



Literature Review on Homeless Youth and Unemployment



The Future Melting Pot

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Executive Summary

This review describes the landscape of homelessness in the United Kingdom by summarising the key findings of multiple reports by different agencies. It begins by defining what is meant by homelessness and the different types of homelessness which exist. The next part of the report looks at legislation that has been enacted over the years and the impact each piece of legislation has played in reducing homelessness and its effectiveness in doing so. The scale of the homelessness problem is then determined by comparing present day data with historical data and projections of future trends. This background information will give context to the realities of homelessness.

The next section discussed the causes of homelessness by analysing both structural and individual factors. Structural factors determine the economic and social landscape which contribute to the homeless epidemic while individual factors depict how life circumstances can put individuals at risk.

The report also looked at the impact of homelessness by assessing its impact on society and the individual. This includes health, support, and financial cost of homelessness.

The final section investigated the link between youth unemployment and youth homelessness. Examining the factors behind unemployment with focus on the discrimination young homeless people face from potential employers due to stigma.

It concludes that the literature shows that homelessness is a complex issue which has multiple different causes and consequences. There are numerous gaps in the current pieces of literature including a lack of cohesive and accurate data being collected by agencies and authorities. However, one achievable area in which requires further research by a specialist body is the connection between employer stigma towards homeless youth and high levels of youth homelessness. If this can be researched further and challenged it offers a sustainable solution to youth homelessness which will also transform the future prospects of vulnerable young people.

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Introduction

Unlike common misconceptions, homelessness includes more than just individuals sleeping rough. The legal definition on homelessness is more extensive as it also includes individuals who live in unsatisfactory living conditions, individuals experiencing violence and even those at risk of violence. Homelessness levels have been on the rise in England and is projected to keep increasing unless major reforms to the welfare system is taken.

To combat the homelessness problem, several pieces of legislation have been enacted with the latest being the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This act allows councils to intervene to prevent homelessness from occurring at an earlier stage. It also allows non-priority homeless people to obtain housing assistance from their respective councils which was not previously possible. Not much is known about the effect this new act has on the homelessness problem as it has only recently been enforced. However, stakeholders have highlighted the lack of available funding and planning in the past.

This report investigates and discusses homeless youth and the rate of unemployment amongst this group. Several factors have been highlighted as the major contributing factor of homelessness. This report has also investigated the rate of unemployment amongst homeless youth. Many barriers exist against homeless and disadvantaged from entering the job market such as poor academic qualification, a lack of work experience, a hyper competitive job market, substance abuse, mental support needs and general low self-esteem.

This report concludes by listing the current initiatives that have been set in place to solve the homelessness issue.

Defining Homelessness

To begin with, it is important to understand how the council defines homelessness and the different terminologies used in this report. Individuals classified as homeless include rough sleepers as well as those who are living in unsatisfactory living conditions

Rough Sleeping

Rough sleepers are individuals who have nowhere to stay and they usually resort to sleeping or bedding down in open air areas such as parks, bus shelters and doorways. Rough sleeping also includes individuals residing in buildings or structures not designed for habitation such as car parks, cars, sheds and barns (Homeless Dublin, 2016).

Unsatisfactory Living Conditions

The Council also defines individuals who live in unsatisfactory living conditions as being homeless. Unsatisfactory living conditions includes:

- Individuals who may not have no right for residing.
- Individuals staying at unsuitable or unsafe spaces.
- Individuals who may be experiencing violence and threats.
- Individuals who are not able to stay with their immediate family whom they usually stay with.

Individuals who have no right for residing are those who are staying somewhere but are not paying rent or do not have any form of a tenancy agreement. Examples of individuals who fall under this category are those who are sleeping on a friend's sofa, those staying temporarily with relatives or friends and those squatting or staying somewhere without permission.

Individuals staying in unsuitable or unsafe spaces includes those staying in legally overcrowded accommodations and accommodations that may pose a significant risk to their health and wellbeing due to the accommodation being in such a bad condition.

Individuals can also be classified as legally homeless if they are experiencing or being threatened with domestic abuse by a partner, former partner or a family member. Those experiencing violence or serious threats from an unrelated person are also classified as being legally homeless. These violence or threats may come in the form of witness intimidation, gang-related violence, serious neighbour nuisance and racial abuse.

If individuals are unable to stay with their immediate families due to accommodation being too small, accommodation not catering for the needs of the elderly, and due to landlords not allowing children into the accommodation, then they are legally classified as homeless. (Shelter Scotland, 2018).

The councils define homelessness as shown above and individuals who fall into either of the categories may apply to their respective councils for assistance. The council is obligated to assist individuals who are legally homeless however, the level of help received depends on the eligibility, the level of need and if homelessness was the individual's fault.

Hidden Homelessness

The hidden homeless are those regarded as being homeless but have not approached or received help from local authorities (Crisis, 2016). This causes them to be hidden from official figures thus making it difficult for the government and local authorities from helping to effectively support them (London Assembly, 2017).

Statutory Homelessness

Homeless individuals who have approached authorities and are deemed to be in 'priority need' are classified of being in a state of statutory homelessness. It is the authority's responsibility to ensure that individuals that have been classified in a state of statutory homelessness will receive help and support (Crisis, 2016).

Homelessness Legislation

Discussed below are the developments of various legislation that have been set in place and designed to assist homeless individuals.

Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 was the first act that made local authorities responsible for the long-term rehousing of some groups of homeless people. This act brought about legal change and it also divided homeless people into two categories with the first being those who were prioritised, and the second being those who were not.

Housing Act 1996

The Housing Act in 1977 was consolidated into the new Housing Act of 1996. The definition of a household in priority need was specified to be one with:

- A pregnant woman.
- Dependent children.
- Someone vulnerable due to old age, mental illness, handicap or physical disability or other specific reasons.
- Made homeless due to disasters such as fires or floods.

This new housing act also introduced provisions relating to allocations, cooperation between local housing and social services authorities, and late appeals to the county court (NHAS, 2018). In general, the housing act of 1996 assisted with the prevention of homelessness and it also provided assistance to individuals who were either homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Homelessness Act 2002 & Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002

In 2002, the homelessness legislation was amended by the government in order to promote a more strategic approach in tackling and preventing homelessness. This was done by requiring every housing authority district to formulate a homelessness strategy. The legislation was also amended to strengthen the assistance available to people who were threatened by homelessness or were already homeless. For example, by extending the priority need categories to homeless 16 and 17-

year olds; care leavers aged 18-20; vulnerable individuals due to time spent in care, the armed forces, ex-convicts, and those who have fled their homes due to domestic violence (GOV.UK, 2018).

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The latest act has significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by allowing local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness. The previous Homelessness Act (2002) defined an individual who was threatened with homelessness as someone who will likely be homeless in 28 days. The current act extends the 28 days into 56 days allowing local authorities to act at earlier stages to help prevent homelessness.

As mentioned before, the previous act (2002) requires councils to determine if an applicant has 'priority need'. This meant categorising applicants into those who fell into priority needs and were unintentionally homeless and those classified as non-priority households. Those that fell in the priority need and unintentionally homeless category were secured accommodation however, those that were from non-priority households were only offered 'advice and assistance' duty only. The new act requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all affected parties irrespective of their priority need status (CIH, 2017).

Criticisms

Concerns have been raised about the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 regarding the lack of proper planning and unrealistic funding arrangements that have been set in place by the government. The government has allocated £72 million over a three-year period in order for councils to recruit new staff to cope with the expected surge in demand for homelessness assistance (Butler, 2018).

This amount may not be enough as Southwark received a grant from the government worth £1 million to test the new system and they had to top it up with an additional £750,000 of its own funds (Butler, 2018). This shortage in funding would make it impossible for councils to continue their effort to reduce homelessness without sustainable funding from the government.

Homelessness Facts and Figures

It is difficult to determine the exact number of homeless individuals in England. Comparing present data with historical data is important to determine homelessness trends. It is important to have an understanding on the scale and severity of the homelessness problem to bring attention to the government to implement more effective policy.

A collaborative mixed method study between Crisis, a charity dedicated to helping homeless people and Professor Glen Bramley of Heriot Watt University was conducted in 2017 about the projection of homelessness in Great Britain. The study separated homelessness into two distinct categories with them being “core” and “wider” homelessness. Core homelessness referred to households that were considered to be homeless at any point of time, as they were experiencing severe problems such as living in short-term or unsuitable conditions. Wider homelessness refers to households at risk of homelessness or living in accommodations on a temporary basis.

Homelessness in England in 2016

The study found that in 2016, an estimated 143,000 households were classified in the core-homelessness category in England. The majority of them were “sofa-surfing” in overcrowded households followed by those staying in hostels and shelters. The minority of homeless people on the other hand were rough sleepers.

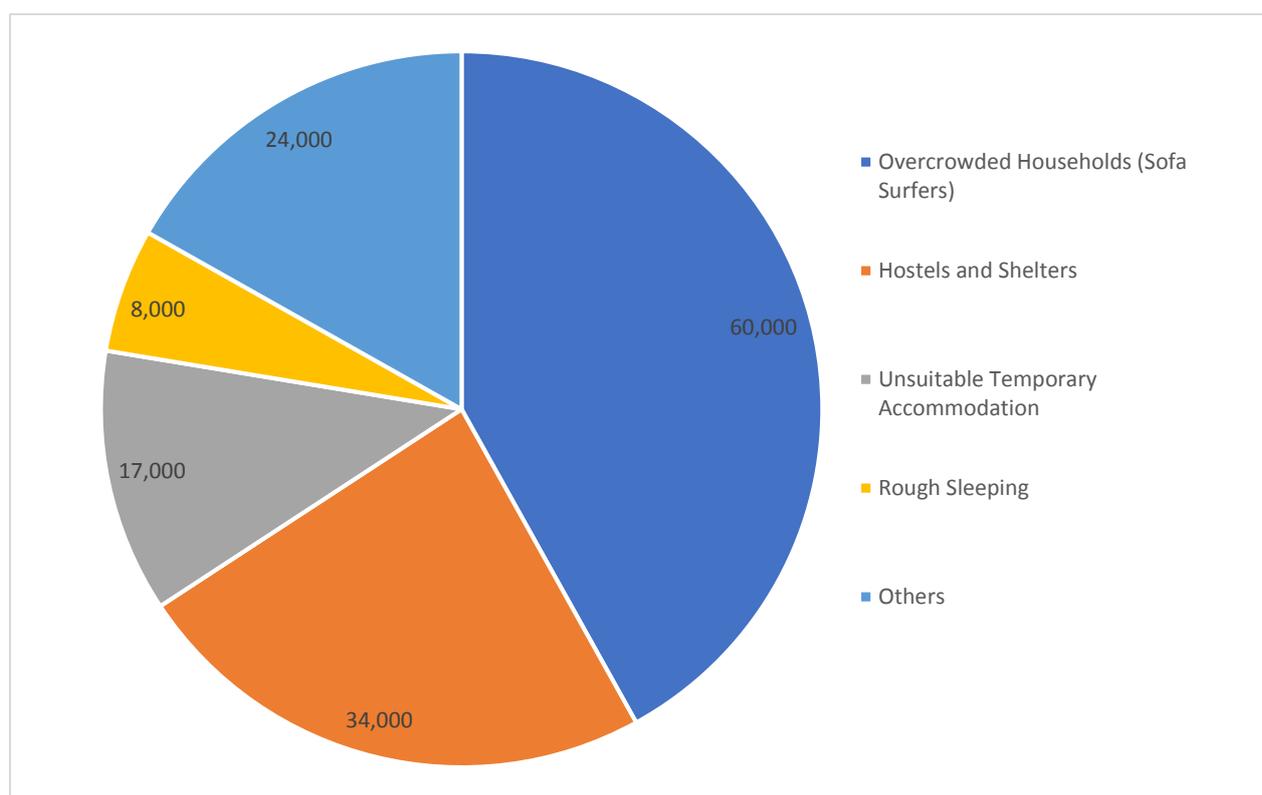


Figure 1: Pie chart of classification of homeless individuals in England in 2016 (Bramley, 2017)

Homelessness in England 2011

In 2011, 103,000 households were classified as being in the core-homeless category. The majority of them sought refuge in hostels and shelters. Following them were sofa surfers, while the minority were rough sleepers.

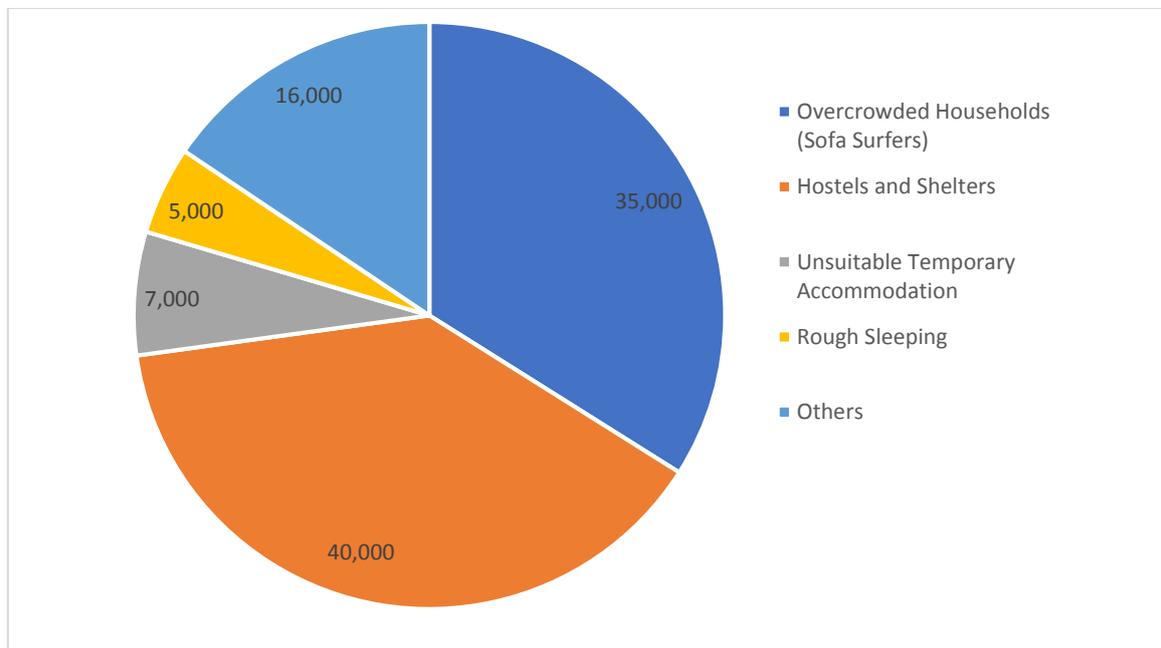


Figure 2 : Pie chart of classification of homeless individuals in England in 2011 (Bramley, 2017)

Table 1: Comparison of homelessness between 2011 and 2016

| Year | 2011 | 2016 | Change (%) |
|--|---------|---------|------------|
| Overcrowded Households (Sofa Surfers) | 35,000 | 60,000 | 71.4% |
| Hostels and Shelters | 40,000 | 34,000 | -15.0% |
| Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation | 7,000 | 17,000 | 142.9% |
| Rough Sleeping | 5,000 | 8,000 | 60.0% |
| Others | 16,000 | 24,000 | 50.0% |
| Total | 103,000 | 143,000 | 38.8% |

Between 2011 and 2016 the total number of homeless households has increased by approximately 38.8%.

Rough Sleeping Figures

The figures obtained below were submitted by the local authorities to the Department of Communities and Local Government (Harris, 2017). These estimates were determined by local intelligence or by an active count carried out on a single night which means that it may not be possible to determine the actual number of people sleeping rough. However, these figures may provide an insight on the estimated number of people sleeping rough and can be used to determine trend lines which may be used to determine the projected change in rough sleepers over the years (Harris, 2017).

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| People Sleeping Rough | 2,309 | 2,414 | 2,744 | 3,569 | 4,134 | 4,715 |
| % change from previous year | 6% | 5% | 14% | 30% | 16% | 15% |

Table 2: The number of people sleeping rough in England since 2010 (Harris, 2017)

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| People Sleeping Rough | 8 | 14 | 20 | 36 | 55 | 57 |
| % change from previous year | 14% | 75% | 43% | 80% | 53% | 4% |

Table 3: The number of people sleeping rough in Birmingham since 2010

Homelessness Projections

Bramley (2017) forecasted the future level of homelessness and found that homelessness levels were projected to continue increasing. The model used took additional variables into account and assumed that the economy and labour market will remain relatively neutral. The study also took planned welfare reforms into account. According to the model, homelessness levels in England are predicted to continue rising in the long term.

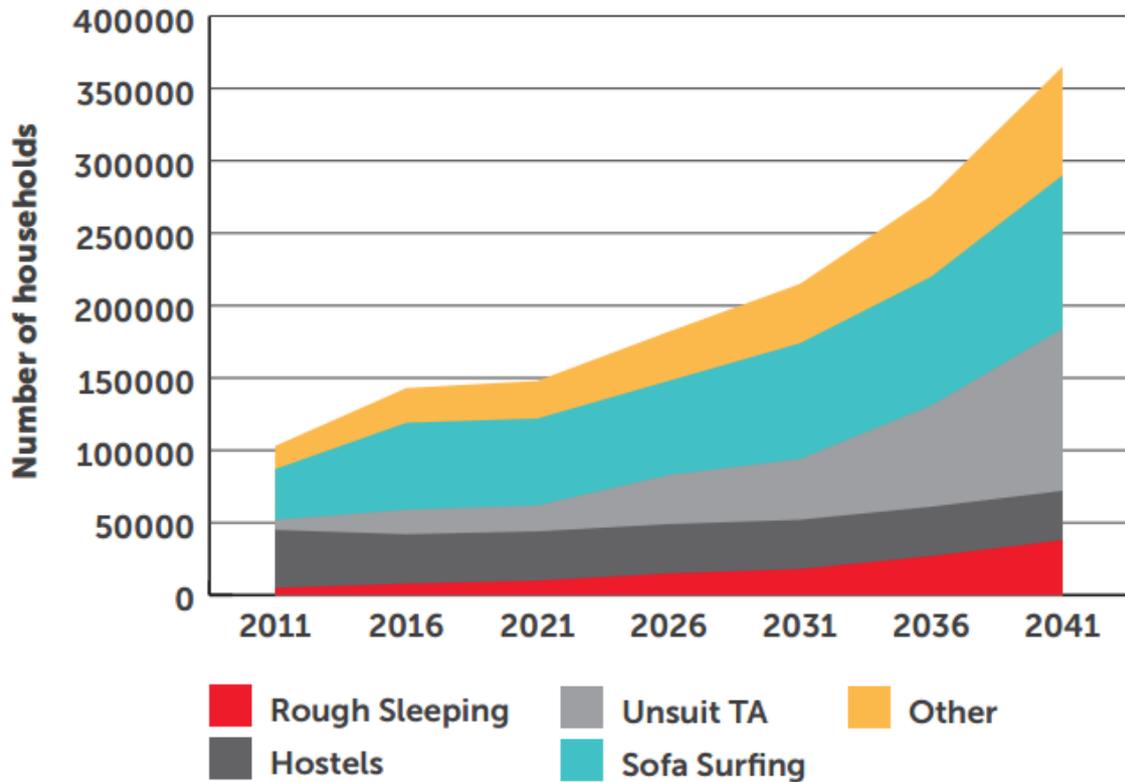


Figure 3: Baseline Forecasts of Core Homelessness in England (2011-41) (Bramley, 2017)

| | 2011 | 2016 | 2021 | 2026 | 2031 | 2036 | 2041 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Rough Sleeping | 5,000 | 8,000 | 10,000 | 15,000 | 18,000 | 27,000 | 38,000 |
| Hostels | 40,000 | 34,000 | 34,000 | 34,000 | 34,000 | 34,000 | 34,000 |
| Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation | 7,000 | 17,000 | 18,000 | 34,000 | 42,000 | 70,000 | 112,000 |
| Sofa Surfing | 35,000 | 60,000 | 60,000 | 65,000 | 80,000 | 89,000 | 106,000 |
| Other | 16,000 | 24,000 | 26,000 | 34,000 | 41,000 | 56,000 | 75,000 |
| Total | 103,000 | 143,000 | 148,000 | 182,000 | 215,000 | 276,000 | 365,000 |

Table 4: Projected forecast of core homelessness in England (2011-41) (Bramley, 2017)

Based on the data that has been collected and analysed, it is clear that homelessness levels are on the rise in England.

Youth Homelessness

It is challenging to determine the scale of youth homelessness due to its sometimes “hidden” nature and the limitations of available data. Watts, Johnsen and Sosenko (2015) compiled data regarding homelessness and found that the number of young statutory homeless acceptances in England was decreasing despite an increase in the overall number of accepted households.

| Year | Total decisions | Total number of accepted households | Number of 16-24-year olds accepted | % of acceptances of 16-24 years old | Number Accepted as vulnerable due to young person | % acceptances due to young person |
|----------------|------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| 2008/09 | 112,900 | 53,430 | 21,620 | 40% | 4,080 | 8% |
| 2009/10 | 89,120 | 40,020 | 15,510 | 39% | 2,680 | 7% |
| 2010/11 | 102,200 | 44,160 | 16,000 | 36% | 2,210 | 5% |
| 2011/12 | 108,720 | 50,290 | 17,380 | 35% | 1,980 | 4% |
| 2012/13 | 113,520 | 53,770 | 16,820 | 31% | 1,760 | 3% |
| 2013/14 | 111,610 | 52,250 | 14,380 | 28% | 1,470 | 3% |
| 2014/15 | 112,340 | 54,430 | 13,490 | 25% | 1,290 | 2% |

Table 5: Statutory homelessness decisions and acceptances 2008-09 - 2014/15, England, by age (Watts, et al., 2015)

As a result, the share of acceptances for young people who applied for assistance from their respective councils has decreased from 40% to 25%. However, the majority of homeless youth households includes pregnant women or children due to them falling in the ‘vulnerable’ category.

Concluding Remark

It is clear that the trends suggest that homelessness levels are on the rise and the authorities should take the appropriate steps to prevent it from spiralling out of control. Further, more initiatives should be introduced to help those who are already experiencing homelessness.

Also, the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act of 2017 will have an impact on the number of young people receiving help from their respective councils, however, not much is known about the impact of the new act due to unavailable data. This is because the new act does not classify homeless people as ‘vulnerable’, therefore allowing all homeless people to receive help.

Causes of Homelessness

The cause of homelessness is often divided into two broad categories with them being structural and individual. Individualistic explanations focus on the behaviour and personal characteristics of homeless people, whereas structural explanations focus on determining the causes of homelessness through analysing broader economic and social structures such as the housing and labour market (Fitzpatrick et al, 2009).

Fitzpatrick et al (2009) also determined four inter-related factors – economic, housing, interpersonal and individual – as being the root causes of homelessness. These factors may work together with the balance of factors differing over time, place and for different groups. This means that structural factors such as the economic and housing market may play a big role in homelessness rather than individual factors for certain groups. Whereas for other groups in other contexts, individual factors may play a more prominent role.

Currently, causes of homelessness can be explained through a combination of both structural and individual factors, but with an emphasis on structural factors.

Individual Issues

In the 1960s and 70s, individual factors were claimed to be the primary factors for homelessness. They include ill health, dysfunctional family backgrounds and substance abuse. For some people, individual issues may be linked to chaotic and complex life experiences.

Troubled Childhoods

A key finding from McDonagh (2011) found that Multiple Exclusion Homelessness (MEH) – a type of 'deep' social exclusion which involves not just homelessness, but also substance abuse, institutional care, and/or involvement in street culture activities such as begging and street drinking, may be linked with troubled childhoods. While it must be noted that not all people who have experienced troubled childhoods will become homeless or have complex lives, traumatising childhood experiences will have a negative impact on an individual's life course.

Experiences such as bullying, abuse, domestic violence, witnessing alcoholism, or a combination of these experiences may affect the way a child perceives their place in the world. Such events will not only affect the well-being of a child, it will also have a ripple effect throughout the child's life, and it will hinder the development and maintenance of self-esteem and their ability to form meaningful relationships (McDonagh, 2011).

Poor Mental Health

Having poor mental health may cause an individual to be more susceptible to the three main reasons that can lead to homelessness: poverty, disaffiliation and personal vulnerability. Due to them lacking the capacity to sustain employability, they will have minimal income and thus lower resources. Mental illness may also harm the ability for an individual to be resilient and resourceful and it may cloud the judgement and thinking of the person. These reasons are why people with mental illnesses may be at a greater risk of experiencing homelessness.

Following being homeless, the mental health of the individual may become worse due to the associated stress. Mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety may worsen and the individual may turn to substance abuse.

Substance Abuse

Substance abuse is a common cause of homelessness. Addictive disorders may cause disruptions to relationships with family and friends and it may also cause individuals to lose their jobs. For individuals already struggling to pay their bills, spending money to buy substances may cause them to not be able to pay their bills and may lead to homelessness.

A survey conducted in 2008 found that substance abuse was the biggest contributing factor towards homelessness for single adults. Didenko & Pankratz (2007) also found that two-thirds of homeless people reported substance abuse as the major reason for them being homeless.

Structural Issues

In the 1980s, structural factors began to dominate over individual issues. Structural factors may include housing shortages, poverty and unemployment.

The State of the Economy

During times of recessions or depressions, the job market deteriorates causing mass joblessness. This shows that the overall levels of unemployment and poverty is greatly affected by the state of the economy. The availability of credit also has an effect on the ability of the government to build more homes.

Housing Markets

There is a correlation between local housing market variables and homelessness rates as cities with higher rates of homelessness often have higher rents (Honig & Filer, 1993). A study was conducted by Kemp, Lynch, & Mackay (2001) to determine if structural factors could explain the varying rates of homelessness in different areas. They found a long-running statistical relationship between the housing market and homelessness, demonstrating a link between the price of housing markets and homelessness which supports the findings of other researchers.

Unemployment

The relationship between unemployment and homelessness has been established as numerous studies have found that there are high rates of unemployment among the homeless community. However, it is unclear if unemployment is a cause or effect of homelessness. Empirically, findings have suggested that the relationship between unemployment rates and homelessness are weak. As a result, unemployment is typically viewed as a proxy for poverty rather than a variable which may lead to homelessness. While some individuals may associate joblessness as being a risk factor due to having less resources, the majority of studies do not link homelessness with unemployment (Johnson et al, 2015).

This may be explained as unemployment rates also include people who are unemployed for a short period of time and it is unlikely that they will experience homelessness. Pinkney & Ewing (2006) have argued that long-term unemployment should be utilised in studies seeking to understand homelessness rather than the overall unemployment rate. This is because long-term unemployed

individuals which may include single-parent families, and people with chronic physical and mental health conditions, usually rely on government benefits and this factor makes them particularly vulnerable to homelessness.

Poverty

Individuals are considered to be experiencing poverty if their disposable household income is below 60% of the national median. The disposable income is the leftover money after subtracting the Income Tax, National Insurance and Council Tax (Webber & Clark, 2017).

The rising levels of poverty is strongly associated with homelessness. It is difficult for a household experiencing poverty to afford basic necessities such as education, food, housing and health care. Due to limited income, the 'poorest of the poor' are often just an illness, divorce, accident or any other personal disaster away from homelessness (Timmer, et al., 1994).

Leaving Prison

Shelter Scotland (2015) found that individuals who spent time in prison had a higher chance of ending up homeless. They also found that prisoners who had difficulties securing accommodation were also more likely to reoffend. Official statistics has shown that 6% of statutory homeless applications came from former inmates. This is a significant representation when compared against national demographics. Shelter Scotland (2015) also found that 30% of ex-cons did not know where to live after being released from prison.

Concluding Remark

The reality is that the causes of homelessness are far more complex and thinking about homelessness from either a structural or individual way may not be the most effective method as it oversimplifies an extremely complex problem.

Main Causes of Rough Sleeping in England

Shelter and Broadway are charities with the aim of reducing homelessness ran a study and identified the top ten factors for homelessness by surveying rough sleepers.

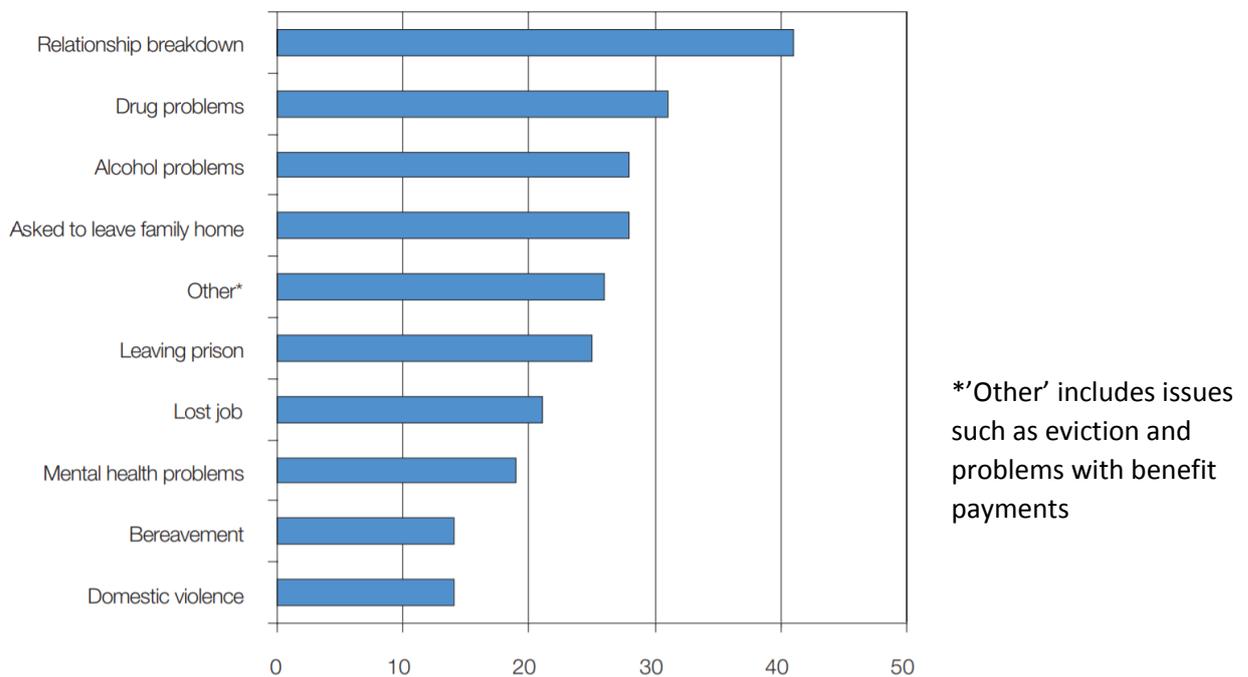


Figure 4: Factors that contributed to homelessness for rough sleepers (Blake, et al., 2008)

It must be noted that it is incredibly difficult to rank the various contributing factors of homelessness due to factors overlapping one another and the fact that homeless individuals tend to experience several of them over a long period of time.

Homelessness Among Youth in England

Data compiled by the Youth Homelessness Databank in 2015/16 stated the primary reasons why young people across England experienced homelessness. It should be noted however that this data may be incomplete as it includes all young people who approached local authorities regardless if their application for assistance was accepted or declined. The data also only accounts for 63% of local councils in England. The data however gives an overall picture of the reasons youths experience homelessness in England.

| Factor | Number of Youth |
|---|------------------------|
| Parents no longer willing to accommodate | 4,704 |
| Relatives or friends no longer able to or willing to accommodate | 1,934 |
| All reasons related to loss of accommodation | 1,779 |
| All other reasons for loss of last settled home | 1,342 |
| Non-violent breakdown of relationship with partner | 1,067 |
| All reasons for leaving institutions or LA care | 573 |
| All reasons related to rent arrears | 490 |
| All types of harassment, threats or intimidation | 316 |
| Required to leave accommodation provided by home office as asylum support | 99 |
| Mortgage arrears | 7 |

Table 6: Reasons for homelessness in England in 2015/16 (Youth Homelessness Databank, 2018)

Impact of Homelessness

On Homeless Individual

Poor housing has a huge impact on the wellbeing of an individual as it affects all areas of their life. This causes homeless people to often feel like they lack a place in community. There are many issues affecting homeless people and this section investigates the most prominent.

Physical Health

More health problems are reported for homeless people than the general population. This is especially true for rough sleepers who reported the most health problems. A study was conducted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (1994) and found that six out of ten people sleeping rough, and four out of ten people staying in hostels and B&Bs, experienced more than one health problem compared with the general population which had two out of ten people. Rough sleepers were particularly affected due to a lack of shelter and warmth with most of them experiencing chronic chest or breathing problems.

Mental Health

With regards to mental health, a larger percentage of single homeless people experienced conditions such as depression, anxiety and nerves as compared to the general population. As compared with the 5% of the general population experiencing mental health issues, 28% of hostel and B&B residents, 36% of day centre users and 40% of soup run users reported having mental health issues. The study also found that two thirds of homeless people did not seek treatment for their mental health issues (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1994).

Substance Abuse

Substance abuse may be a cause or a result of homelessness which often arises after people lose their houses. It was found that alcohol abuse was more prevalent amongst the older generation whereas drug abuse was more common in young adults and homeless youths (Didenko & Pankratz, 2007).

The levels of drug and alcohol abuse amongst the homeless community is relatively high. Pleace & Bretherton (2017) found that 27% of homeless individuals who approached Crisis had reported problematic substance abuse. Also, approximately 66% of rough sleepers cite substance abuse as a reason for becoming homeless with those using drugs being seven times more likely to become rough sleepers.

Substance abuse has become a common cause of death amongst the homeless population and it is estimated to be responsible for over a third of all deaths. Thomas (2012) has found that homeless people were seven to nine times more likely to die from an alcohol-related illness and 20 times more likely of dying from drugs.

Crisis has come up with the solution of prioritising permanent housing for rough sleepers with the assumption that independent accommodation is important to prepare them for independent living. Also, like all addictions, substance abuse should be viewed as an illness which requires counselling, treatment and support to overcome (Pleace & Bretherton, 2017).

On Society

Research has suggested that the cost incurred by the state in assisting a homeless young person who is around 16-17 years old and is not in education, employment or training (NEET) is approximately £12,200 per year. For a NEET homeless person who is between 18-24 years old, the cost rises to £19,400. It is estimated that 83,000 young people experience homelessness annually. The number of young homeless individuals whom are NEET is about 58% and that equates to roughly about £556 million per year (Centrepont, 2016).

Tax Foregone

High unemployment levels amongst homeless youth may cause losses in the form of benefit payments and taxation. It can be assumed that unemployment amongst homeless youths would cause approximately £80.40 for NEET 16-17-year olds and £263.65 for NEET 18-24 years old of earnings to be forgone.

Currently, the tax rate is 20% for those with incomes over £11,000. This means that the weekly amount taxed from each group should be approximately:

- £0 for 16-17-year olds as their wages are below the threshold
- £10.42 for 18-24-year olds.

The marginal rate for the contribution to National Insurance by employees is 12%. If the wage is above the £155 per week lower threshold, the employer's contribution is 13.8%. Employers however do not need to contribute to the National Insurance if their employee is under 21 years of age and is earning less than £827 per week.

The average gross earnings of 16-20-year-old NEETs is £155 per week whereas for 20 to 24-year-old NEETs, it is £301.05. This means that the amount of tax forgone is approximately:

- £0 per week for 16-20-year olds
- £41.47 per week for 21-24-year olds

The public finance costs of being homeless between 16 to 24 is extremely high due to losses in tax revenue and benefit payments. More preventive social policies should be introduced to prevent youths from becoming homeless in the first place.

Relationship between NEETs and Homeless Youth

Research by Centrepont (2015) has suggested that young homeless people are more likely to be NEET. Approximately 48% of Centrepont's young users are NEET as compared to 11.9% of the national population. Many barriers exist between young homeless individuals and employment. Without employment, transitioning to independent living would prove to be extremely challenging for homeless youths. It was also found that young people who are NEET, will on average have poorer life outcomes the longer they are unemployed.

Distinction between Unemployment and Economically Inactive

Unemployment is used to describe individuals without a job who have been actively seeking one within the last four weeks and are able to commence work in the next two weeks. The term economically inactive on the other hand is used to describe individuals who do not have employment and have not been seeking employment in the last four weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next two weeks.

Statistics Regarding NEETs

There were approximately 794,000 youths in the UK who were classified as NEET in March of 2018. This is represented as 11.2% of youths in the UK. Of all young people who were NEET, 41.6% were actively pursuing employment and are therefore classified as unemployed with the remainder being economically inactive (Office for National Statistics, 2018).

The statistics below show the differences in unemployment between NEET individuals with homes and NEET individuals who are homeless.

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| NEET and Homeless | From Centrepont's own internal data <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 43% of NEET 16-17-year olds are unemployed.• 68% of NEET 18-24-year olds are unemployed. |
| NEET | From ONS Data <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 45% of NEET 16-17-year olds are unemployed.• 44% of NEET 18-24-year olds are unemployed. |

Table 7: Unemployment amongst NEET in England (Centrepont, 2016)

The table shows that a larger percentage of homeless NEET individuals who were between the ages of 18 and 24 were unemployed.

Academic Underachievement

People who underachieve academically tended to earn less than their peers with higher academic achievements on average. They are also more likely to be unemployed.

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| NEET | ONS data estimates that 40% of NEET 16-17-year olds are unemployed and have no qualifications above Level 1. The same source also states that 41% of NEET 18-24-years old are unemployed and have no qualifications. |
| NEET and Homeless | Centrepoinťs internal data between July 2014 -July 2016 found that 37% of 16-17-year olds who approached Centrepoinť were unemployed and have no qualifications above Level 1. The data also revealed that 67% of 18-24-year olds were unemployed with no qualifications. |

Table 8: Educational Attainment of NEET and NEET and homeless (Centrepoinť, 2016)

It is observed that homeless NEET are more likely to have lower academic achievements as compared with other NEETs. However, it must be noted that there were no available statistics from the Office of National Statistics regarding the academic achievement of NEETs who were homeless. Data from Centrepoinť only included homeless NEETs who approached Centrepoinť and it does not take the hidden homeless population into account.

Prior Educational Experiences

The key drivers for non-participation in higher education and NEET were determined by SEU (1999) to be academic underachievement, dissatisfaction with the education system, family disadvantages and poverty.

Buzzeo et al, (2016) has determined several contributing factors that may have caused homeless young people to underachieve academically. These factors include negative experiences while they were in education such as bullying and getting into fights which might have affected their attendance and their subsequent academic performance. Other interviewees reported being influenced by their peers with bad behaviour which included playing truant. Several said that they were not given the required one-to-one support which may have affected their self-confidence and attainment.

NEETs who progressed to college found that the academic content was less engaging than as in school and several dropped out due to experiencing bullying and getting into fights. Those who dropped out with few or no qualifications were regretful (Buzzeo, et al., 2016).

Lack of Experience and High Competition in Labour Market

In general, young people are disadvantaged due to a lack of experience and work-related skills as compared to older adults in the labour market. This presents a greater challenge for young people with few or no qualifications, minimal work experience, and low skill levels when competing with older adults with more work experience for employment (Atkinson & Williams, 2003).

A focus group conducted by Buzzeo, et al. (2016) found that disadvantaged youths were dejected about their chances of securing employment due to their lack of qualifications and experience. Due to their lack of experience, the disadvantaged youths were not able to seek employment and in turn, they were not able to gain the experience needed for employment. Some had taken on work placements however, it was not deemed to be sufficient by employers. A lack of opportunities and high competition in the labour market also made it difficult for them to secure jobs.

High competition in the labour market is also evident due to the fact that approximately half of recent graduates – defined as graduates who have left full-time education in the last five years - in the UK were employed in non-graduate jobs. This has caused unemployment rates for graduates to be much lower as compared to non-graduates. This is due to graduates entering jobs in which they are over qualified, making it more difficult for non-graduates to find employment (Allen, 2013).

As determined before, the majority of unemployed homeless youths were found to have few or no qualifications and this presents an enormous challenge when they begin job-seeking. This has caused the youths who took part in the focus group to admit that they lacked motivation and were applying for jobs in order to continue claiming welfare benefits (Buzzeo, et al., 2016).

Low Confidence, Self-esteem and Personal Motivation

It was noted that disadvantaged youths had the mind-set that they were 'good for nothing' due to their prior educational attainment, family circumstance and their ability to join the labour market. Low confidence and self-esteem pose as barriers for progress. Negative routines whilst living in supported accommodation was also deemed to be another barrier of getting into and staying in employment. Negative routines included a general lack of discipline, irregular sleeping patterns, and unhealthy eating which in turn resulted in poor attendance and time keeping while in employment (Buzzeo, et al., 2016).

Financial Pressure and Housing Difficulties

A lack of funds is the main factor that prevents disadvantaged individuals from finding accommodation due to the initial payment deposit. Most disadvantaged youths lack family support and the accompanying financial buffer. This causes homeless youths to turn to supported housing which may cause discrimination when they are job-hunting.

Supported housing is a pathway out of homelessness which presents its own set of barriers such as the huge increase in rent that residents have to pay when they find employment. This has created a disincentive to find a job as residents would not be able to save money due to the increase in rental thus not allowing them to buy their own property.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Homeless youths generally have higher support needs due to a large proportion of them abusing substances and having mental health issues as mentioned before. These issues may prevent them from being able to maintain a job or to focus on training and education.

Anger management issues which are prevalent amongst former youth offenders may prevent them from completing training or maintaining employment due to their unpredictable nature and violent tendencies. Several focus group participants acknowledged being excluded from school or having lost jobs due to these issues (Buzzeo, et al., 2016).

Institutional Care

Homeless Link (2015) found that 14% of clients had a history of offending. There is a perception among employers that people with criminal convictions may be untrustworthy, unreliable and not highly skilled. Due to the stigma employers have on ex-offenders, it will be extremely difficult for ex-convicts to be able to secure jobs.

A third of homeless youths have also been in care. This suggests that the care system may not be adequately providing young people with the necessary skills to make a transition into adulthood. This is supported by Homeless Link (2015) which discovered that 61% of homeless youths who have experienced care or chaotic home lives lacked independent living skills. A lack of living skills may have caused them to lack the necessary stability needed for entering employment, education or training.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the unfair treatment of an individual due to their identity or because they possess certain characteristics. The Equality Act 2010 lists the protected characteristics which include age, gender, race, disability, religion, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnerships (Acas, 2017). Research has suggested that discrimination is likely to negatively affect the well-being of a person.

Apart from personal and economic hardships, the homeless population also faces discrimination and expulsion due to their housing status. Marchak (1996) describes pervasive discrimination as the state in which discrimination is unrelenting and that everyone and everything is affected by it. Pervasive discrimination occurs towards homeless people particularly when it comes to their access to accommodation as well as to goods and services. This has led to the high rates of poor health amongst them.

Why are the homeless facing discrimination?

Despite the fact that the homeless community needs care and compassion, research has suggested that they are not perceived as being fully human. Evidence suggest that when the stigmatized identity is seen to be controllable to some extent (e.g. unemployment, drug addiction or obesity), it leads to legitimized forms of discrimination. As housing is perceived as being under an individual's control, the homeless community is seen as being responsible for their absence of adequate housing (Johnstone, et al., 2015).

A study conducted on stereotypes and measured how the subjects perceived other people used two primary dimensions, competence and warmth. It was found that homeless people were perceived to be neither competent nor warm thus placing them as being "the lowest of the low" (Fiske, et al., 2002).

Homeless people may not only be discriminated for their lack of housing but they may be discriminated for other reasons. Many rough sleepers may have substance abuse problems and mental illnesses and these conditions present high levels of stigma in society (Barry, et al., 2014).

These reasons have contributed to the worst kinds of prejudice – disgust and contempt – and it may cause homeless people to be dehumanized (Harris & Fiske, 2006).

How are they discriminated?

There are countless reports of discrimination against the homeless community. For instance, one homeless woman described that she was "laughed at" by council staff after exposing her personal experiences. Her ordeal was so humiliating that she did not want to continue seeking help from the council (Bloomer, 2016).

Sleeping rough is considered to be a crime under Section 4 of the Vagrancy Act. This has led to homeless people to be given tickets and to be forcibly removed from city centres. For instance, Windsor council plans to impose a £100 fine on rough sleepers as part of their new "homelessness support strategy". This new measure has attracted criticism with homeless charities arguing that it is wrong to penalise homeless people simply because they are homeless (Greenfield, 2018).

Stereotypes may prevent an employer from considering an application properly due to the negative perception regarding the homeless community. This may cause homeless people who do not have a fixed address to be discriminated against. For instance, individuals who become homeless due to bad luck such as being involved in an accident and suffering serious injuries may be discriminated. Jeff Johnson, who suffered from injuries in a robbery and consequently lost his job and became homeless. Upon recovery, Johnson applied for many entry-level positions without success and he suspects that using the address of a homeless shelter may have caused potential employers to discriminate against his application due to the perceived stigma against homeless people (Golabek-Goldman, 2016). This means that the companies may be exerting systematic discrimination against the homeless community when they require jobseekers to provide an address in a job application.

Initiatives to Solve Homelessness

Several prevention and reduction methods have been utilised to help solve the homelessness crisis. Prevention methods are set in place to assist those whom are threatened with homelessness, whereas reduction methods work by reducing the number of homeless individuals by offering them help in the form of accommodation to get them off the streets. Both charities and governments must work hand-in-hand to reduce and prevent homelessness.

Government Initiatives

The new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 requires councils to give assistance to all at risk of becoming homeless including those who might be considered 'intentionally homeless'. Prevention methods include making information and advice available for free for all residents. Advice that is available includes advice on the prevention of homelessness, the securing of accommodation and on how to access help. Tailored advice is also available especially for vulnerable groups such as domestic abuse victims and young adults leaving care. Another homelessness prevention initiative is the formation of a personalised housing plan based on the needs and circumstances for those who are threatened or already homeless. This housing plan includes 'reasonable steps' that have been set in place by local authorities and the applicant to prevent homelessness or to secure alternative housing (GOV.UK, 2017).

Charity Initiatives

Charities work on homelessness prevention by influencing the government, local authorities and housing provider's policy. This is done by campaigning to bring awareness on the homelessness problem. For instance, a homelessness charity, Crisis, lobbied with hundreds of campaigners on the 10th of October of 2016 to bring attention to MPs to support the Homelessness Reduction Act which was eventually passed in 2017 (Crisis, 2018). Charities also work on empowering homeless people, conducting research and publishing reports about the scale of the homelessness issue.

For instance, St Basils which works with young homeless individuals has formulated a Learning, Skills and Work (LSW) team to engage with its residents in order to empower them with the necessary skills for them to become truly independent.

Housing First

Housing First is an evidence-based approach to provide access to stable and independent housing for homeless people with complex needs. Apart from housing, Housing First also provides intensive support that is condition-free apart from a willingness to sustain the tenancy. Residents include individuals experiencing disadvantages that come in the form of housing, physical and mental health, those who came in contact with the criminal justice system, education and employment, and social integration. It is estimated that 58,000 adults in the UK experience multiple disadvantages.

Summary

Following the completion of this literature review, it can be concluded that the data available is not comprehensive and detailed enough as it does not include the hidden homeless population. This may have caused inaccuracies in several of the reports as they do not represent the whole situation. This is due to unreliable methods for gathering data, such as, the method employed by councils in determining the number of rough sleepers. Different methods for collecting data may also cause inaccuracies and a guideline for data collection should be formulated to allow councils to collect better data.

The new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has just been enforced and there is no available data following the adoption of this piece of legislation. This act does prioritise certain groups of homeless people. The lead up to the adoption of this act has been criticised with regards to planning and funding. For instance, Southwark was chosen to test this new system and it received a grant from the government. However, the grant proved to be insufficient and they had to top it up with their own funds to continue their effort in homelessness reduction. Insufficient funding would therefore cause this new system to be unsustainable and only time will tell how this new system works out.

This review also investigated the causes of homelessness which were classified into either structural or individual causes. The research reveals that, homelessness is a complex problem which is usually caused by a combination of different factors over time. These factors are usually a mix of individual situations and complex structural inadequacies which result in someone becoming homeless. The impact of becoming homeless is significant for both the individual and society, due to the social and economic cost.

Unemployment levels among homeless NEETs were compared with NEETs and it was observed that unemployment rates among 16-17-year olds were similar. On the other hand, unemployment rates for 18-24-year-old homeless NEETs were significantly higher than NEETs. Several reasons were investigated and it was determined that academic underachievement, lack of work experience and low self-esteem were determined to be the major contributing factors.

However, there was limited research on discrimination and the perception of employees on homeless NEETs. This has been determined to be a significant gap in the current literature. Studies on the perception of the public on homeless individuals have shown that the public view homeless people as being incompetent and cold. This means that the homeless community is regarded as the "lowest of the low". This may have contributed to unemployed NEETs seeking employment being systematically discriminated when they do not have a permanent address or are living in assisted accommodations.

Research on the perception of homeless NEETs seeking employment is also not available. From this research, it may be possible to formulate training schemes with aim to empower homeless NEETs with the necessary skills to gain and retain employment while also supporting them with their health/emotional requirements.

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