



No way out

Children stuck in B&Bs during lockdown

August 2020

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Introduction from the Children's Commissioner

Last year, my report *Bleak Houses* found that there were around 210,000 homeless children in England. This included 120,000 children being housed by their council in temporary accommodation.



Temporary accommodation comes in many forms, but unfortunately it is often very poor quality. My team spoke to families living in homes that were cramped, noisy and sometimes unsafe. Children told us they lacked space to play or do homework, and some spoke of their fears when forced to share kitchens or bathrooms with adults engaged in crime, anti-social behaviour or with substance abuse issues.

Since the publication of the *Bleak Houses* report, the world has been changed by Covid-19. Lockdown has impacted on all children, but at a time when so much of life is centred on the home, it has had stark implications for children who are homeless.

As the crisis unfolded, I was particularly concerned about the prospect of children living through lockdown in B&Bs. As *Bleak Houses* showed, families placed by their council in B&Bs are often living in single rooms, and share kitchen and bathroom facilities with other households. I was worried that this would make it difficult for families to take protective measures and socially distance in the ways called for by Government guidance. It would also present real challenges to children who were unable to attend school and therefore needed to do schoolwork from their B&Bs. In March I wrote to senior civil servants at the Ministry of Housing, Local Government and Communities and the Department for Education outlining these concerns.

The Government recognised the importance of a safe and stable home during the pandemic, by investing an unprecedented £105 million to get rough sleepers off the streets. But no similar national efforts were made to move vulnerable children into more appropriate accommodation, with decisions left in the hands of local authorities as to whether to stop using B&Bs to house homeless families during this time.

To find out more about the local response to the crisis, I issued a data collection to the 15 local authorities with the highest numbers of children in B&B accommodation according to the most recent publicly available data.

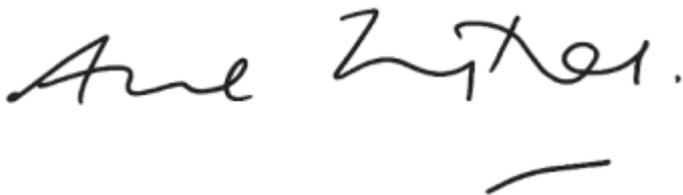
This research estimates that there were between 1,100 – 2,000 families in England in B&Bs on 23 March. We estimate this range has dropped to between 750 and 1,350 by the time full lockdown ended on 31 May. It is positive to see an overall reduction. In some cases we know that local authorities were already reducing the numbers of families in B&Bs before Covid-19 struck, while there are others who made deliberate efforts to move families out during lockdown. These councils show that reducing the number of families in B&Bs can be done, and it was the right thing to do.

However, it is still very concerning that across England over 1,100 families may have spent part of lockdown in B&Bs, including, as the data in this report shows, as many as 550 families who lived there continually throughout the whole of lockdown. Furthermore, there was an increase in the proportion of families who had spent longer than 6 weeks in B&Bs between 23 March and 31 May, despite this being unlawful.

The impact on families of living through lockdown in a B&B cannot be underestimated. My team heard from one family who were terrified that their accommodation was also being used to house NHS workers who were shielding from their own families.

Homeless children will need to be prioritised for extra support in the weeks and months to come, including tuition and other catch up help at school being funded by the Department for Education's £1 billion catch-up programme.¹ In the event of further lockdowns, the Government must instruct councils to move families out of B&Bs and provide the funding to enable them to do so. And more needs to be done to prevent a new wave of family homelessness over the next few months. There needs to be a package of support put in place to help families meet housing costs, as the eviction ban and furlough scheme come to the end.

The Government's actions to house rough sleepers have shown that homelessness need not be a fact of life. Now more than ever, bold action must be taken to stop children in England having to live in temporary accommodation like B&Bs.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Longfield". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature is a short, horizontal black line.

Anne Longfield OBE
Children's Commissioner for England

¹ In June the Government announced £1 billion of funding on an education catch-up plan. £650 million will be available to schools to use how they see fit to enable children who have fallen behind to catch up. £350 million will fund the National Tutoring Programme which will provide subsidised tutoring.

What the data shows

The Children's Commissioner's Office (CCO) issued a data request to the 15 local authorities (LAs) with the highest numbers of children in B&Bs before the pandemic struck,² according to the most recent national data which was available at the time of the data request.³ These 15 local authorities together accounted for 63% of all families housed in B&Bs in England at that time. The CCO wanted to find out:

- > How many families in each LA were living in B&Bs at the start of lockdown on 23 March, including those who had been there longer than the six week legal limit.
- > How many families in each LA were living in B&Bs when full lockdown ended on 31 May, including those who had been there longer than the six week legal limit.
- > How many families in each LA spent the entirety of lockdown (23rd March to 31st May) in B&B accommodation.

This briefing sets out the findings and outlines what needs to be done to protect homeless children as the country enters a "new normal".

² These local authorities were: Birmingham, Croydon, Ealing, Essex, Greenwich, Lewisham, Liverpool, Luton, Manchester, Newham, Sandwell, Slough, Tameside, Waltham Forest and Warwickshire.

³ MHCLG, Dec 2019:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/886394/DetailedLA_201912.xlsx. Note that neither this data, nor the data we have collected, captures families who are living in council-owned B&Bs (which do not meet the Government's definition of a B&B), or families housed by children's services rather than under housing legislation.

The picture at the start of lockdown

When lockdown began on 23 March there were 714 families housed in B&Bs across the 15 LAs surveyed by the CCO.

Newham and Slough both had no families in B&Bs at the start of lockdown, compared to 133 and 33 families respectively in October-December 2019. Lewisham and Luton both had fewer than 5 families in B&Bs at the start of lockdown respectively.

Three LAs had more than 100 families in B&Bs when lockdown began: Birmingham, Ealing and Manchester. In Ealing, the number of families housed in B&Bs increased between the end of 2019 and the start of lockdown, from 132 to 156 families, continuing the trend in increasing quarterly totals for this local authority. All other LAs in the sample saw decreases with the exception of Liverpool (3 more families than at 30th December 2019).

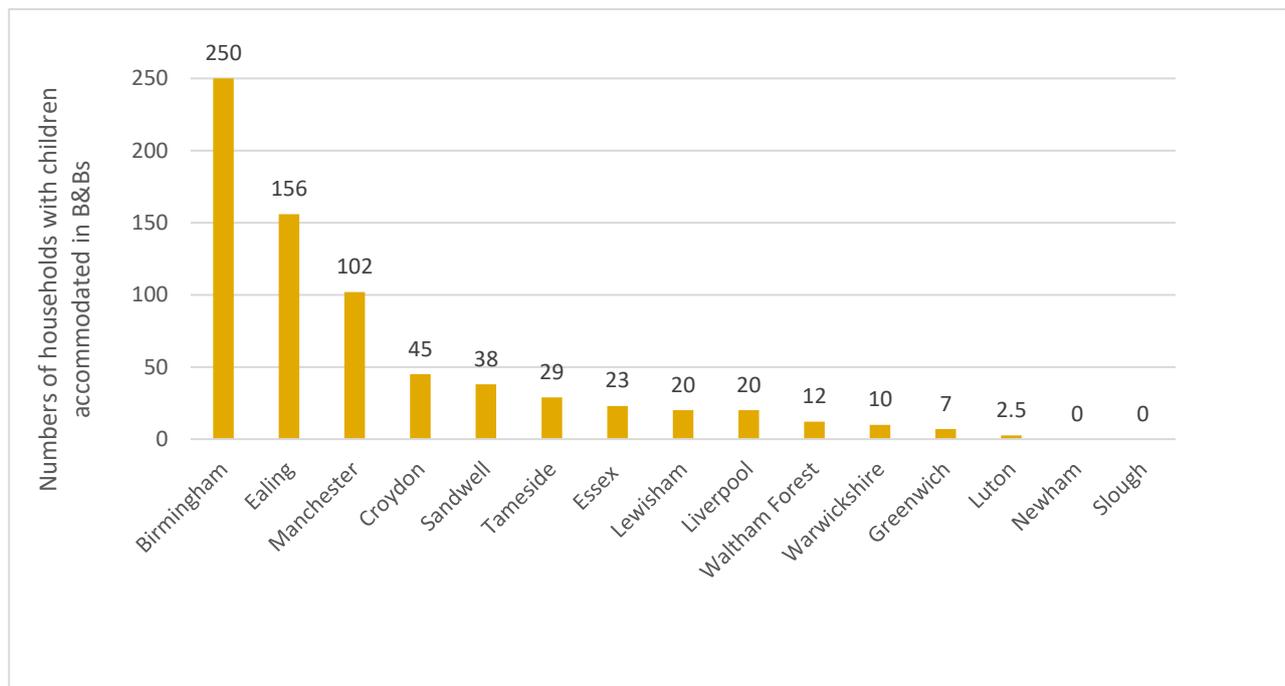


Figure 1 - Number of households with children accommodated in B&Bs on 23/03/20. Note: values between 1 and 5 have been set to 2.5 to avoid disclosure

Councils are only legally allowed to house homeless families in B&Bs for a maximum of 6 weeks. Yet out of the 714 families in B&Bs at the start of lockdown in these 15 local authorities, over 4 in 10 had been there longer than that legal limit.

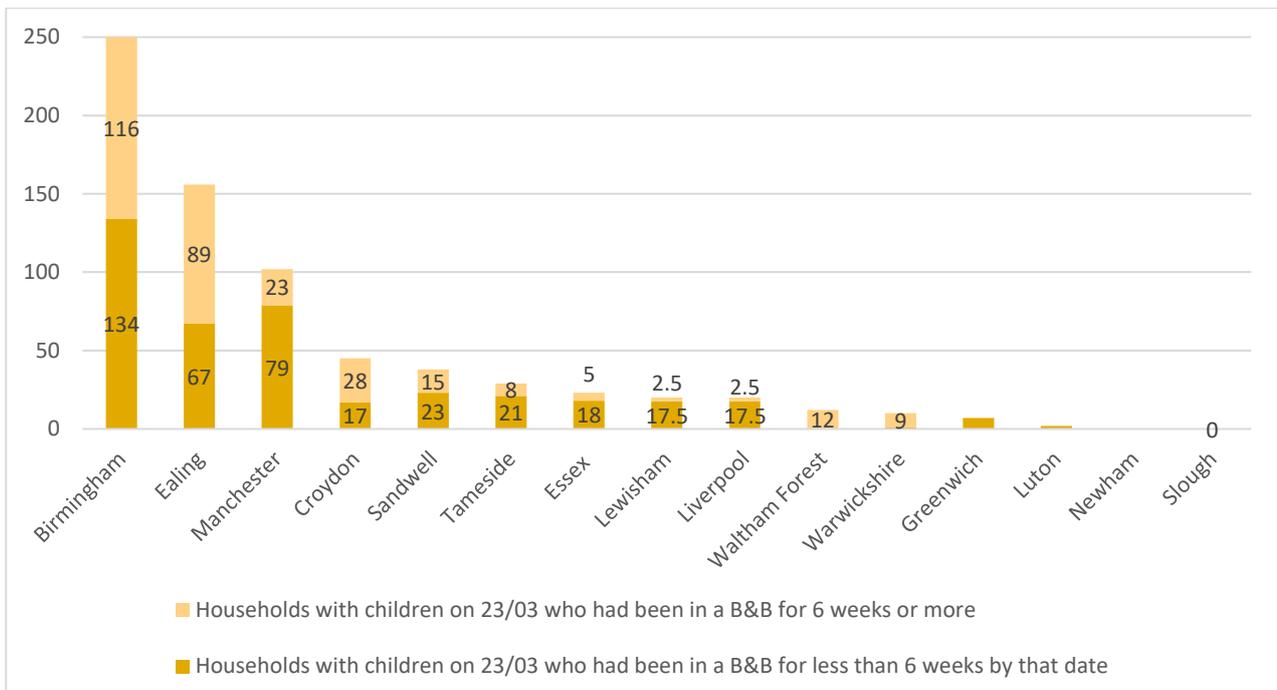


Figure 2 - Number of households with children accommodated in B&Bs, and number who had been there longer than 6 weeks, on 23/03/20. Note: values between 1 and 5 have been set to 2.5 to avoid disclosure.

The CCO used the data across the 15 LAs to produce plausible national estimates of the number of families in B&Bs across all of England on 23 March. Due to the high level of uncertainty in this analysis, we produced a range of estimates (see the Appendix for more details). These suggest that it is likely that there were between 1,100 and 2,000 families with children housed in B&Bs in England on 23 March. Using the same methodology, we also estimate that between 470 and 890 may have been in this accommodation for 6 weeks or longer.

These figures are broadly corroborated by the most recent published MHCLG data which covers Q1 2020 (January – March).⁴ This data shows that across England there were 1,550 families in B&Bs at the end of March 2020. Of these families, 530 been housed in a B&B for 6 weeks or longer.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>, accessed 20th August, 2020

The picture at the end of lockdown

By the end of the full lockdown on 31 May, there were 476 families living in B&Bs across the 15 local authorities – a third less than on 23 March. 10 of the 15 LAs saw a reduction in the number of families housed in B&Bs between 23 March and 31 May. This included Greenwich, which reportedly moved all families out of B&Bs during lockdown. Otherwise, the biggest reductions between the start and end of lockdown were achieved by Manchester (87% reduction), Lewisham (around 80% reduction) and Liverpool (70% reduction).

Having eliminated B&B use by the start of lockdown, both Newham and Slough were able to avoid moving any families back in by 31 May. In the remaining three local authorities, the number of families in B&Bs increased during lockdown, though only by a maximum of 3 families – these were Birmingham, Croydon and Tameside.

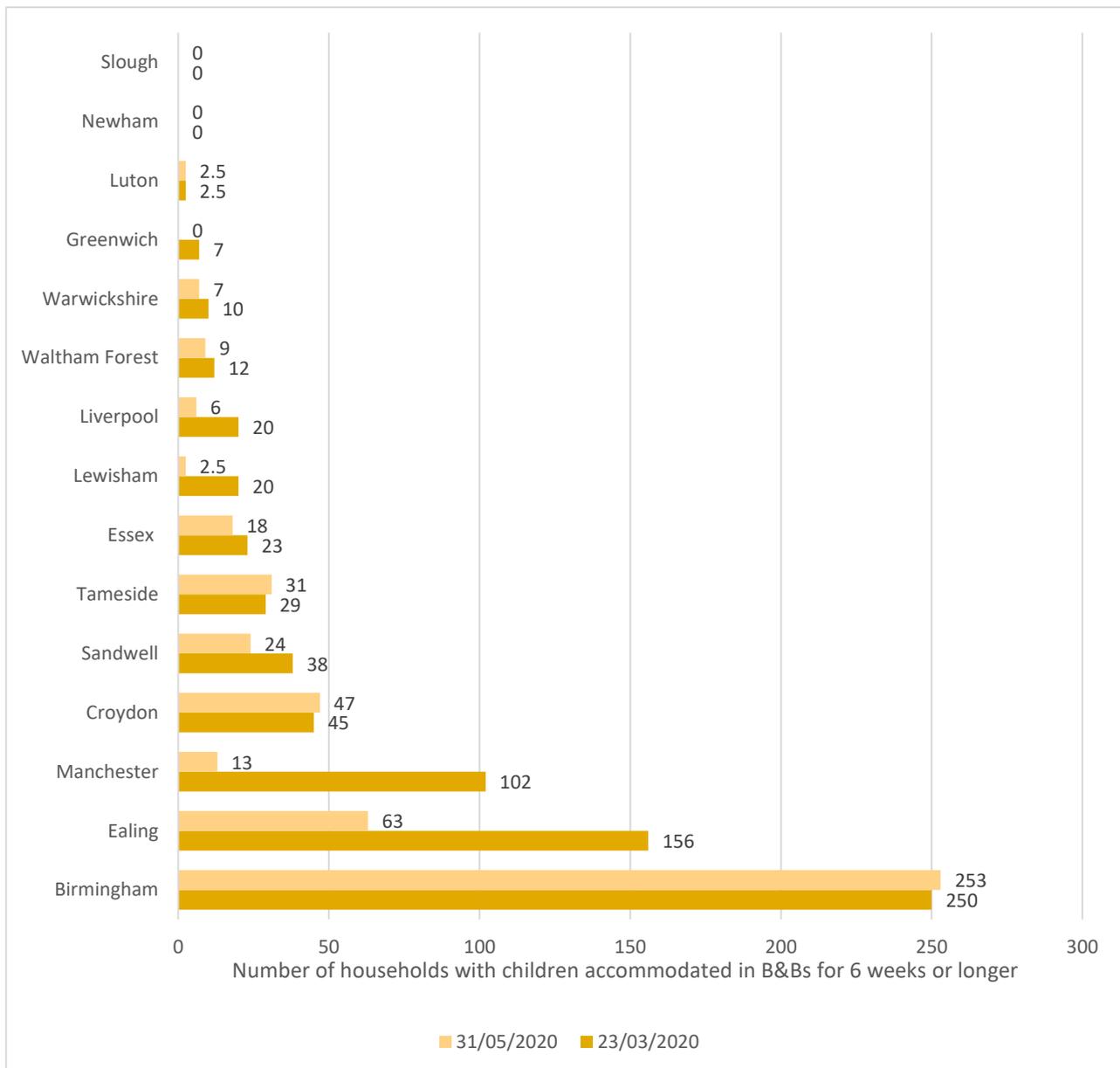


Figure 3 - Number of households with children accommodated in B&Bs for 6 weeks or longer, 23/03/2020 and 31/05/2020. Note: values between 1 and 5 have been set to 2.5 to avoid disclosure

While it is encouraging to see that some local authorities were able to move families out of B&Bs during lockdown, it is extremely concerning that there were still nearly 500 families in B&Bs in these 15 LAs at

the end of lockdown. Furthermore, a greater proportion had been there for longer than 6 weeks (43% at the start of lockdown, compared to 56% by the end).

Table 1: Numbers of families with children accommodated in B&Bs amongst these 15 LAs

Families accommodated in B&Bs on 23/03/2020	714
- Of which the number who had been in a B&Bs for at least 6 weeks by that date	310 (43%)
Families accommodated in B&Bs on 31/05/2020	476
- Of which the number who had been in a B&Bs for at least 6 weeks by that date	265 (56%)
- Of which the number who had been in a B&Bs <i>continuously</i> since the start of lockdown	193 (41%)

All of Waltham Forest’s and Luton’s families in B&Bs at the end of lockdown had been there longer than 6 weeks, along with 85% of Croydon’s and 70% of Ealing’s. Croydon, Lewisham and Liverpool all saw considerable increases in the proportion of families in B&Bs who had been there for 6 weeks or longer, as shown in Figure 4 below.

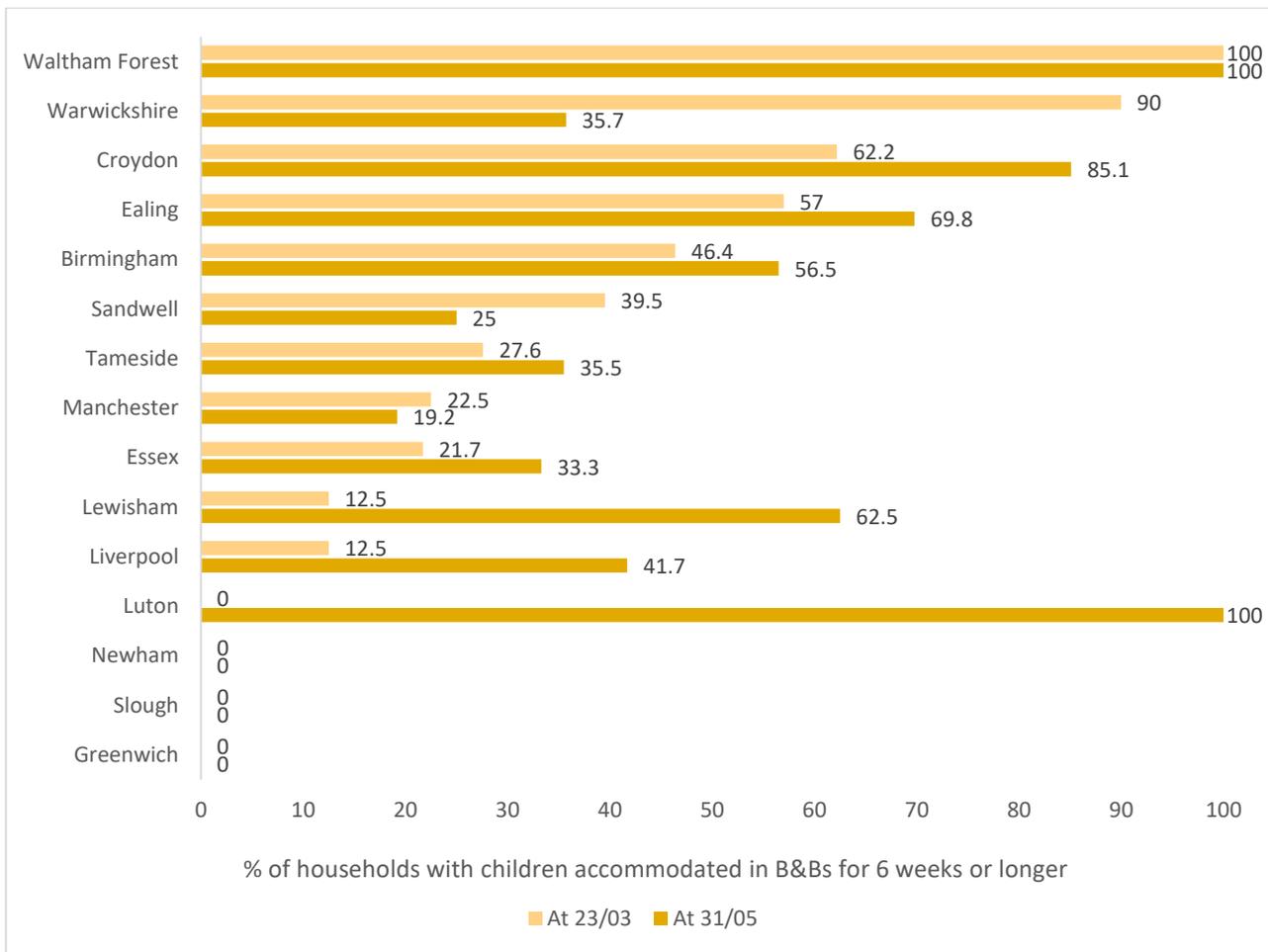


Figure 4 - Percentage of households with children accommodated in B&Bs for 6 weeks or longer, as of 23/03/2020 and 31/05/2020

As before, we used the data from the 15 LAs on 31 May to estimate plausible national totals of the numbers of families housed in B&Bs across England as a whole on that date. Based on the same range of scenarios, we estimate that on 31 May there was likely to be between 750 and 1,350 families housed in B&Bs in England (see the Appendix for more detail). Using the same assumptions as before, we further estimate that that between 400 and 760 of these families would have been in B&B accommodation for 6 weeks or more.

Of the 476 families housed in a B&B on 31 May, 193 (41%) had been housed in B&B accommodation continuously throughout the entire period of lockdown, including 107 in Birmingham and 38 in Ealing. In Waltham Forest and Luton, all of the families who were living in a B&B on 31 May had spent the entire duration of lockdown there, but in both cases these are very small numbers of families. In Ealing, 60% of the families who were in a B&B on 31 May had been there for the whole of lockdown. The full data is shown in Figures 5 and 6 below.

Nearly half of the local authorities in our sample (seven) had no families who had spent the entirety of lockdown living in a B&B.

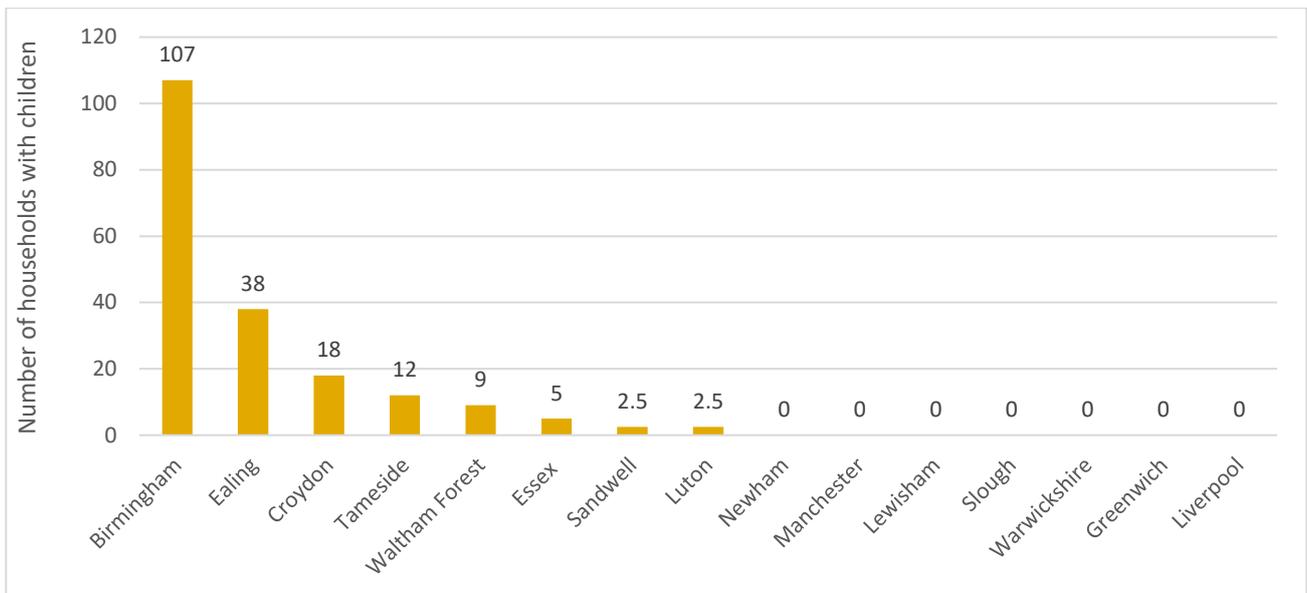


Figure 5 – Number of households with children accommodated in B&Bs continuously from 23/03/2020 to 31/05/2020

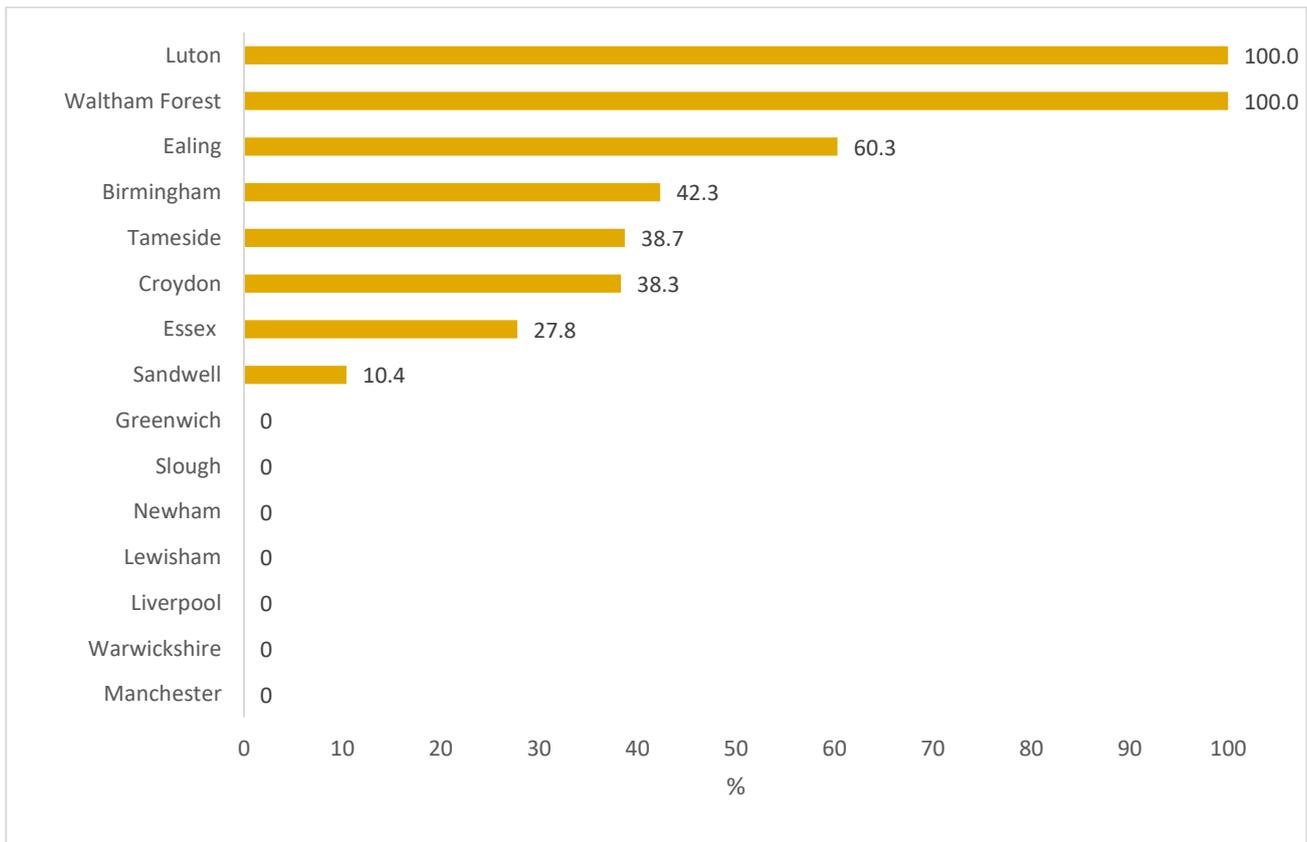


Figure 6 – Percentage of households with children accommodated in B&Bs on 31/05/2020, who had been living there continuously since 23/03/2020

Our sample shows of 15 LAs a total of 193 families in B&Bs continuously between 23/03 and 31/05. It is more difficult to calculate a corresponding national estimate for this, because there is no published data on the number of families across England who have previously spend this sort of duration (around 10 weeks) living in B&Bs. We therefore cannot say what proportion of national cases the sample has

previously accounted for, for this specific measure.

As an alternative approach, however, we can apply the same methodology as used above to calculate the national estimate of families living in B&Bs for at least 6 weeks. This is the best available approximation given the lack of data. Applying the same methodology, we estimate that across England as a whole, somewhere between 290 to 550 families with children spent the whole of lockdown (23 March to 31 May) living in a B&B. For more detail on the methodology, see the Appendix.

The impact of living through lockdown in a B&B

Living in a B&B has never been appropriate for a child, but the problems have been amplified during Covid-19.

The CCO's report *Bleak Houses* describes how B&B accommodation can be extremely overcrowded, with some families occupying just a single room where they live and sleep. Although this is very difficult in normal times, at least children are able to get out to attend school and some families choose to spend a lot of time outside, whether in cafes, parks or other public spaces. This all changed in lockdown, with families mostly confined to their B&B accommodation. Children were struggling to complete schoolwork in these cramped conditions, putting them at a distinct disadvantage from their peers. Although families were technically still able to go to parks for their exercise during this time, many families were too anxious to do so – particularly because national lockdown guidance was explicit that people could only go out to shops or essential 'exercise' so that it was unclear whether children were allowed to go to parks to play. The result was families spending most, if not all of their time in B&Bs, unable to use the coping strategies which would normally reduce the stress of living in this accommodation.

The stresses of living in a B&B are heightened when families share the building with vulnerable adults also being housed by the council or other services, such as those with mental health or drug abuse problems. This can create intimidating and unsafe environments for children. Again, being unable to escape the B&B during lockdown would have increased feelings of anxiety.

Furthermore, many B&Bs have shared kitchen and bathroom facilities which poses particular risks in the lockdown context, with families being unable to self-isolate if they begin to show symptoms. It also contributes to a feeling of being unsafe, knowing that they are continually mixing with other households who may not be following social distancing guidelines.

Many homeless families in B&Bs have multiple vulnerabilities and need support from a range of services to stay safe and well, including health services and social care in some cases. Teachers often play a key role in identifying when things are going wrong, given the amount of time children usually spend in school. Many of these services were significantly stripped back during lockdown, reducing contact between homeless families and the professionals that normally protect them. For example, many health visitors and social workers stopped attending families at home,⁵ and although some schools made brilliant efforts to check in with vulnerable pupils, not all did. The CCO was told that, at least in some areas, even council housing officers stopped making visits to check on homeless families in B&Bs to check on the suitability of accommodation and how families were coping. As a result, at a time when homeless families in B&Bs (and elsewhere) needed more support than ever, in many cases they were actually getting less.

⁵ The NHS said that three of the five health visitor visits should stop except for vulnerable families. Guidance to social workers said that face-to-face visits should stop except when there was serious concerns for a child's welfare.

Julie and Michael's story

Julie is a single mother of 6 children aged 1 to 19. Michael, 16, is one of them. In February, the family was evicted from their privately rented property and on the same day moved to a Travelodge hotel.

"They placed us in a Travelodge in 2 rooms, me and my 6 children, one room is on the first floor, and the other room is on the second floor, knowing I have caring responsibilities, knowing I have got children with disabilities, knowing I have to be monitoring these children, and with 2 rooms on separate floors, it was disastrous" - Julie

Between February and mid June, the family moved 11 times between different Travelodge hotels far from each other, back and forth, as the council continually forgot to prolong their stay.

During their time in lockdown, the family did not go anywhere, and there was nothing to do. They watched a bit of television. The children struggled to complete the work set by school. Michael received a laptop from his school only in June and as a result has fallen behind on his schoolwork. Internet wasn't free of charge in the Travelodge. The family had no cooking facilities and had to live off takeaways that were costly. There were no washing facilities either. Julie washed clothes in the sink and hung them up in the room, and sometimes they did not dry for days. Hospital workers were staying in the Travelodge because they were at high risk of catching Covid-19 so were shielding from their own families, so the family didn't feel safe.

"I was 100% trapped in the hotel so there was no way out, so it was even worse... It was traumatising, I was in a room with my brothers and sisters cramped, there was no privacy at all, it was difficult because there were a lot of people getting drunk and they would just come into our rooms and wake us up" - Michael

Four months in hotels has taken its toll. Julie has received anti-depressants from her GP, and she thinks this time had an impact in particular on two of her children, one of whom is autistic and one who has a mental health condition. In the Travelodge, her daughter said she wanted to end her life. The family has now been moved to more suitable accommodation, but it is more expensive than they can afford and they are still recovering from their ordeal.

"It still feels the same, even being in a new place now with my own space, I still feel cramped, I still get flashbacks, I feel like anyone could come inside and there would just be someone random... I am trying my best to forget, because I don't want that experience, even though I've gone through it and I will have the experience for the rest of my life, I just don't want to, you know, reminisce of it" - Michael

Conclusions and recommendations

Given the evidence in this report, it is critical that councils and the Government ensure they are better prepared for the possibility of more local lockdowns or a second wave. The first wave saw the government take unprecedented action to get rough sleepers off the streets, but there was no similar drive to protect homeless families across the country. The ending of the eviction ban in August and the furlough scheme in October are likely to add further pressure as more families are likely to be made homeless at these points. The CCO has heard that some families who were moved out of B&Bs during lockdown are already being moved back in – not only will this add to children’s feelings of instability or anxiety, but it heightens the risk that these families will be in B&Bs, or will need to be moved again, under any future local or national lockdowns.

The Children’s Commissioner is calling for:

1. Support for children who were homeless during lockdown
2. All families housed in B&Bs to be moved out of them in the event of further local or national lockdowns
3. Action to prevent new family homelessness in the coming weeks and months

Support for children who were homeless during lockdown

In the summer holidays and early Autumn term, schools should identify homeless children who were living in poor quality or overcrowded accommodation during lockdown, including B&Bs. Schools should:

- > Closely monitor the attendance and behaviour of these pupils, identifying any need for pastoral support if pupils are persistently absent or poorly behaved.
- > Prioritise these pupils in plans to help children catch up at school, funded by the Government’s £1bn catch-up support package.
- > In the event of schools being closed to most pupils, homeless children should be prioritised for access, in recognition of the fact that they are vulnerable.

NHS services should prioritise homeless children for access to mental and physical health support, including Health Visitor checks and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

All families to be moved out of B&Bs in the event of further local or national lockdowns

In anticipation of further local lockdowns and a possible second spike, the Government should provide significant funding and support to local authorities to immediately move families out of B&Bs. For the duration of the Covid-19 crisis (if not beyond), all homeless families should only be placed in suitably sized, self-contained accommodation with private kitchen and bathroom facilities. If necessary, councils should source short term apartment rentals to make this a reality. The Government needs to provide funding as well as clear messaging and guidance to local authorities about the importance of providing suitable accommodation to homeless families during this time, as they did with rough sleepers.

The Government should closely monitor whether any councils continue to house children in B&Bs and take action against those that continue to do so – especially where children have been placed there

illegally for longer than 6 weeks.

As part of this work, the Government should collect data on the numbers of children housed in B&Bs by social services, rather than under housing legislation, and those accommodated in council-owned B&Bs. Neither of these groups are currently captured by the Government's data on temporary accommodation.⁶

Prevention of new family homelessness in the coming weeks and months

Preventing homelessness in the first place is the best way of protecting children from living in this type of accommodation. Reducing demand on homelessness services will also make it easier and less costly for local authorities to keep families out of B&Bs.

However, there is a clear risk that the number of families made homeless will increase significantly later this year. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has forecast that unemployment will more than double from pre-Covid levels, and likely hit a peak of 12% before Christmas.⁷ Many people who have already experienced job losses or who will become unemployed later in the year are parents, and unemployment will lead many families to accrue significant rent arrears. Research indicates that 420,000 children were in households in rent arrears in May and a further 640,000 are in rented households that have drawn down their savings or increased borrowings.⁸ Despite increases to the Local Housing Allowance, Universal Credit is often insufficient to cover the family's rent, and the five week wait to receive the first payment is often enough to push the family into arrears.

A ban on evictions has thus far protected these families from losing their homes, but it is due to expire on 24 August – just when children are about to return to school – at which point families may be evicted. In addition, the end of the furlough scheme in October is likely to lead to further job losses and another wave of families losing their homes, unless additional support is put in place.

To stop council homelessness services from being overwhelmed and avoid children being forced into inappropriate accommodation, the Government must:

- > Further increase Local Housing Allowance rates and end the five week wait for Universal Credit.
- > Provide a package of support to help families meet housing costs, to coincide with the end of the eviction ban and furlough scheme.

⁶ For further exploration of this issue, see Bleak Houses (2019): <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/cco-bleak-houses-report-august-2019.pdf>

⁷ https://cdn.obr.uk/OBR_FSR_July_2020.pdf

⁸ CCO analysis of wave 2 of the Understanding Society COVID-19 survey, which is available here: <https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=8644>

Appendix: Methodology for calculating national estimates

The CCO surveyed 15 local authorities to find out the number of families in B&Bs in these areas on 23 March and 31 May.

The CCO surveyed a 1-in-10 sample of local authorities, rather than all of them, to minimise burden on local authorities during the pandemic. The CCO specifically chose the 15 LAs with the highest numbers of children in B&Bs according to the most recent data publicly available at the time of creating the request (the Q4 2019 statistics), to increase the chances of accounting for a large share of the national total. The public data is highly skewed with the majority of LAs having very small numbers of children in B&Bs in Q4 2019, as shown in Figure 7 below. The 15 LAs in this sample accounted for 63% of the total for England in Quarter 4 2019.

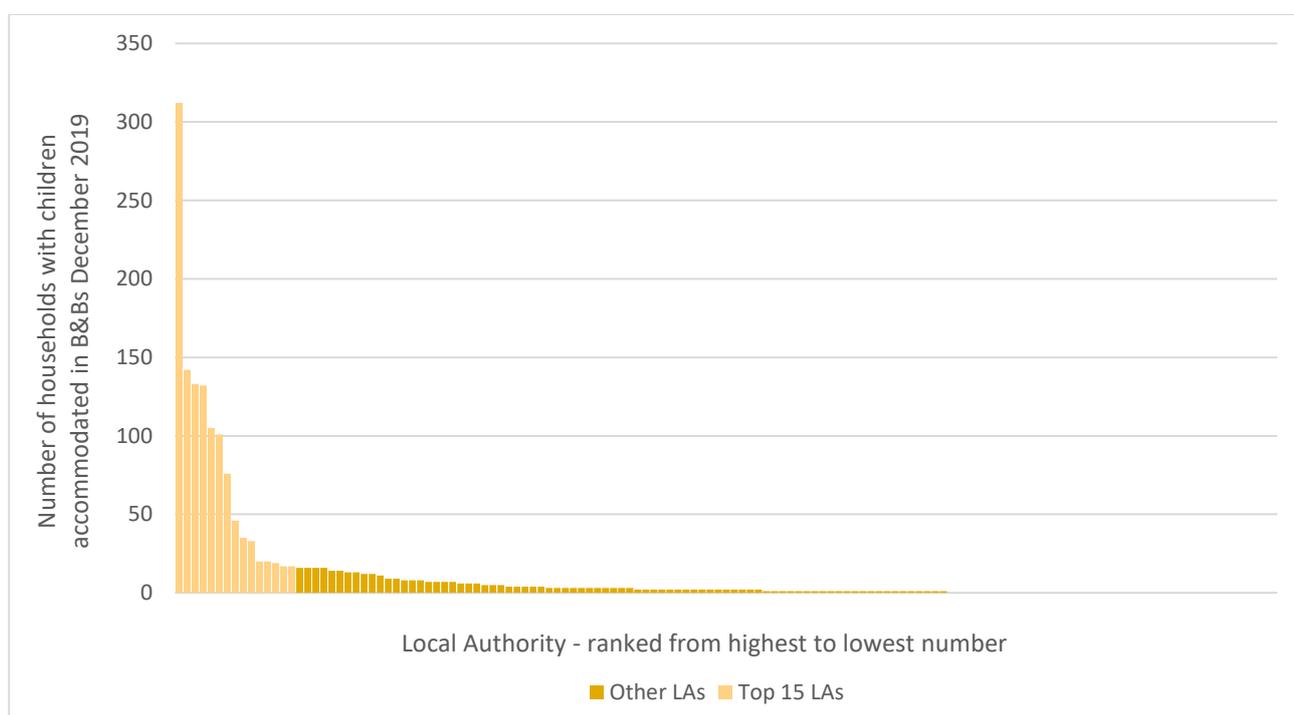


Figure 7 – Number of households accommodated in B&Bs across LAs in England December 2019. (Source: MHCLG Live tables on homelessness). Note: LAs with suppressed figures in national statistics are not shown.

The data collected from these 15 LAs is used to extrapolate to plausible national estimates of the numbers in B&Bs across England on the same date. While this is possible because these LAs accounted for a large proportion of the total, there is a high level of uncertainty in these estimates due to the small number of LAs sampled and the varied impacts of lockdown in LAs. We therefore produced a range of estimates based on different potential scenarios.

Total number of families in B&Bs in England on 23 March and 31 May

Figure 8 below demonstrates that there has been considerable fluctuation in the proportion of households with children in B&Bs accounted for by the 15 LAs sampled since June 2018 (the limit to currently available information). The graph only goes up to Q4 2019, even though MHCLG figures have now been published for Q1 2020, because the Q1 2020 data does not include figures for Ealing,

Lewisham and Liverpool. Therefore this calculation could not be repeated for Q1 2020 due to missing values in the data.

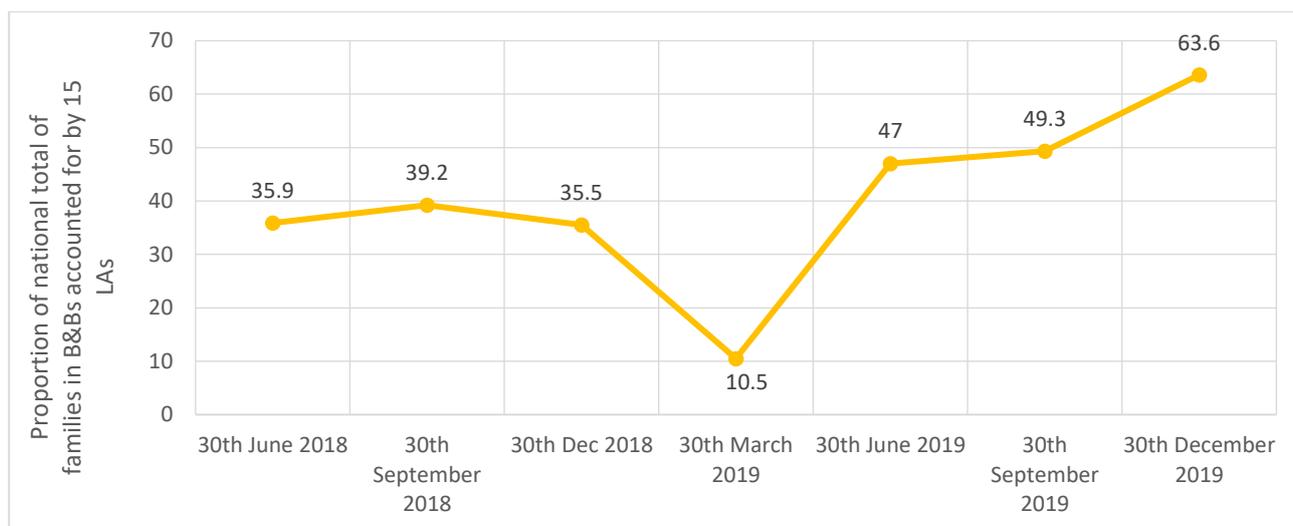


Figure 8 – Proportion of national number of households with children in B&Bs accounted for by the 15 LAs in our sample (June 2018 - December 2019 Source: MHCLG Live tables on homelessness)

The variation in this proportion is used to generate a range of assumptions of the current proportion accounted for by these LAs. These proportions are then scaled up to estimate the total number of children in B&Bs at 23rd March 2019 in England.

The obvious outlier of 10.5% at 30th March 2019 has been excluded from the analysis due to its divergence from the general trend.

There were also some data quality concerns about the large rise in the proportion in the most recent quarter. This rise is driven by a large increase in Luton’s figures (less than 5 in September 2019 up to over 120 in December 2019). Without a further quarter’s data, it is unclear if this increase is genuine or a data quality issue. The analysis therefore refrains from projecting any further increase based on this final quarter and restrict this to being the upper estimate of the proportion accounted for by these LAs.

With these caveats in mind, there are two potential estimates of the national number of families with children housed in B&Bs at 23rd March. Given the obvious uncertainty of how practices may have changed during the COVID-19 outbreak these estimates are deliberately calculated to give a wide range.

- > High estimate: this assumes the proportion of the total number of families in B&Bs in England accounted for by the 15 LAs has fallen to the lowest proportion in the period June 2018 – December 2019 (35.5% excluding the outlier of March 2019). Applying this to the total number of families in these 15 LAs at 23rd March suggests a total number of 2,000 households nationally (calculation = $714/35.5*100$).
- > Low estimate: This assumes the proportion of the total number of families in B&Bs in England accounted for by the 15 LAs has remained constant at the proportion seen in December 2019 (63.6%). Applying this to the total number of families in these 15 LAs at 23rd March suggests a total number of 1,100 households nationally (calculation = $714/63.6*100$).

Therefore the plausible range for the national total number of families housed in B&Bs in England on 23 March is roughly 1,100 – 2,000. These estimates are corroborated by the most recent published MHCLG

data for Q1 2020, which showed that in England there were 1,550 families in B&Bs at the end of March 2020.

Using the same methodology, our national estimates for 31 May are as follows:

- > High estimate: 1,342 households with children in England accommodated in B&Bs.
- > Low estimate: 749 households with children in England accommodated in B&Bs.

Therefore the plausible range for the national total number of families housed in B&Bs in England on 31 May is roughly 750 – 1,350.

Total numbers of families in B&Bs for 6 weeks or longer

Figure 9 below demonstrates similar variation in the proportion of the national households with families housed in B&Bs for 6 weeks or more accounted for by these 15 LAs. Again, the graph only goes up to Q4 2019 because of missing values in the Q1 2020 data for Ealing, Lewisham and Liverpool.

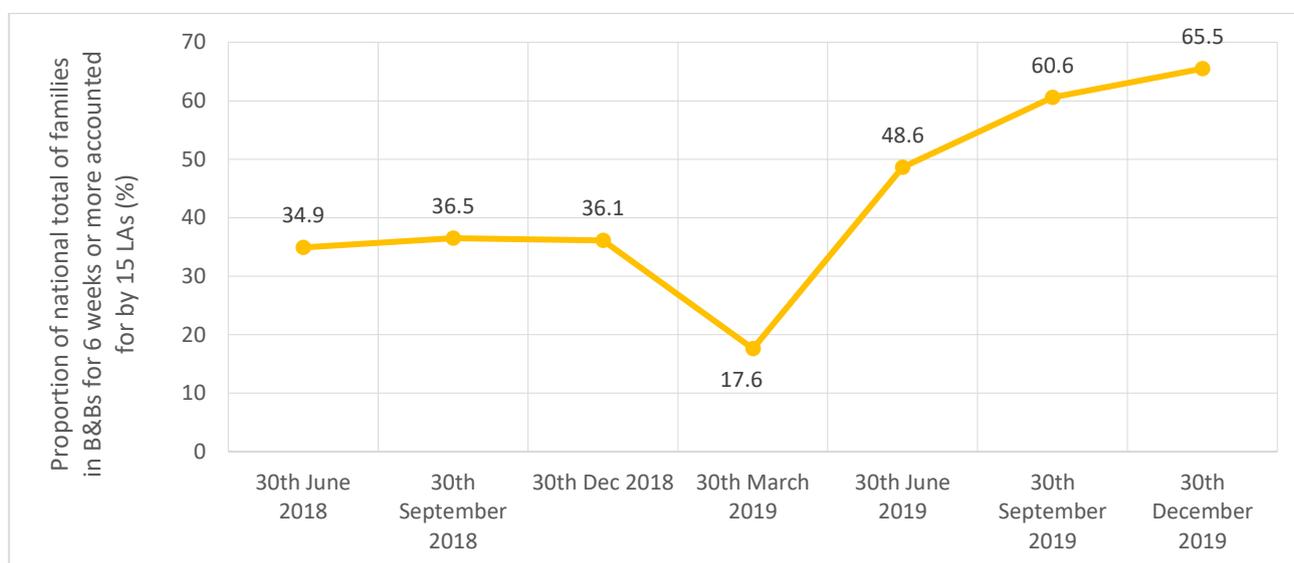


Figure 9 – Proportion of national number of households with children accommodated in B&Bs for 6 weeks or more accounted for by the 15 LAs in our sample (June 2018 - December 2019 Source: MHCLG Live tables on homelessness)

The same assumptions as above are applied to estimate the total numbers housed in B&Bs for 6 weeks or more at the 23rd March. The outlier point at 30th March 2019 is excluded due to its departure from the general trend over the period.

High estimate: assuming the proportion of the national total accounted for by these 15 LAs has fallen to the lowest proportion on figure 7 (34.9%), this estimates a national total of 890 households with children housed in B&Bs for 6 weeks or more at 23rd March 2020 (calculation = $310/34.9 \times 100$).

Low estimate – assuming the proportion of the national total accounted for by these 15 LAs has remained at the highest proportion in figure 7 (65.5%), estimates a national total of 470 families housed in B&Bs for 6 weeks or more at 23rd March 2020 (calculation = $310/65.5 \times 100$).

Therefore the plausible range for the national total number of families housed in B&Bs in England on 23 March who had been there for at least 6 weeks is roughly 470 – 890. This range is corroborated by the

most recent published MHCLG data (Q1 2020)⁹, which shows that at least 530 families who were housed in a B&B on 30 March 2020, had been there for at least 6 weeks.

Using the same methodology, our the equivalent high estimate for numbers of families in B&Bs for 6 weeks or more at 31st May 2020 is 760 (calculation = $265/34.9*100$) and the equivalent low estimate is 400 families (calculation = $265/65.5*100$).

Therefore the plausible range for the national total number of families housed in B&Bs in England on 31 May who had been there for at least 6 weeks is roughly 400 – 760.

Total numbers of families in B&Bs continuously from 23 March to 31 May

Our sample shows of 15 LAs a total of 193 families in B&Bs continuously between 23/03 and 31/05. It is more difficult to calculate a corresponding national estimate for this, because there is no published data on the number of families across England who have previously spend this sort of duration (around 10 weeks) living in B&Bs. We therefore cannot say what proportion of national cases the sample has previously accounted for, for this specific measure.

As an alternative approach, however, we can apply the same methodology that was used above to calculate the national estimate of families living in B&Bs for at least 6 weeks on 31 May. This is the best available approximation given the lack of data.

Using this same methodology, our equivalent high estimate for numbers of families in B&Bs continuously from 23/03 to 31/05 is 553 (calculation = $193/34.9*100$) and the equivalent low estimate is 294 families (calculation = $193/65.5*100$).

Therefore the plausible range for the national total number of families housed in B&Bs in England continuously from 23 March to 31 May is roughly 290 – 550.

⁹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/910424/DetailedLA_202003.xlsx

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