (NRPF). This is slightly higher than the proportion seen in the **previous year 11/61 (18%)**.¹

NRPF is a common issue faced by EEA migrants. RSI funding has allowed the Council to commission this winter for 14 winter shelter beds for rough sleepers with no local connection to the city, and in some cases NRPF. . The Council is also planning to commission in the New Year a new EEA Migrants Service which will provide dedicated support for rough sleepers from the EEA.

2.9 Complex Needs, Support Needs and History of Rough Sleepers

Mental health issues and offending history are the highest support need from this year’s count with **28/45** for both **(62%)**.

In November 2017, mental health was the highest issue, with 25/61 (41%) and alcohol issues were the most common for the estimate, 37/89 (42%).² These numbers cannot be taken as a cumulative percentage, as rough sleepers often have

¹NRPF means that these individuals do not have access to benefits. This can be a hindrance to long-term recovery. Typically, those with NRPF in Oxford are EU migrants who are not exercising their treaty rights, (not studying, working, seeking work or being self-sufficient
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/518624/Public_funds_v13.0.pdf

² Last year, only drug, alcohol and mental health issues were recorded and thus other categories cannot be compared with this year.

multiple, overlapping needs, with the average for the count and estimate being 3 needs per rough sleeper.

OCC is currently funding a new RSI funded pre-recovery service for people with drug and alcohol addictions to help them get off the streets and support their access to drug and alcohol services.

2.10 Oxford Adult Homeless Pathway (AHP) Bed Provision

The total number of beds available for rough sleepers on the night of the 2018 November count was **214** – a 21% increase on the number of beds available at November 2017, and a direct result of the council having secured £1M RSI funding.

Of these 214 beds, **195** beds (91%) were occupied on the night of the count. 19 bed spaces (9%) were unoccupied due to:

- **RSI Programme** – Several of the new RSI funded accommodation services filled quickly following opening, including Sit-up expansion, 10 bed spaces, opened September; London Place winter shelter, 6 spaces, opened October, Simon House, 8 spaces, opened November. The womens' service, 5 spaces, and pre-rehab service, 7 spaces, both opened in October but have taken slightly longer to fill due to the need to identify suitable candidates from within the AHP rather than the street. At the time of reporting (4th December) bed occupancy has increased substantially, with the RSI funded beds up to 35/41 (85%).
- **Other** - reasons include rooms in transition for next rough sleeper (cleaning), or repairs, rooms being doubled up for wheelchair users, rooms awaiting client referral process to be completed.

This year, rough sleepers that had accommodation but slept rough on the night of the count was lower than last year with 2/45 (4%) accommodated November 2018, but sleeping rough compared to 5/61 (8%) November 2017.

3 Detailed data analysis and data tables

3.1 Introduction

This section of the report presents detailed findings and analysis from the **November 2018 official street count and intelligence-based estimate** of the number of people sleeping rough in Oxford.

For the first time, the two methodologies used for the street count and the intelligence-based estimate are being placed side by side.

The data findings presented below therefore describe both count and estimate analysis and implications from 2018, with reference to the previous year's count and estimate trends.

Information on the methodologies for the count intelligence-based estimate is presented in the Appendices to this report, along with an appraisal of the strengths and limitations of these.

Overview of the tables and analysis presented below:

- How many people are sleeping rough?
- How long are people sleeping rough for?
- How many long-term and returning rough sleepers were there? (Chronic and entrenched)
- What is the proportion of female rough sleepers?
- How old are rough sleepers in Oxford?
- What nationality are rough sleepers in Oxford?
- What are the ethnicities of rough sleepers in Oxford?
- Where do rough sleepers have a local connection to?
- How many rough sleepers have no recourse to public funds?
- Where were people found rough sleeping?
- How many people had accommodation but chose to sleep rough?
- Why might people choose to sleep rough despite having accommodation?
- Where were people accommodated before they became rough sleepers?
- Why did people leave their last accommodation?
- What support needs do rough sleepers have?
- How many support needs do rough sleepers have?
- How many rough sleepers have an institutional history?
- What accommodation provisions were available for rough sleepers on the night of the count?

3.2 How many people are sleeping rough?

45 rough sleepers were found in the November 2018 count and 94 were identified by the intelligence based estimate.

The overall trend for the count over the past 5 years below) is an increase, which is in line with national statistics which show that rough sleeping is on the rise.³

The count figure is a 26% decrease from 2017's figure of 61, and an 18% increase from the September count number of 37. The intelligence-informed estimate figure for 2018 is a slight increase (6%) up from 89 in 2017. **The difference between the count and estimate is explained in section 4 of the appendices to this report.**

The intelligence based estimate draws upon a multi-agency approach to data collection about rough sleepers known to be sleeping out on the night of the estimate. This includes individuals which can be difficult to find on a typical street count due to complex behavioural issues, such as vulnerable rough sleepers that may choose to sleep in discreet locations or long-term rough sleepers which are well-known to services but can be difficult to find as they move around a lot.

Street Counts and Intelligence Estimates By Financial Quarter

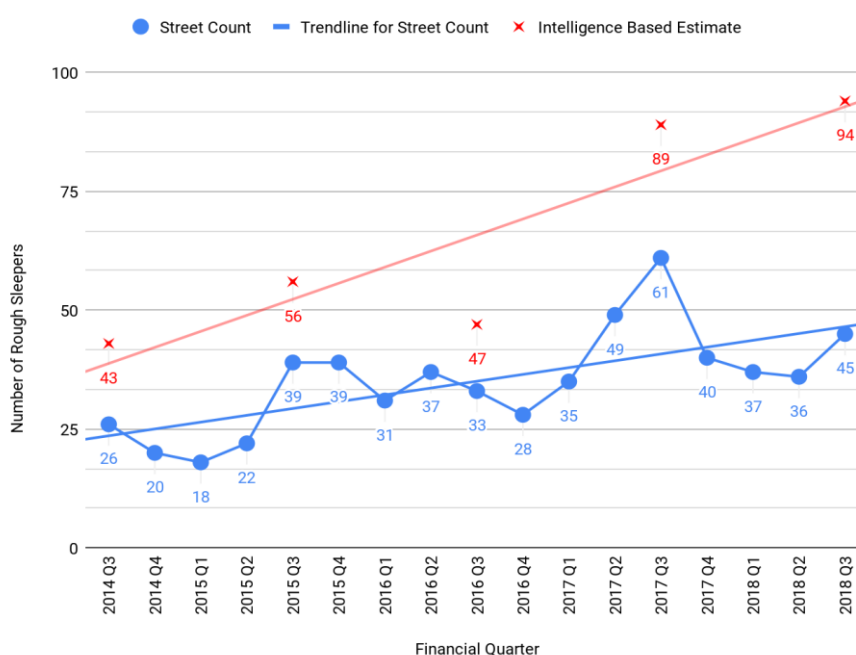


Figure 1: Rough sleeper numbers - overall trend

The red points on the graph above indicate the intelligence-based estimate of rough sleepers currently in Oxford. This is based on combined intelligence from our commissioned Outreach Service, Oxford Street Population Outreach Team (OxSPOT), Thames Valley Police (TVP) and the Community Response team in Oxford City Council (OCC).

³ [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682001/Rough Sleeping Autumn 2017 Statistical Release - revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682001/Rough_Sleeping_Autumn_2017_Statistical_Release_-_revised.pdf)

Financial Quarter	Street Count	Intelligence Based Estimate
2014 Q3	26	43
2014 Q4	20	
2015 Q1	18	
2015 Q2	22	
2015 Q3	39	56
2015 Q4	39	
2016 Q1	31	
2016 Q2	37	
2016 Q3	33	47
2016 Q4	28	
2017 Q1	35	
2017 Q2	49	
2017 Q3	61	89
2017 Q4	40	
2018 Q1	37	
2018 Q2	36	
2018 Q3 (this count)	45	94

3.3 How long are people sleeping rough for?

Time Spent Rough Sleeping

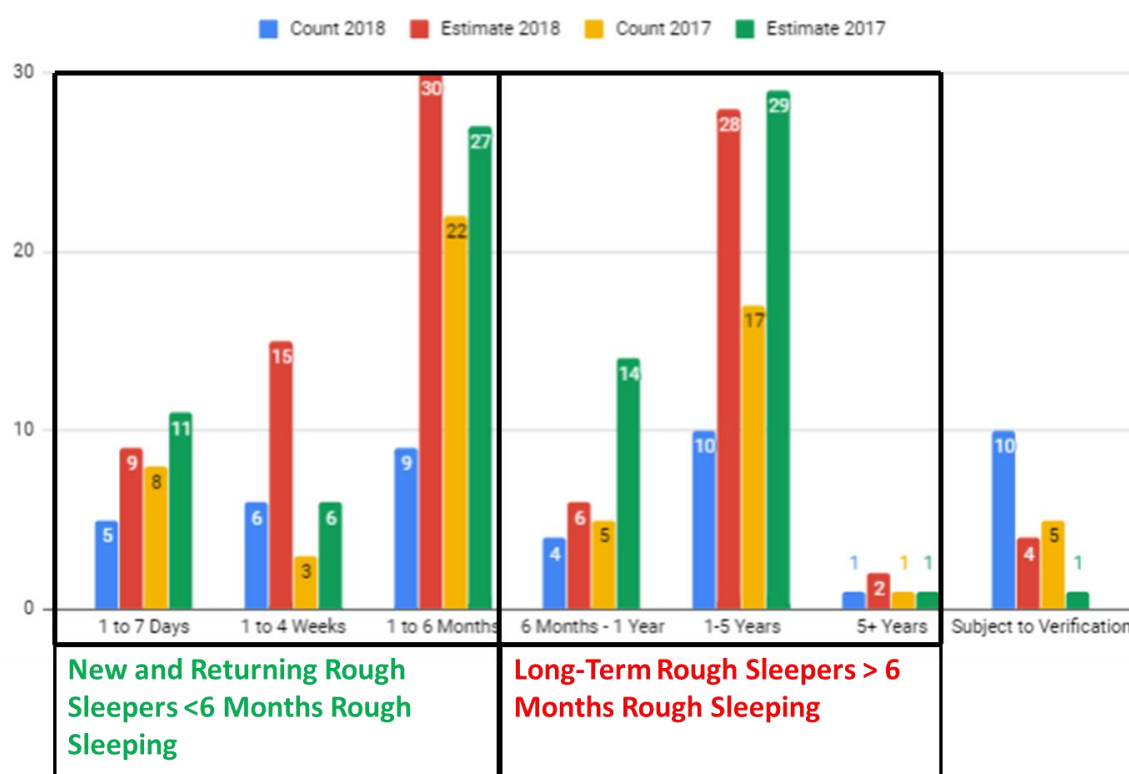


Figure 2: Time spent rough sleeping

	Time Spent RS	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%	Count 2017	%	Estimate 2017	%
New and returning rough Sleepers (<6 months)	1 to 7 Days	5	11%	9	10%	8	13%	11	12%
	1 to 4 Weeks	6	13%	15	16%	3	5%	6	7%
	1 to 6 Months	9	20%	30	32%	22	36%	27	30%
Long-Term Rough Sleepers (>6 months)	6 Months - 1 Year	4	9%	6	6%	5	8%	14	16%
	1-5 Years	10	22%	28	30%	17	28%	29	33%
	5+ Years	1	2%	2	2%	1	2%	1	1%
	Subject to Verification	10	22%	4	4%	5	8%	1	0%

The count revealed that there were **20 individuals** that have been rough sleeping for less than six months a decrease of **39%** from 33 in 2017. Of those, 7 were new or and 13 were returning to rough sleeping.

There were **15 long-term rough sleepers (6 months+)**. This is a **35% decrease** from last year's total of 23, and a slightly reduced proportion of all rough sleepers (33% 2018, 38% 2017). The remaining 10/45 individuals were still subject to verification. Last year, 5 were subject to verification.

Oxford has cohorts of both new/returning rough sleepers and also long-term rough sleepers, as can be shown by this year's count and estimate, with nearly equal numbers in the 1-6 months and 1-5 years groupings (red and blue bars). This shows a similar trend to last year, but both the number and proportion of longer term rough sleepers (>1 year) have decreased in both the count and the estimate this year.

This year's estimate also captures more rough sleepers who have been rough sleeping for less than 1 month compared to the count and last year's count and estimate. This illustrates the issue of growing numbers of new and returning rough sleepers whilst still retaining a large proportion of existing rough sleepers that stay out on Oxford's streets.

3.4 How many Chronic and Entrenched rough sleepers are there?

	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%
Entrenched and Chronic Cohort	13	29%	7	7%

This count, 13/45 (29%) were found to be on OxSPOT's entrenched and chronic list. This is a specialised list of rough sleepers which are particularly challenging for services to help.

Entrenched refers to rough sleepers that are consistently rough sleeping over a long period of time (6+ months) and/or repeatedly declining offers of service interventions. Chronic rough sleepers have accessed pathway (supported) accommodation, but repeatedly end up sleeping out on the streets again.

The number on the intelligence based anticipated list is lower with only 7/94 (7%). This is due to the fact that any individuals who were judged to be unlikely to be out on the night of the estimate were removed from the evidence-based estimate list.

3.5 What is the proportion of female rough sleepers?

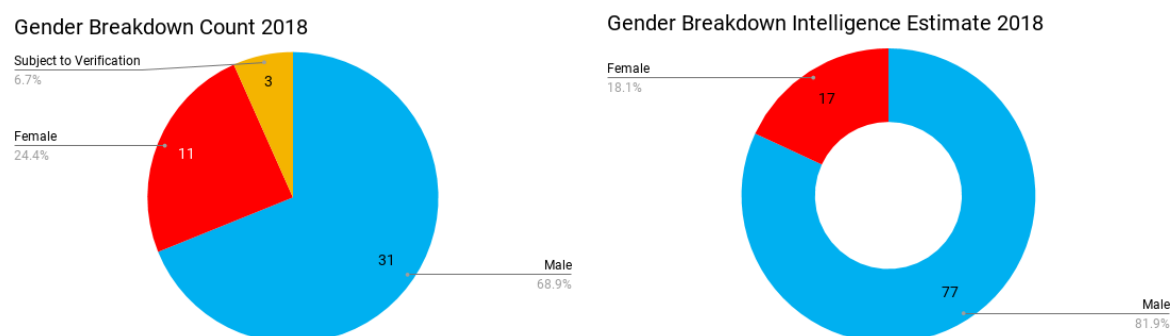


Figure 3: People Sleeping Rough by Gender

Gender	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%	Count 2017	%	Estimate 2017	%
Male	31	69%	77	82%	51	84%	74	83%
Female	11	24%	17	18%	10	16%	15	17%
Subject to Verification	3	7%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

24% of rough sleepers found on the count were identified as **female (11/45)**, and **69% male (31/45)**. The remaining 7% (3/45) were unidentifiable as their faces were hidden. 24% is higher than the previous national figure for female rough sleepers of 14%, and 20% in the Southeast.⁴

This indicates a significant *increase in the proportion of rough sleepers that are female* from 16% in the previous year (10/61). This is representative of trends nationally showing increases of women both found to be rough sleeping, and presenting as homelessness at accommodation services.

Compared to this year's count, the intelligence-based estimate shows a slightly lower proportion of female rough sleepers: 17/94 (18%). This however is still an increase in both number and proportion compared to the count and estimate in 2017.

⁴

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682001/Rough_Sleeping_Autumn_2017_Statistical_Release_-_revised.pdf

3.6 How old are rough sleepers in Oxford?

Age Distribution

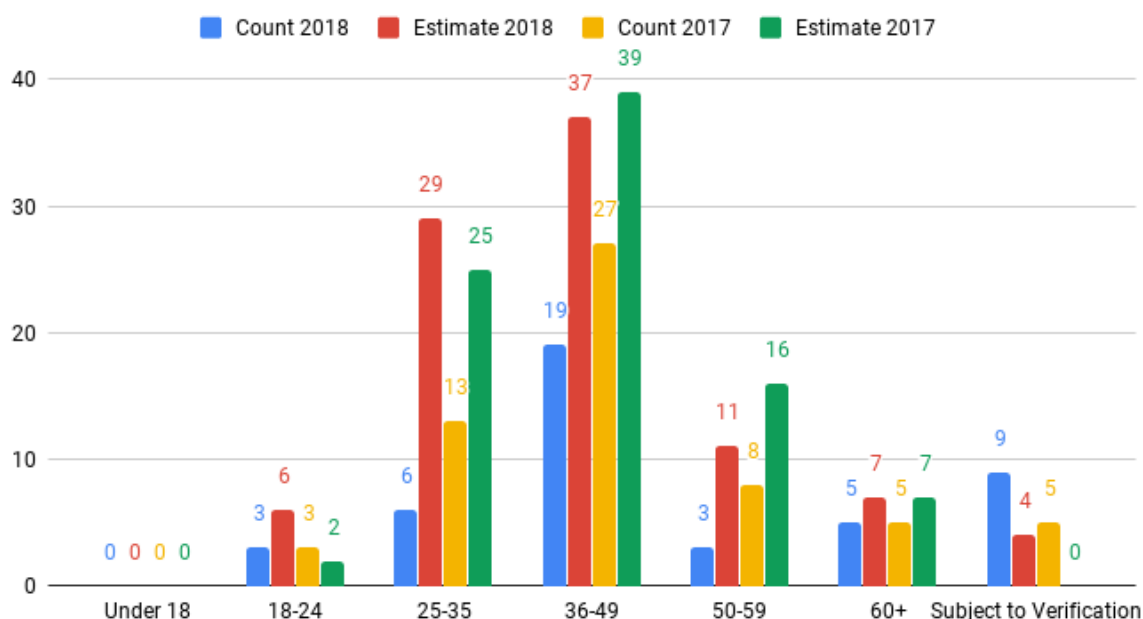


Figure 4: Age groupings of people sleeping rough

Age	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%	Count 2017	%	Estimate 2017	%
Under 18	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
18-24	3	7%	6	6%	3	5%	2	2%
25-35	6	13%	29	31%	13	21%	25	28%
36-49	19	42%	37	39%	27	44%	39	44%
50-59	3	7%	11	12%	8	13%	16	18%
60+	5	11%	7	7%	5	8%	7	8%
Subject to Verification	9	20%	4	4%	5	8%	0	0%

The main age category for people sleeping rough found on this count and estimate is 36-49 years old with 19/45 people (42%) found in this category.

This is consistent with last year's count and estimate with 36-49 as the most common grouping. Younger rough sleepers (<25) are consistently low again this year, with similar numbers to last year's count and estimate. Younger rough sleepers and female rough sleepers may be vulnerable and may choose to sleep in more discreet locations compared to the wider cohort seen on the streets and be underrepresented by street counts.⁵

⁵ <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Estimate%20Process%202018.pdf>

3.7 What nationality are rough sleepers in Oxford?

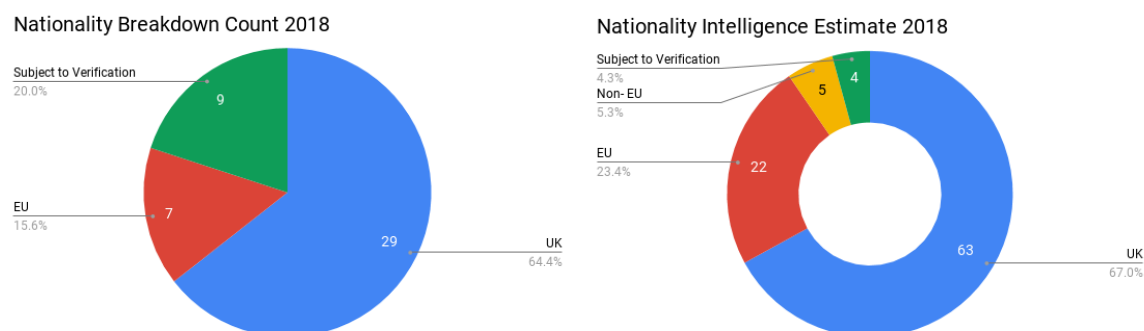


Figure 5: People sleeping rough by nationality

Nationality	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%	Count 2017	%	Estimate 2017	%
UK	29	64%	63	67%	46	75%	65	73%
EU	7	16%	22	23%	11	18%	21	24%
Non- EU	0	0%	5	5%	2	3%	3	3%
Subject to Verification	9	20%	4	4%	2	3%	0	0%

As shown by both the count and estimate, the majority of people sleeping rough in Oxford continue to be UK nationals, with 29/45 counted (64%).

This figure is broadly consistent with the previous count and estimate as the highest nationality category, although it was not possible to confirm the nationalities of 20% of those found as these were still subject to verification. The second most frequent category of people rough sleeping are EU nationals with 7/45 (16%). This is consistent with the intelligence figure and also the previous years.

3.8 What are the ethnicities of rough sleepers in Oxford?

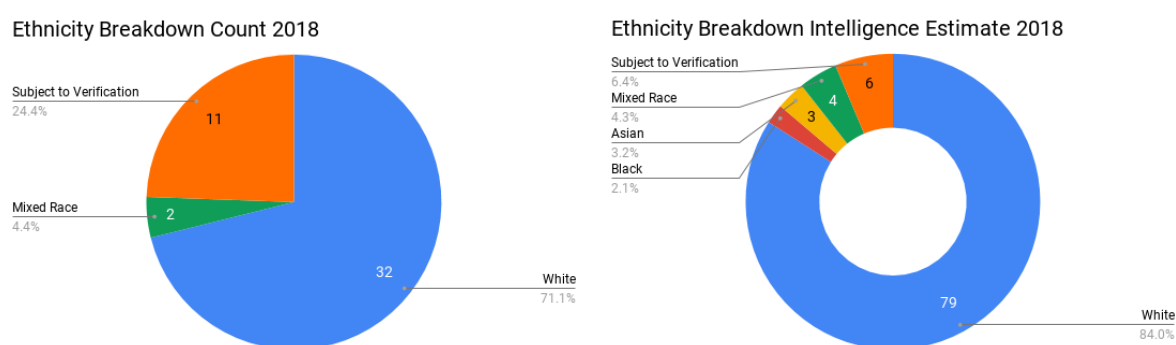


Figure 6: People sleeping rough by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%	Count 2017	%	Estimate 2017	%
White	32	71%	79	84%	52	85%	72	81%
Black	0	0%	2	2%	3	5%	3	3%
Asian	0	0%	3	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Mixed Race	2	4%	4	4%	1	2%	0	0%
Subject to Verification	11	24%	6	6%	0	0%	14	16%

The majority of people sleeping rough found on the street count and intelligence based estimate were white, with 32/45 found on this current count (71%).

This is consistent with the estimate and also the count conducted at the same time in the previous year. Minority groups such as Black and Asian were not found and 2 mixed race individuals were found this count. Relatively low numbers of minority ethnicities are consistent with the intelligence figure and the results from last year's count and estimate.

3.9 Where do rough sleepers have a local connection to?

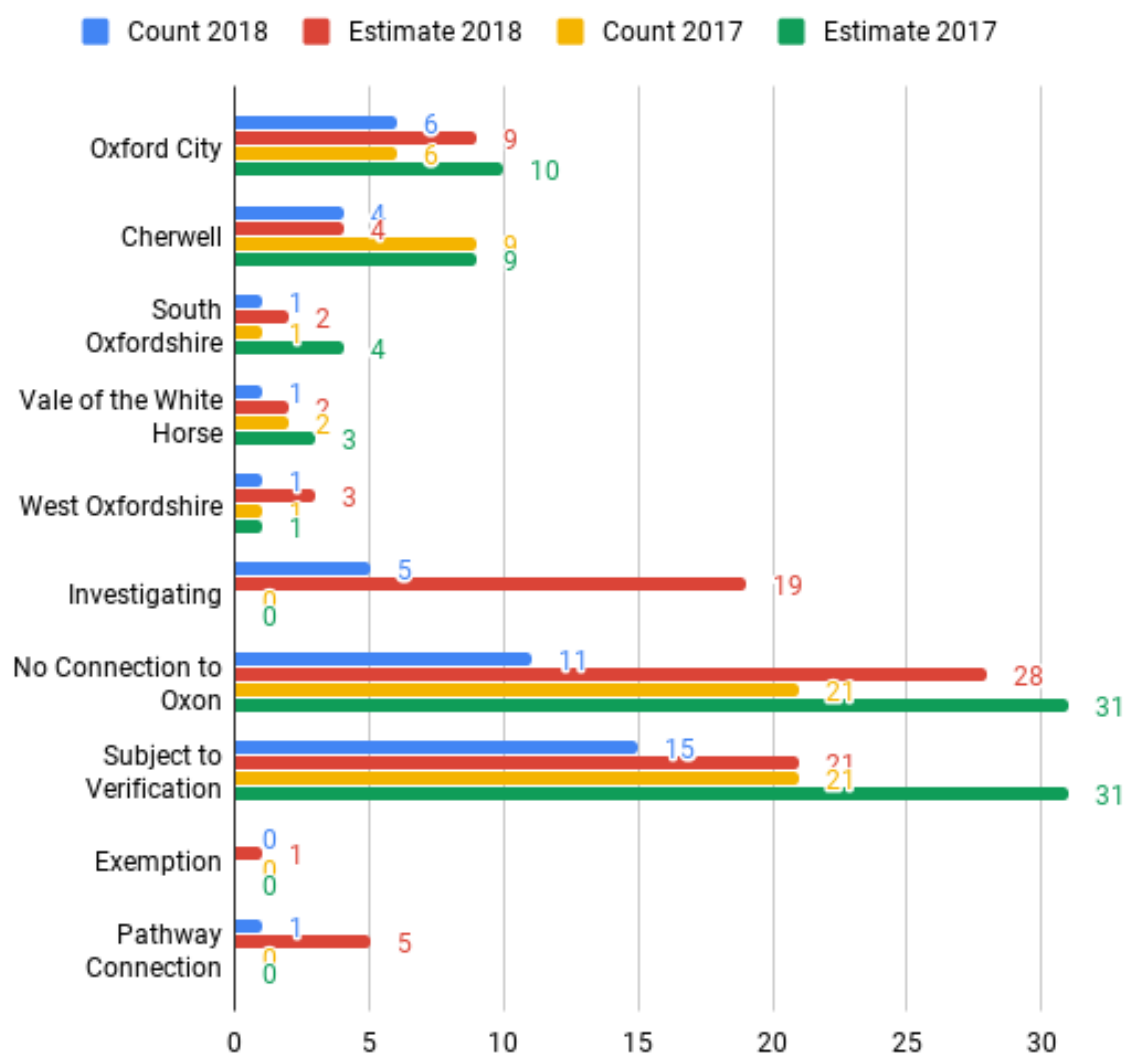


Figure 7: People rough sleeping by Local Connection

Local Connection	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%	Count 2017	%	Estimate 2017	%
City	6	13%	9	10%	6	10%	10	11%
Investigating	5	11%	19	20%	0	0%	0	0%
No Connection to Oxon	11	24%	26	28%	21	34%	31	35%
Other UK connection	0	0%	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Subject to Verification	15	33%	21	22%	21	34%	31	35%
Exemption	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Pathway Connection	1	2%	5	5%	0	0%	0	0%
Cherwell	4	9%	4	4%	9	15%	9	10%
South Oxfordshire	1	2%	2	2%	1	2%	4	5%
Vale of the White Horse	1	2%	2	2%	2	3%	3	3%
West Oxfordshire	1	2%	3	3%	1	2%	1	1%

The largest group of rough sleepers on the count were those which have their local connection subject to verification: 15/45 (33%), followed by those with no local connection to Oxfordshire, 11/45 (24%). This year there is an additional category for rough sleepers that at the time of the count are currently being investigated for their local connection: 5/45 (11%), which in addition to those still subject to verification is higher in proportion to those that were subject to verification last year (20/45, 44% 2018 compared to 21/61, 34% 2017.) Those with no local connection to Oxfordshire has decreased from last year, (21/61 34%).

Oxford City has the highest number of confirmed local connections compared to other Oxfordshire districts with 6/45 (13%). This is consistent with the intelligence figure and the numbers from last year's count. As usual, there are high numbers of individuals with no local connection to Oxfordshire and unverified local connection. New to this year's data collection is the category of 'investigating' where individuals are still being assessed for their local connections (see glossary in the main report for definitions of 'None'; 'Subject to Verification' and 'Investigating').

In common with other local authorities, OCC allocates supported accommodation to individuals who are considered to have a local connection to the City. This means that some rough sleepers are ineligible for Adult Homeless Pathway accommodation.

Oxfordshire is divided into five District Authorities: Oxford City, Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, Vale of the White Horse and West Oxfordshire. Oxford City Council is responsible primarily for people sleeping rough in the Oxford City district, with the

other districts funding their own provisions. In addition, there is a pooled budget arrangement in place between the Districts, funded, owned and managed by the Joint Management Group (JMG). The assessment and allocation of single homeless people in Oxford for supported accommodation and support needs is led by each District, in close partnership with one another, their accommodation and outreach service providers.

People sleeping rough with a connection to Oxfordshire districts have access to limited provisions within the Oxford Adult Homeless Pathway (AHP), but people with no local connection to Oxfordshire cannot access any provisions. In special cases, exemptions can be awarded if someone (without local connection) is at risk, enabling them to access services and accommodation. For those without a local connection, reconnection attempts can also be made to reconnect these individuals with their local area.

Local connection often also takes time to ascertain. After someone is identified on the street by OxSPOT, a process of investigation is needed to confirm what if any connection the person has to this or another location. This often requires building trust with the person sleeping rough, and then investigating where their local connection is. This process can then also take some time to verify. Please see the appendices to this report for more information on the terms used here, eg: *Subject to Verification*, *Investigating* and *None*.

Of those confirmed to not have a local connection, 10/45 (22%) have been offered support for reconnection to another location by OxSPOT.

	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%	Count 2017	%	Estimate 2017	%
Reconnection attempts	10	22%	22	23%	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded

3.10 How many rough sleepers have no recourse to public funds?

	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%	Count 2017	%	Estimate 2017	%
NRPF	11	24%	22	23%	11	18%	22	25%

11/45, (24)% of people sleeping rough on the count were found to have no recourse to public funds (NRPF). This is slightly higher than the proportion seen by the estimate 22/94 (23%) and also higher than the previous year 11/61 (18%). Typically, those with NRPF in Oxford are EEA migrants who are not exercising their treaty rights, (not studying, working, seeking work or being self-sufficient).⁶

⁶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/518624/Public_funds_v13.0.pdf

3.11 Where were people found rough sleeping?

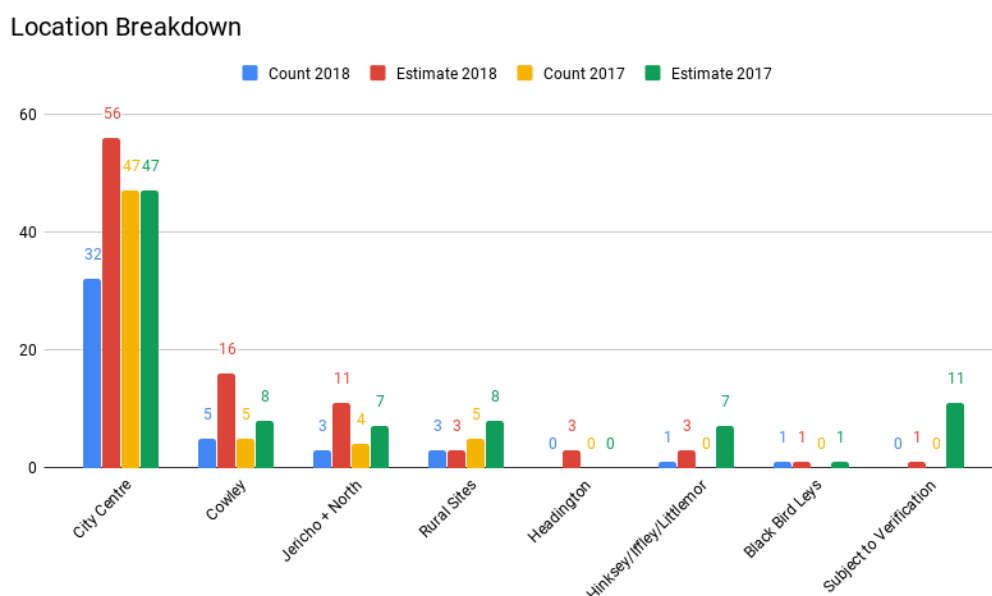


Figure 8: People sleeping rough by site bedded down

Location	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%	Count 2017	%	Estimate 2017	%
City Centre	32	71%	56	60%	47	77%	47	53 %
Cowley	5	11%	16	17%	5	8%	8	9%
Jericho + North	3	7%	11	12%	4	7%	7	8%
Rural Sites	3	7%	3	3%	5	8%	8	9%
Headington	0	0%	3	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Hinksey/Iffley/Littlemore	1	2%	3	3%	0	0%	7	8%
Blackbird Leys	1	2%	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
Subject to Verification	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	11	12 %

The majority of people sleeping rough in Oxford were found in the city centre with 32/45 (71%)

This figure is consistent with the intelligence based estimate and the previous count.

The concentration of rough sleepers in the city centre can be explained as a combination of factors - rough sleepers can be drawn into the city centre, where there is a much higher concentration of activity and thus activities such as begging or street economy activities are more commonplace. Rates of street referrals are also likely to be higher in the city centre. Secondly, the accessibility of more rural areas of Oxford take longer operationally to reach for the outreach team and other street

organisations, lowering the probability of finding rough sleepers, particularly if they are mobile in the night.

3.12 How many rough sleepers had accommodation but slept rough?

Some people have been offered or allocated accommodation in the adult homeless pathway (AHP), but were found to be out on the street.

Accommodated but still rough sleeping	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%	Count 2017	%	Estimate 2017	%
	2	4%	N/A	N/A	5	8%	N/A	N/A

This year, the number found on the count was lower than last year with 2/45 (4%) accommodated but sleeping rough compared to 5/61 (8%).

Previously accommodated in Pathway	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%	Count 2017	%	Estimate 2017	%
	13	29%	28	30%	19	31%	38	43%

A slightly lower proportion of people sleeping rough, 13/45 (29%), were previously accommodated in the adult homeless pathway compared to last year 19/6 (31%).

Of the 13 of 45 that previously had pathway accommodation, but are now sleeping rough, 10 of 13 of these have no confirmed local connection to Oxford city.

The proportion is relatively consistent in the intelligence based estimate and also compared to last year's count. There are multiple reasons why people who have access to accommodation are sleeping out, see below.

3.13 Where were people accommodated before they became rough sleepers?

Last Known Accommodation

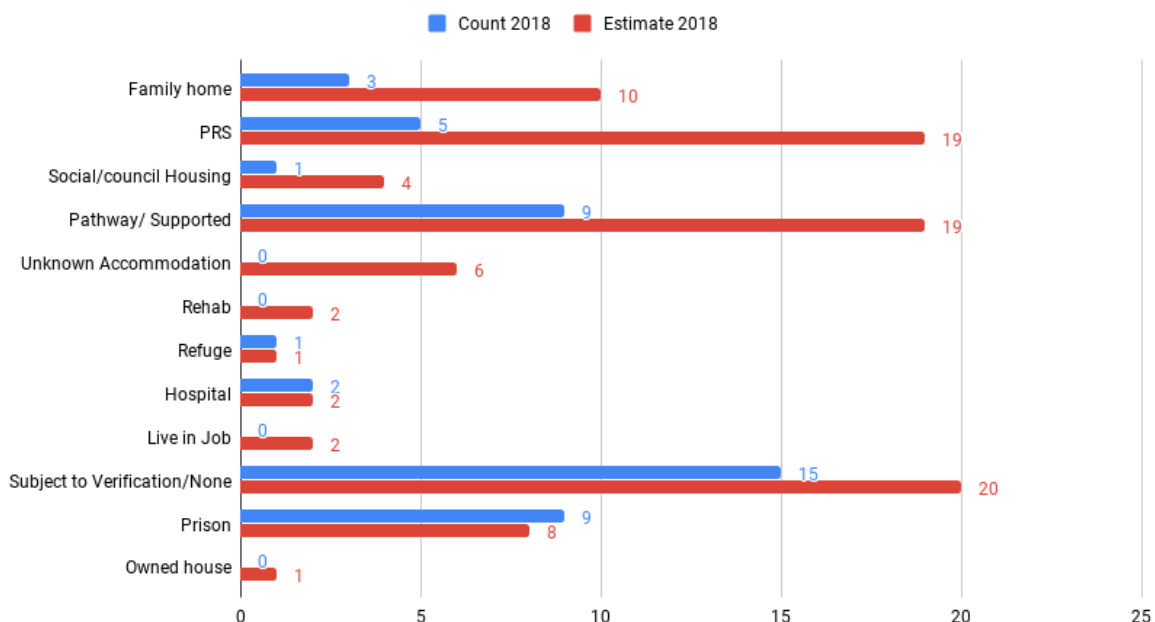


Figure 9: People rough sleeping by last known accommodation

Last Known Accommodation	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%
Family home	3	7%	10	11%
PRS	5	11%	19	20%
Social/council Housing	1	2%	4	4%
Pathway/ Supported Accommodation	9	20%	19	20%
Unknown Accommodation	0	0%	6	6%
Rehab	0	0%	2	2%
Refuge	1	2%	1	1%
Hospital	2	4%	2	2%
Live in Job	0	0%	2	2%
Subject to Verification/ None	15	33%	20	21%
Prison	9	20%	8	9%
Owned house	0	0%	1	1%

Excluding those still subject to verification, from this count, the most commonly cited categories of previous accommodation were prison 9/45 (20%), pathway / supported accommodation 9/45 (20%) and the private rented sector 5/45 (11%).

The intelligence led estimate shows a slightly different picture with a higher proportion of people that had previously lived in the private rental sector, 19/94 (20%) and a similar proportion of people previously in supported accommodation,19/94 (20%). This is followed by those that had previously lived in a family home: 10/94 (11%). This information was not collected from previous counts, so a comparison cannot be made.

The large proportion of unverified accommodation history can be explained by the fact that it can be difficult for some rough sleepers to reveal their last accommodation and this often this requires trust to be built between rough sleepers and organisations working with them for information to be disclosed.

This information was not collected in the previous year.

3.14 Why did people leave their last accommodation?

Reasons For Leaving Last Accommodation

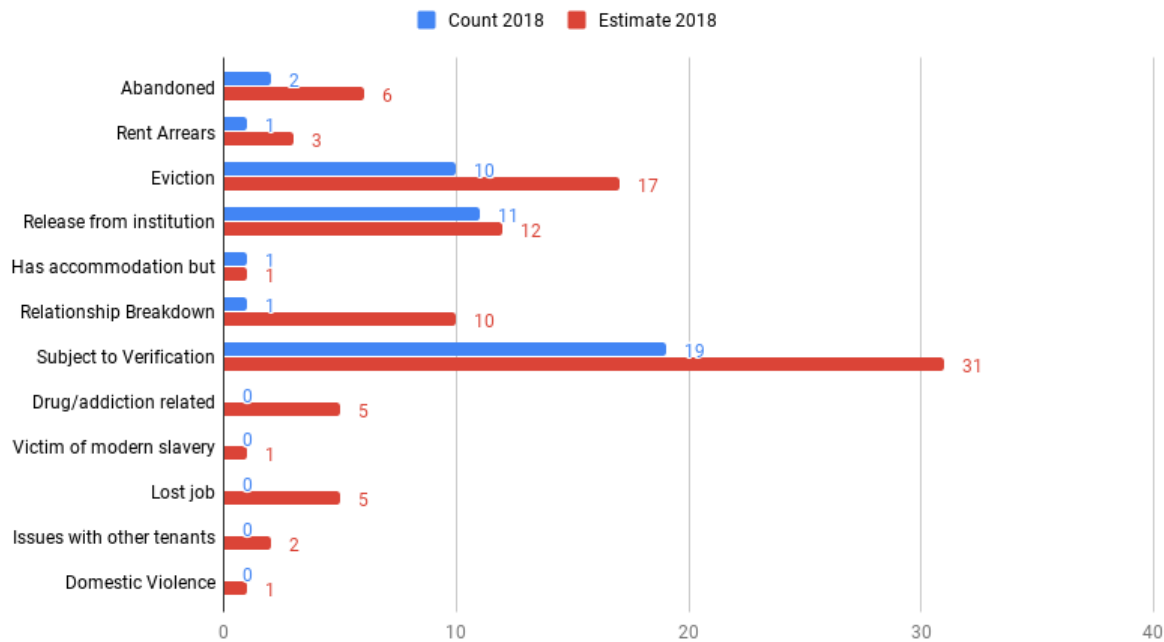


Figure 10: Reasons for leaving previous accommodation

Reasons for leaving last known accommodation	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%
Abandoned	2	4%	6	6%
Rent Arrears	1	2%	3	3%
Eviction	10	22%	17	18%
Release from institution (prison/hospital)	11	24%	12	13%
Has accommodation but sleeping out	1	2%	1	1%
Relationship Breakdown	1	2%	10	11%
Subject to Verification	19	42%	31	33%
Drug/addiction related	0	0%	5	5%
Victim of modern slavery	0	0%	1	1%
Lost job	0	0%	5	5%
Issues with other tenants	0	0%	2	2%
Domestic Violence	0	0%	1	1%

The main reasons for leaving previous accommodation is release from an institution 11/45 (24%) (Such as prison, hospital or care)

This is followed by eviction from accommodation 10/45 (22%). The estimate shows a similar picture, but evictions are the most common reason with 17/94 (18%) followed release from an institution 12/94 (13%).

The estimate reveals additional categories not accounted for in the count including drug related, victims of modern slavery, loss of job, issues with other tenants and issues of domestic violence. The estimate highlights the wide reach of services with rough sleepers, and further illustrates the variety of different reasons that could result in people rough sleeping.

Similar to previous accommodation history, a large number of people sleeping rough's previous reasons for leaving their past accommodation is subject to verification. This can be a highly sensitive matter and can take time and trust-building to investigate by the outreach team. These reasons also may take a while to verify and cross-check. OCC have a process to follow up with 'Subject to Verification' categories 3 months after a count.

This information was not collected last year.

3.15 What support needs do rough sleepers have?

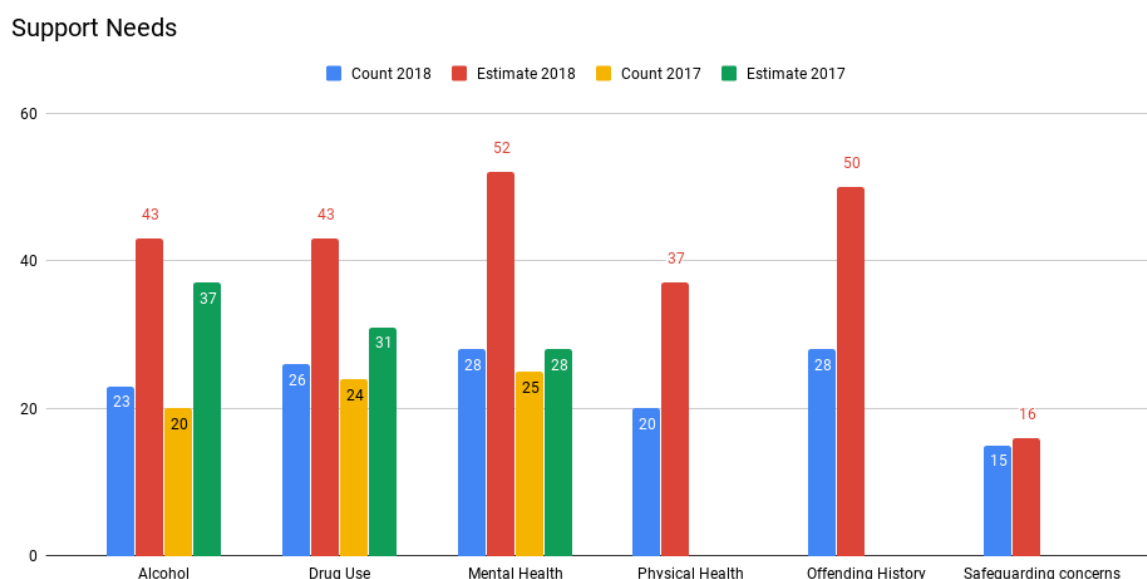


Figure 11: Support needs and background of people sleeping rough

Needs	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%	Count 2017	%	Estimate 2017	%
Alcohol	23	51%	43	46%	20	33%	37	42%
Drug Use	26	58%	43	46%	24	39%	31	35%
Mental Health	28	62%	52	55%	25	41%	28	31%
Physical Health	20	44%	37	39%	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
Offending History	28	62%	50	53%	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
Safeguarding concerns	15	33%	16	17%	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded

Mental health and offending history are the highest support needs from this year's count with 28/45 (69%).

The previous year, mental health was the highest issue, with 25/61 (41%) and alcohol issues were the most common for the estimate, 37/89 (42%). These numbers cannot be taken as a cumulative percentage as often people have overlapping multiple needs. (See below)

3.16 How many support needs does a rough sleeper have?

Number of Support Needs

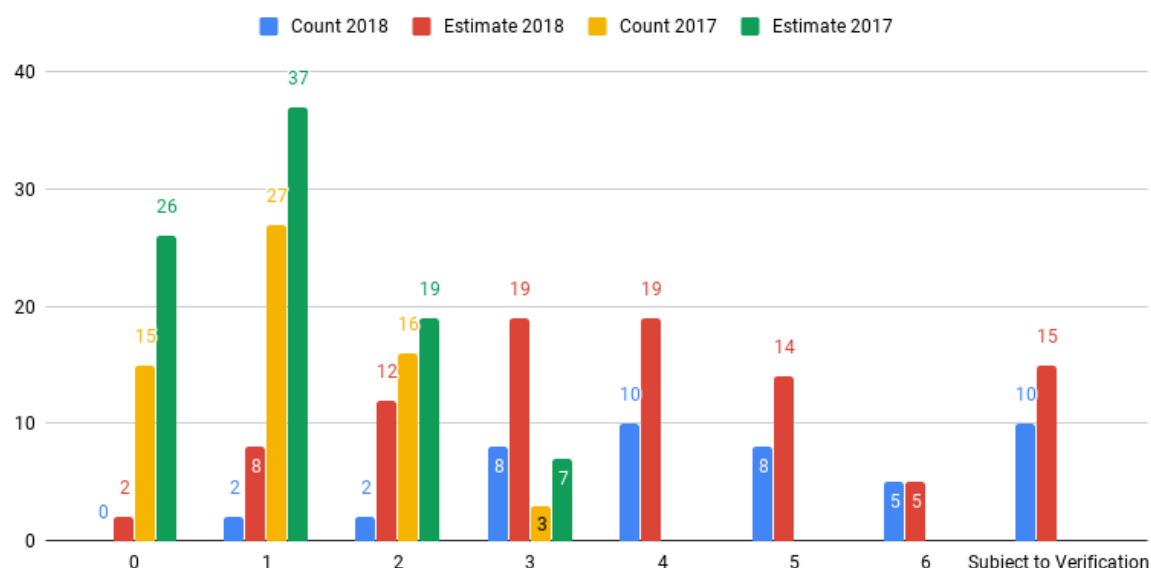


Figure 12: Multiple support needs of people sleeping rough

Number of Needs	Count 2018	Estimate 2018	Count 2017	Estimate 2017
0	0	2	15	26
1	2	8	27	37
2	2	12	16	19
3	8	19	3	7
4	10	19		
5	8	14		
6	5	5		
Subject to Verification	10	15		
Average	3.3	3.4		

The average number of needs/background issues per individual is 3 for the count for the intelligence based estimate.

This shows that rough sleepers often have multiple issues which must be addressed in addition to providing accommodation services to help them into long term recovery.

Last year, only drugs, alcohol and mental health issues were recorded and thus the result cannot be adequately compared with last year. In November 2017, mental health was the highest issue, with 25/61 (41%) and alcohol issues were the most common for the estimate, 37/89 (42%).

3.17 How many rough sleepers have an institutional history?

Institutional History

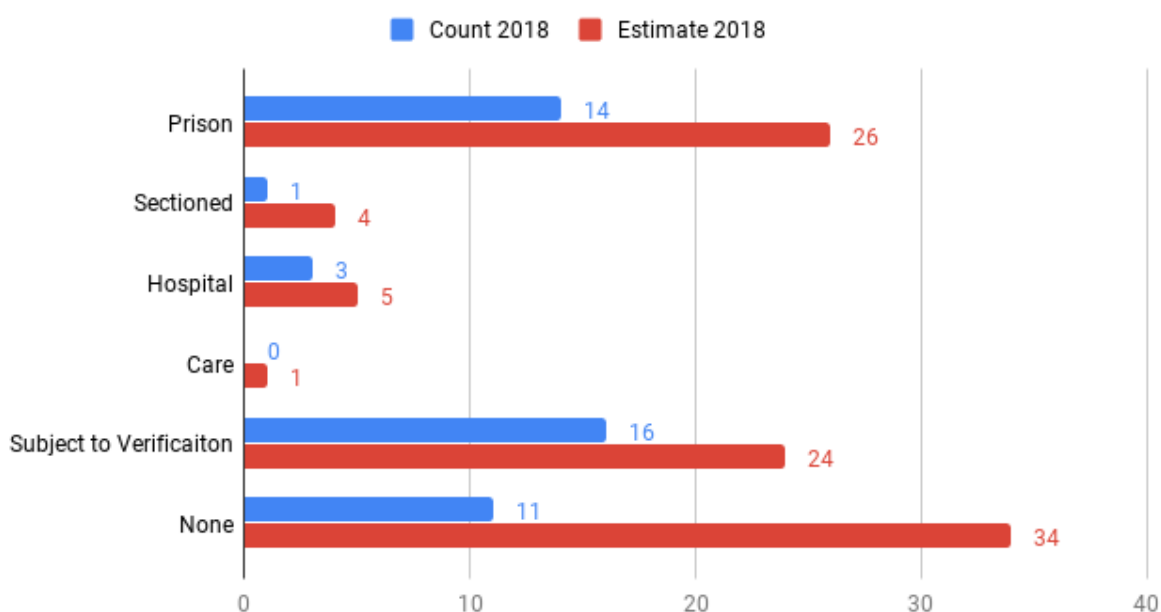


Figure 13: Institutional history of people sleeping rough

Institutional History	Count 2018	%	Estimate 2018	%
Prison	14	31%	26	28%
Sectioned	1	2%	4	4%
Hospital	3	7%	5	5%
Care	0	0%	1	1%
Subject to Verification	16	36%	24	26%
None	11	24%	34	36%

Many people sleeping rough on the count had an institutional history, with the majority of these, 14 (31%) having been previously in prison.

This matches the estimate with 26/94 (28%) previously having been in prison. This data was not captured last year for comparison.

3.18 What accommodation provisions were available on the night of the count?

The total number of beds available for rough sleepers on the night of the 2018 November count was **214** – a 21% increase on the number of beds available at November 2017, and a direct result of the council having secured £1M RSI funding.

Of these 214 beds, **195** beds (91%) were occupied on the night of the count. 19 bed spaces (9%) were unoccupied due to:

- **RSI Programme** – Several of the new RSI funded accommodation services filled quickly following opening, including Sit-up expansion, 10 bed spaces, opened September; London Place winter shelter, 6 spaces, opened October, Simon House, 8 spaces, opened November. The womens' service, 5 spaces, and pre-rehab service, 7 spaces, both opened in October but have taken slight slightly longer to fill due to the need to identify suitable candidates from within the AHP rather than the street. At the time of reporting (4th December) bed occupancy has increased substantially, with the RSI funded beds up to 35/41 (85%).
- **Other** - reasons include rooms in transition for next rough sleeper (cleaning), or repairs, rooms being doubled up for wheelchair users, rooms awaiting client referral process to be completed.

This year, rough sleepers that had accommodation but slept rough on the night of the count was lower than last year with 2/45 (4%) accommodated November 2018, but sleeping rough compared to 5/61 (8%) November 2017.

Appendices

1. Counting the number of people sleeping rough	2
2. Street Count: Definitions and Methodology	4
3. The Intelligence-Informed Estimate: Definitions and Methodology	9
4. Why are The Count and Estimate Figures Different?	14
5. Glossary	16

1. Counting the number of people sleeping rough

1.1 Introduction

There is currently *no national mechanism for recording every person who sleeps rough in England*. The snapshot methodology of the street count aims to get as accurate a representation of the number of people sleeping rough as possible, while acknowledging that each process has its limitations. The evaluation method is chosen to meet the local context: counts are based on visible rough sleeping, and evidence-based estimates on a range of sources for rough sleeping.⁴

According to Homeless Link¹ guidance, a count is appropriate in a local authority if for example the area is largely urban; there is a significant change in the number, population or location of rough sleepers; high numbers of rough sleepers in the area; increase of fluctuation in numbers of rough sleepers in accessible areas. Estimates on the other hand are recommended for more rural areas, the number of rough sleepers is consistently low; sleep sites are inaccessible or hidden.

The below factors tend to apply in these cases:

1. Inaccessible, rural, unsafe to access or hidden from site sleep sites e.g. in woods or dispersed across rural areas, that may also change frequently
2. Numbers of people sleeping rough are consistently low and they are already in touch with services, and partner agencies agree this is the case
3. The local authority can gather sufficient intelligence on people sleeping rough via partner agencies, agree to collect information for an agreed night and to share this with the local authority for the purpose of the estimate.

Conversely, the choice to use a street count by OCC is more appropriate due to the following factors applying:

4. Higher concentration of rough sleepers in urban areas located in close proximity, where sleep sites are accessible/ visible and include well-known or 'hotspot' locations.
5. Higher numbers of people sleeping rough in the area with an increase or fluctuations in numbers of people sleeping rough A significant change in the number, population or location of people sleeping rough where sites are
6. Higher resources to conduct a street count (the entire count process involves around 15 people).

¹ Homeless Link is the national membership charity for organizations working directly with people who become homeless in England

1.2 Homeless Link's Role

Homeless Link provides support to local authorities in planning and carrying out the data collection, creates and delivers resources and training. It collates, verifies and validates local authorities' official annual street count data which it shares with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).² This data is published annually by the Ministry.

Local authorities are advised that all street counts should follow the Homeless Link guidance. This guidance sets out a specific methodology to ensure that the counts are as accurate and consistent as possible, and can reasonably be compared across regions, local authority areas and over time.

Since autumn 2010, all local authorities have been required to submit an annual figure in November to the MHCLG to indicate the number of people sleeping rough in their area on a typical night. This figure can be submitted by means of either *an evidence-based estimate*, or *a count of visible rough sleeping*. This annual rough sleeping figure allows local authorities to track progress, consider whether current measures are effective in tackling rough sleeping and if new approaches are needed. The MHCLG produces a statistical release based on the data each year in the February commencing.

1.3 Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) – requirement for bi-monthly counts

The Council has this year secured a total of approximately £1M for 2018/19 and 2019/20 from the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) – part of the government's strategy for tackling rough sleeping. The government published its Rough Sleeping Initiative strategy on 13th August 2018. Further information can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

The purpose of these bi-monthly street counts is for monitoring information for the MHCLG. The aim of this is to help improve the Ministry's collective understanding of rough sleeping nationwide. The data collected from counts outside of November are **not** used in the official statistics.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government>

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is the UK Government department for housing, communities and local government in England. It was established in May 2006

2. Street Count: Definitions and Methodology

2.1 The official annual street count

Since autumn 2010, all local authorities have been required to submit an annual figure to MHCLG to indicate the number of people sleeping rough in their area on a typical night. They can arrive at this figure by means of an evidence-based estimate, a count of visible rough sleeping, or an estimate including a spotlight count. This annual rough sleeping figure allows local authorities to track progress, consider whether current measures are effective in tackling rough sleeping and if new approaches are needed. MHCLG produces a statistical release based on the data each year³.

This has been the Homeless Link defined methodology used historically by OCC including the September, and November counts this year. The street count is carried out in parallel to the Oxfordshire Districts' official methodology, which is their intelligence-based estimate.

2.2 What is a street count?

The street count process is defined as, *"a snapshot of the number of people seen sleeping rough in a local authority area on a particular night."*¹

2.3 Who is being counted?

In 2010 the Government widened the definition of rough sleeping to be used when estimating or counting:⁴

"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")."

2.4 Who is not being counted?

Key groups including known rough sleepers who are not bedded down at the time of the count, and people who are known to be sleeping rough in a specific area that cannot be accessed by the count staff, cannot be included in the count tally. Those excluded from the count figures are:

³ Homeless Link *Counts & Estimates Toolkit: Estimate Process* 2018, pg. 3 <http://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/counts-and-estimates-evaluating-extent-of-rough-sleeping>

⁴ Homeless Link *Counts & Estimates Toolkit: Estimate Process* 2018, pg. 6 <http://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/counts-and-estimates-evaluating-extent-of-rough-sleeping>

“People accommodated in hostels or shelters, sofa surfers, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or Travellers”.

- **Known rough sleepers not bedded down** - a number of rough sleepers who are known to the OxSPOT outreach team were found to be walking around and engaging with night time economy, anti-social behavior or begging. As part of the homeless link methodology, these individuals could not be counted as they are not bedded down or about to bed down. Thus, they cannot be confirmed as rough sleeping on the night.
- **Known rough sleepers not seen during the count window** - when rough sleepers are simply not found on the routes during the count.
- **Tents** - in line with safeguarding procedures – whilst attempts can be made to verbally communicate with people in the tents, no staff can enter into a tent without the presence of a police officer. On the count night one empty tent was found.
- **Inaccessible and privately owned sites** – rough sleepers choosing to stay on the grounds of private land or estates to which OCC have no intelligence of or access to, cannot be counted. These individuals may be known to OxSPOT but may choose to keep their sleep site private and not reveal its location. This also extends to rough sleeping sites i.e. stairwells of tower blocks, garages, outhouses and other sites not fit for living purposes that are not easily accessible at night time without extensive resources.
- **Remote rural sites** - in locations considered too dangerous to attempt to access at night time when the count takes place. This can include unlit areas near water/the river, pathways blocked by fallen trees or with locked gates.
- **Those falling outside of the Oxford City Council District** - one rough sleeper was found on the boundary between OCC and Cherwell District council. His closer proximity to the neighboring District meant he was not counted by OCC and was instead added to the Cherwell District Estimate list.

2.5 Count strengths and limitations

Strengths

The street count allows for long-term comparisons of the growth or decline in the number of people sleeping rough in Oxford, tracking change over time as well as rough sleeper demographics. Having a fixed methodology is useful as a national tool to see the general trends in the country, but does not take into account the wider picture about what is known about rough sleeping. People can be observed

as bedded down which means that there is strong evidence that they are rough sleeping on the night of the count.

However, street counts do not give a complete picture of current rough sleepers in Oxford. The council is currently exploring ways in which a more complete picture can be built, drawing on different data sources including data provided by the rough sleeping outreach team, OxSPOT, data from commissioned accommodation, historical data, and real time information drawn from the council's OxTHINK (Oxford Tackling Homelessness Information Network) database and from adult homeless pathway service providers.

Limitations

As detailed throughout **section 2.4 (above)**, the street count can exclude many groups of individuals that are known to be rough sleeping and will **not** record everyone in the area currently rough sleeping. The amount of people that are able to be counted on one 'typical' count night often varies as well - as rough sleeping locations of rough sleepers change from night to night and only a finite amount of people can be seen within the four-hour time frame.

The methodological constraints of the count process therefore excludes a large proportion of rough sleepers that make up the truer picture of this behavior in Oxford. These include rough sleepers not found to be sleeping during the short period of time by the street count workers, and also those seen on the count but not bedded down. The intelligence-based estimate offers a complementary picture of rough sleeping based on collated data-sources and validated sector-knowledge from Frontline workers.

2.6 Count Process in Oxford

Stage 1: Pre-count data gathering

A pre-count meeting takes place between Oxford City Council and OxSPOT, (Oxford's rough sleeping outreach team) based around an anticipated list of those that have been recently seen or referred, and the location at which they were last seen. This information is corroborated with the Homelessness Liaison Officer at the Thames Valley Police (TVP) and finalised on the day of the count so it is as up to date as possible. The list is compiled from the following:

- **OxSPOT's list of clients** known to be rough sleeping which is updated on a daily basis using the street-shift diary. This is used to inform both the *anticipated list* (for the count) *and* the *intelligence-based estimate* figure.
- **Client exclusions** - if OxSPOT do not see a client bedded on three occasions then they are removed from this list. It could be that they are still rough sleeping

but have moved sleep sites. One limitation with the target list is that clients move around a great deal and can be well-hidden so they may not be found.

- **Cross-referencing** with outreach workers' client caseloads to identify clients who had been removed from the target list but are certain to be rough sleeping somewhere in Oxford. The Target List is a list of clients compiled by OxSPOT of those who are known to be currently sleeping rough in Oxford.
- **Long-term rough sleepers** from the entrenched and chronic return cohorts would have been accounted for in the same way.

Stage 2: The pre-count planning meeting

- **The date of the street count** - was specifically chosen to coincide with the surrounding Districts - Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, Vale of the White Horse and West Oxfordshire to ensure there was no duplication of rough sleepers across District boundaries.
- **Count routes and district boundaries** - are confirmed using maps and establishing count routes. This is done to ensure the count only takes place within the OCC District and does not encroach onto other Districts. It also ensures the areas most likely to have rough sleepers present are covered by count routes.
- **Confidentiality of the count night** - is on a need-to-know basis only to avoid any influencing of the count figures by rough sleepers, accommodation providers, the public or any other sector organisations.
- **External influences** - which might impact rough sleeping behaviour and thus potentially skew the results are also factored into consideration when setting the count night. Therefore, the street count must take place on a 'typical night' (for more details see 'Typical Night' in the Glossary on page four). For example, count nights do not take place over the weekend or during student nights in the Oxford nightclubs, or when there is a big event taking place such as Guy Fawkes Night.

Stage 3: The night of the count

The count itself took place during a four-hour window between the hours of 00:00 and 04:00 one night in November to collect first hand data based on sightings of rough sleepers found to be bedded down across the city and its outer-lying areas. Five planned street count routes are strictly followed in five rounds led by OxSPOT Outreach Workers and TVP Officers, supported by OCC staff, and partners - including, Homeless Oxfordshire, The Porch and The Big Issue.

Immediately following the count a post-count briefing took place to carefully cross-check and confirm all the individuals sighted.

2.7 What data is collected?

Any person sleeping rough found on the count will have some basic information recorded about them such as their name, sex, nationality, ethnicity and basic support needs. These details are checked immediately after the count for double counting and to eliminate duplicates.

Afterwards, the information of each person rough sleeping is then checked on the OxTHINK [formerly known as: CHAIN] database which contains information about rough sleepers in Oxford and this information forms the basis of this data analysis. The about people sleeping rough has been collected by OxSPOT, who regularly work with rough sleepers on the streets of Oxford and refer them to appropriate rough sleeping services such as supported accommodation.

Data collection is often a process which involves OxSPOT building trust with rough sleepers on the streets and following up with them with assessments to identify who they are and what their background is. The majority of people found on the count are known to this team, but data in some cases may be missing for a number of rough sleepers in the analysis below.

2.8 Mitigating factors and Considerations Impacting on the Count

The following factors have been identified as having had a potential impact on the findings shown below:

- **Weather** – the lowest temperature on the night of the count was **10°C** (Met office forecast). There was no rain during the night of the count or other adverse weather conditions that may have impacted rough sleeper activity.
- **Count date** – a night in November was chosen for the date of the official street count. There were no significant issues on this night for the count. A week before, the intelligence based estimate was conducted.
- **Rough sleepers not engaging on the night - 9 out of 45 individuals** on the night refused to engage with the count team and either hid their faces and/or was completely unresponsive. This made any basic data collection difficult, and where possible, only certain pieces of basic information such as gender, ethnicity and age group could be determined.
- **Adult Homeless Pathway Bed Spaces** – at the time of the count, there were 19/214 unoccupied spaces (91% full) in the Adult Homeless Pathway and Sit-Up accommodation. Some beds could not be occupied on the night as they were undergoing maintenance to be used by new clients. New bed spaces offered by RSI funding require further assessment with clients to allocate and were not fully filled by the time of the count (these are not allocated to new rough sleepers). The single space available for sit-up on the night was filled by a newly verified rough sleeper within the first hour of the count.

3. The Intelligence-Informed Estimate: Definitions and Methodology

3.1 The intelligence-based estimate figure and what does this mean?

According to Homeless Link definitions, the purpose of the estimate is to assess *the numbers of people rough sleeping on the typical night chosen*, rather than a larger sample of street activity, hidden homelessness or people using homelessness services. This means that, for example, a person who *sometimes* sleeps rough but *sometimes* has accommodation/shelter will not be included in the estimate unless there is evidence that they did sleep rough on that night.

It is therefore an *evidence-based assessment compiled with input from frontline services that have contact with rough sleepers*, leading to a single figure that represents the number of people thought to be sleeping rough in the local authority area on a 'typical night' – a single date chosen by the local authority between 1 October and 30 November. It is a **snapshot** and will *not* include everyone in the area with a history of rough sleeping⁵.

3.2 Oxford City Council's estimate history

The intelligence-based estimate has been conducted by Oxford City Council since 2002 on an annual basis for internal purposes to add to the intelligence of actual numbers of rough sleepers in Oxford. Historically, it has taken place in November to coincide with the official street count.

- Historical submission of the Street Count - provides time-series data allowing for comparison of data - and hence trends for more than ten years (since 2002).

3.3 Choosing Count versus Intelligence-based Estimate Methodology

Homeless Link guidance permits Local Authorities to make their own arrangements and choice of data submission between the count, the estimate (or the hot-spot estimate), using the method that they think will reflect the number of those rough sleeping in their area most.⁶

Generally there is a tendency for the Oxfordshire Districts to submit the Estimate as their official count number pre-determined by low numbers of rough sleepers that are dispersed over a large, rural area. The Oxford City Council have historically carried out street counts as Officers and Homeless Link have deemed street counts as the most appropriate methodology for Oxford. The main advantage to using the same methodology is having a comparable single figure for a

⁵ Homeless Link *Counts & Estimates Toolkit: Estimate Process* 2018, pg.4 <http://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/counts-and-estimates-evaluating-extent-of-rough-sleeping>

⁶ Homeless Link *Counts & Estimates Toolkit: Estimate Process* 2018, pg.7 <http://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/counts-and-estimates-evaluating-extent-of-rough-sleeping>

substantial period of time. See appendix 5 for more details on the factors considered for choosing the count over the estimate.

To provide evidence of people sleeping rough, including observation and self-reporting, Homeless Link list the following considerations which include the below:⁷

1. Individuals *seen* bedded down by agency or by another partner agency
2. Individuals *known* to the agency and where it is clear that they *do not* have accommodation that they can occupy (those with a history of rough sleeping)
3. Information that demonstrates that someone *known to be sleeping rough intermittently* did sleep rough on the night in question (e.g. they weren't seen in their hostel; were at the day centre early; were discharged from prison or hospital shortly before)

Considerations also considered by Homeless Link that were **not used by OCC**:

- A spotlight count carried out in particular locations on the chosen night to inform the estimate (not employed in this count).
- Individual self-reports sleeping rough over the period alongside evidence that they are sleeping rough (not employed in this count).
- Appearance – while bearing in mind many people sleeping rough are well-presented, use of services, carrying/storing belongings, (not employed in this count).

The final decision on the estimated single figure is made by the local authority, taking into account **all the evidence and eliminating duplicates or unsubstantiated data**. The Coordinator might need to collate further information following the estimation meeting in order to resolve any outstanding questions. Partners can raise concerns to Homeless Link if they think decisions have been made that are not in line with this guidance.

3.4 Validating the Estimate List

The list of 94 rough sleepers estimated to be rough sleeping on the night of the 6th November was verified through the following criteria:

Estimate List Criteria:

- i. Seen at least 1 month before the estimate bedded down by rough sleeping services.
- ii. No alternative accommodation options for the night (friends, family, own home).
- iii. Checked against accommodation providers for stays, including sit up (assessment spaces).

⁷ <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Estimate%20Process%202018.pdf>

- iv. Long-term rough sleepers that may not have been seen recently rough sleeping recently but are well known by outreach workers/rough sleeping organisations to be consistently rough sleeping in Oxford with no alternative options for the night.
- v. Regular contact with outreach workers, that will be able to confirm rough individuals are sleeping rough on the night of the estimate.
- vi. Those recently evicted from accommodation, did not turn up to a bed in the adult homeless pathway or released from prison/institution with no alternative accommodation options.

Estimate removal criteria:

- i. Names will be removed from the list if: any rough sleepers with any known alternative accommodation options, or who are known to sleep away outside of the Oxfordshire area are removed from the list unless proven otherwise.
- ii. Rough sleepers that were previously rough sleeping but not seen recently, despite three or more attempts for the outreach team to find them.
- iii. If a name is duplicated on another agency's list of rough sleepers.
- iv. If any agency has evidence that the person is not rough sleeping on the night of the estimate.
- v. Additional scrutiny of the list for any erroneous additions.

3.5 Statistics about Rough Sleepers on the Estimate List

The intelligence-based estimate list consisted of 94 named rough sleepers, of which:

- 87% were reported as sighted at least 1 month before the estimate night.
- The remaining names on the estimate list (13%) are persons known in the sector for rough sleeping in Oxford for 6 months or more, falling into the long-term/entrenched category (see glossary for further definitions).
- Furthermore, of these 94, 71% were reported as being seen in Oxford in the 2 weeks leading up to the estimate date by rough sleeping and outreach services.

3.6 Strengths and Limitations of the Intelligence-Informed Estimates

Strengths

- Built upon shared knowledge and expertise of experienced workers in the rough sleeping sector who have assessed the clients, have built a relationship with the client and therefore have knowledge know about individual rough sleeping behavior and any alternative accommodation options.
- Not restricted by the time or geographical constraints of patrolling on the count.
- Multiple rounds of cross-checking and eliminating names means that the quality of the final dataset is high.
- Can account for a large proportion of rough sleepers who are not accounted for in the count, due to varying behavior and choices. For example, changing their

sleep site locations frequently, the result of which is they may not be located, and therefore counted for, in the street count. More vulnerable rough sleepers (such as women or young rough sleepers) may choose to sleep in well-hidden sites for safety out of the city centre, where they cannot be found on the street count.

Limitations

- Like the count, the estimate is merely a snapshot of people rough known to be sleeping on one single night. It is therefore a limited indicator in terms of capturing the wider picture of all rough sleepers known across the city.
- There are often cases of people that have not been seen for a long time, reappearing on the streets of Oxford and found on the count or on outreach rounds). The estimated list primarily deals with rough sleepers *recently seen* eliminating this cohort.
- People who *may have* alternative sleeping arrangements or *could potentially* be out of the area are not counted in the estimate but could well be sleeping rough in Oxford on the night of the estimate.
- Evidence is based on trust of the knowledge of organisations where no physical or tangible evidence of rough sleeping can be provided such as sightings on the count.
- Where there is any uncertainty surrounding whether or not a person would have been to be rough sleeping are removed from this list, but may be rough sleeping on the night of the estimate.

3.7 Estimate Process in Oxford

The estimate is a highly rigorous and methodological process coordinated by OCC and carried out jointly with inputs from OxSPOT, Thames Valley Police, other OCC teams and other relevant commissioned services in Oxford.

Conducting both an official street count and intelligence-based estimate is rare among local authorities, but OCC has always done this to enable comparison with the findings of the annual estimates carried out by the other four Oxfordshire District Councils.

The below are the stages undergone in order to complete the intelligence-based estimate list, and then the carefully considered process of elimination by multiple parties to arrive at the final number.

Stage 1: The Initial Estimate List

- Prior to an estimate meeting, an initial list is assembled by a selection of frontline workers and representatives about rough sleepers known to be **currently** rough sleeping in Oxford. These included: Community Response Team Officers, Green Spaces and Parks Officers, Thames Valley Police

Homelessness Liaison Officers and Outreach Workers and Information Officers. Tenancy management officers gave names and intelligence - rough sleepers known to be sleeping in OCC owned property and garages. Further intelligence was provided by day services and accommodation providers for rough sleepers.

- 118 rough sleepers were originally identified by the OxSPOT team as recently rough sleeping which was reduced down to 94 rough sleepers for **the night of the estimate** in collaboration with the TVP and Oxford City Council.
- The largest list compiled is from the outreach team. This is made up of their **daily street shift diary** - their list of rough sleepers that are currently sleeping rough which is reviewed and updated on a daily basis post their street rounds which are conducted Monday - Saturday. The individuals on this list are searched for on Outreach's street rounds three times to confirm that they are rough sleeping (bedded down). If they are not found after three separate attempts, they are then removed from this list.
- If there is *any uncertainty* on whether or not a client would have been rough sleeping or accommodated for the night of the count, with grounds to believe they have alternative sleeping arrangements - such as sofa surfing, or are known to occasionally be based out of the area - they are removed from this list.
- Long-term rough sleepers who are *known to have no alternative arrangements* are included on the estimate list, as the historical knowledge based on long-term relationships and interactions between client and Outreach workers sufficiently evidences their rough sleeping.
- Detailed demographic information of the client is also captured on this list, obtained from the OxTHINK intelligence database. The purpose of this is to compile together the data from which analysis and trends can be drawn.

Stage 2: Estimate meeting

- The Estimate meeting took place on Tuesday 6th November at the Town Hall, one week prior to the street count. This was purposefully set in order to avoid any possible influence of the street count onto the Estimate process. The meeting was facilitated by OCC's Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Team.
- The meeting purpose of which being to bring together those working in frontline Rough Sleeping and Homelessness service delivery and related issues working knowledge of the known rough sleeping population together to combine their intelligence of individuals known to be rough sleeping for the night of Tuesday 6th November
- A list of names was brought to the meeting from each of the individual parties. During the course of the meeting, client names were removed for the following reasons: when it was established that there were duplications; if different

organisations or if any parties have evidence (recent interactions with rough sleepers) which demonstrated that these rough sleepers would not be rough sleeping on the night of the estimate. Such reasons can include: knowing that the individual has accommodation; knowing that the individual has alternative sleeping arrangements and thus is uncertain; knowing that the individual has relocated or been arrested.

Stage 3: Post estimate meeting

Following the estimate: rough sleepers are further investigated to be verified sleeping on the night of the estimate, by being seen both before and after the night and having no alternative accommodation options. Any rough sleepers that are suspected to be in transitional spaces such as sofa surfing or in any cases where there is uncertainty that the individual may have moved to another area are further removed from the estimate list.

Both the estimate and the count are affected by the fact that rough sleepers move around a lot and can be well hidden.

Stage 4: Finalisation of number and further removal of names

Four people were removed from the estimate post the estimate meeting during the finalisation process with the outreach team after further scrutinising names of rough sleepers that had not been seen for more than a month before the count and also not seen previously after the count either. These individuals had insufficient evidence to be rough sleeping on the night of the estimate.

This resulted in the final number of **94 names**.

4. Why are the Count and Estimate Figures Different?

The count and estimate are complementary techniques for taking a snapshot indicator the number of rough sleepers that are on the streets of Oxford.

It is noticeable that there is a discrepancy between the count and estimate figure this year. **24/45 (53%)** of people on the estimate were found on the subsequent count. Of those found on the count and not on the estimate list, **9/45 (20%)** were new rough sleepers, not previously known to the outreach team.

Of the remaining 12 rough sleepers found on the count but *not* on the estimate, **7/45 (16%)** were known to the outreach team to be sleeping rough for longer than one month and **5/45 (11%)** were *seen within the previous two weeks*. For the estimate list, a one month window for sighting of a long-term rough sleeper before the estimate night is justified.

The higher numbers recorded by this year's estimate can be explained as such:

- Across all our agencies we work with far more rough sleepers than can be sighted and counted within the methodological constraints of a street count 3 hour window.
- Higher rates of people becoming homeless and rough sleeping as a result of multiple, often complex and inter-related reasons, in line with national trends, therefore higher numbers of rough sleepers being sighted and reported.
- Increased reporting of rough sleepers leads to the increased levels of engagement and therefore of names being brought forward in the estimate process from multiple rough sleeping agencies.
- Also specific to this year is the increased planning and consolidation of additional intelligence gathered from an increased number of key frontline service providers - compared to previous years. As well as the Outreach Team and TVP, other OCC agencies and partners have been brought into the estimate meetings to ensure a greater coverage of known rough sleepers is collated. This includes Oxford City Council's: Community Response Team, Tenancy Management/Sustainment Team, and Green Spaces and Parks Officers. Homelessness Day Centre's Sit-Up provision and all accommodation providers were also asked to submit names of rough sleepers expected to be accommodated for the night, and of those, who most likely did spend the night there. Furthermore, lists of people temporarily banned, or known to be in hospital or in prison that night. All of these agencies had critical information based on current working and historical knowledge of rough sleepers to inform the estimate figure.
- Independence from having to locate individuals both in space and time allows for a higher cross section of Oxford's rough sleeping population to be captured on the estimate, based on knowledge across multiple rough sleeping service providers.
- Improved data collection methodology which has been developed between OxSPOT and Oxford City Council to collate and update information on the OxTHINK database system before the estimate, has meant that rough sleeper information about is kept much more up to date, detailed and accurate. This enabled more effective working and identifying rough sleepers.
- An ever improving, joined-up working approach to engage with more intelligence sources than in the previous year has resulted in producing a more rigorous body of evidence for the estimate but also higher numbers.
- More resourcing and higher skilled workers working in the Adult Homeless Pathway Coordination bringing into place greatly improved working practices ensuring people are assessed and accommodated more quickly and effectively.

- A combination of the factors mentioned above accounts for the *increase* in the recorded estimate number compared to last year, despite the count number decreasing.
- The *decrease* in the numbers of people found on the street count this year can be explained by the additional bed provision (41 more Oxford City beds, and the additional bed spaces for non-Oxford Local Connection clients such as the ten beds provided by Cherwell District council from Quarter 1 of this year).

5. Glossary

- **Adult Homeless Pathway (AHP)** - This is the mechanism for managing the provision of supported accommodation for rough sleepers and single homeless people across the County. This is funded by a pooled budget arrangement and hence owned and managed by the countywide Joint Management Group (JMG). The JMG consists of the five District Authorities of West Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire, Vale of the White Horse, Cherwell, Oxford City Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group.
- **Oxford Adult Homeless Pathway (AHP)** – The Oxford Adult Homeless Pathway refers to the supported accommodation commissioned by Oxford City Council directly and via the countywide joint commissioning arrangements described above, for the benefit of rough sleepers and single homeless people with a connection to Oxford.
- **“Anticipated list”** - A list compiled from recently seen rough sleepers in preparation for the street count night to assist with route planning, compiled by OxSPOT, Oxford City’s Tough Sleeping Outreach Team. This also used as a starting point for the estimate list before reducing down rough sleepers for the night of the estimate.
- **“Client”** - Anyone using rough sleeping service provision.
- **“Chronic” and “Entrenched Rough Sleepers”** - These are two groups defined within rough sleeping street populations. Entrenched rough sleepers are long-term rough sleepers (6 months +) who are service resistant; and chronic homeless - repeat, but unsuccessful users of homelessness services.
- **The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA)** - 2017 is the most ambitious legal reform in decades and places new duties on councils to prevent and relieve homelessness, including for single homeless people who are at greater risk of sleeping rough.

- **“Local Connection” (LC)** - means that a person sleeping rough has a connection to Oxford (via tenancy, family or employment). A local connection allows them access to the widest range of rough sleeping services, including supported accommodation (beds in hostels and other commissioned services) and then the ability to apply for social housing in the long-term. Related to this are the terms below, ‘None’, ‘Subject to Verification’ and ‘Investigating’.
- **MHCLG** – The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly the Department for Communities and Local Government). The Ministerial Department of the UK government responsible for housing supply, home ownership, working with communities.
- **“None”**- means that the client does not apply to this category. For example, for Local connection, people sleeping rough with ‘None’ can have lived lives where they have never had a stable home, or have chosen to live out on the streets for long periods of time.
- **OCC** - The District Authority of Oxford City Council.
- **OxSPOT** - Oxford Single Population Outreach Team. The current outreach service provision for the Oxford homeless population is the national organisation St Mungo’s.
- **“Typical night”** - in choosing the night for the estimate or count, the following factors are to be considered so that no mitigating factors will impact the count/estimate methodological process and data findings, in order to be as representative or ‘typical’ as possible. Such factors to be considered include the below:

Avoiding a night when unusual local factors may distort the numbers, such as events, festivals or charity sleep-outs, higher levels of police activity or changes to service opening times.

Identifying an appropriate day of the week: avoiding a weekend as this may mean that people bed down later or are less visible. Also taking into account of student club nights - avoiding Monday and Wednesday nights- or when big sporting events - such as football matches - take place, which may distort average levels of rough sleeping in the area.⁸

- **“Subject to verification”** - refers to a person sleeping rough who may be:
 - Newly referred to Oxford SPOT and thus very little or incomplete information is known about them.

⁸ Homeless Link *Counts & Estimates Toolkit: Estimate Process* 2018, pg. 4 <http://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/counts-and-estimates-evaluating-extent-of-rough-sleeping>

- Actively not engaging with the outreach service, making information gathering difficult.
- Only seen by the Outreach Team a few times, and the process of gathering information and investigating their background (e.g. local connection) is still underway.
- ***“Investigating”*** - means that the person sleeping rough is currently being investigated by Oxford SPOT for a piece of information, but this has not yet been confirmed. The investigation process can be lengthy and depends on client trust and engagement; the availability of information that the person sleeping rough can provide to the team, and the time it takes to verify/ cross-check this information with different parties.
- ***Local Authority (LA)*** - The five main Local Authorities that make up Oxfordshire County are the Districts of: Oxford City, Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, The Vale of the White Horse and West Oxfordshire.
- ***No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)*** - No recourse to public funds is a condition imposed on someone due to their immigration status which means they cannot access benefits or housing support. Someone will have NRPF when they are ‘subject to immigration control’.
- ***Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI)*** - This is a specific allocation of government funding targeted at local authorities with high numbers of rough sleepers, aimed at delivering tailored solutions to reduce the numbers of rough sleepers. This is part of the government’s strategy for tackling rough sleeping.