

# *UK homeless crisis worsening*

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London, November 17 (RHC)-- In the UK, the number of people sleeping on the streets has surged to record highs.

According to the Combined Homelessness and Information Network nearly 4,000 people slept in the streets across London from July to September 2019. That's 28 percent more than during the same period last year. And the majority are very vulnerable.

Less visible types of homelessness like sofa-surfing or living in temporary accommodation are also rising. Councils are housing people in cramped substandard conditions in converted office buildings and shipping containers in exchange for a large chunk of their benefits money.

A spokesperson for the ministry of housing, communities and local government has said: "Nationally the number of people sleeping on our streets has fallen for the first time in eight years but there is still much more to do. In London, we've given councils £24.5 million under our Rough Sleeping Initiative to enhance and develop their ability to tackle rough sleeping."

Some say such initiatives have failed though -- that there is an absence of long-term funds for council services, and a shortfall between housing benefit and the actual cost of renting. Charities are in overdrive setting up temporary shelters and encouraging people to report to them when they see people sleeping rough, which is not only uncomfortable dangerous and degrading, but illegal under the vagrancy act.



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