
Homelessness in Cumbria

By admin

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Street homeless and hidden homeless

The most visible and extreme form of homelessness is that of people sleeping rough on the streets. Rough sleeping counts are conducted by Local Authorities in partnership with local homelessness agencies. These counts provide a useful snapshot of how many people are sleeping rough in a given geographical area on a single night. In Cumbria these counts have previously showed up none, or very few, actual 'street-homeless'. However, this doesn't mean that there isn't a homelessness problem in the county. There are many people who are homeless but don't show up on these or any other government statistics: including those who temporarily stay with family and/ or friends (referred to as 'sofa surfing') and people who live in squats – both referred to as the 'hidden homeless'.

Statutory Homelessness

Statutory homelessness figures relate to the definition of homelessness in the [Housing Act, 1996](#). Statistics are collected on those who apply to their Local Authority homelessness department for assistance and those who are deemed to be homeless under the legal definition. These statutory statistics can be found on the [Communities and Local Government](#) (CLG) website. The most recent statistics published are for the last quarter of 2007. The various boroughs of Cumbria differ widely on how many people they take homelessness applications from and what their decisions end up being:

Allerdale; 74 people made a full application; 42 were accepted as being homeless, in priority need and unintentional.

Barrow in Furness; 69 people applied; 18 were accepted as above.

Carlisle; 77 applied; 43 were accepted

Copeland; 43 applied; 24 were accepted

Eden; 7 applied; 4 were accepted

South Lakeland; 31 applied; 15 were accepted

This information however, does not give an accurate picture as to how many people actually approach their Local Authority with a housing/ homelessness query. On a daily basis there are people who seek advice and assistance but do not complete a full homeless application and therefore will not be counted in the published statistics. For example, between April and December 2007 Copeland Borough Council saw 302 people requiring advice and assistance in addition to those who completed full applications. In the same period, Allerdale Borough Council saw 262 people.