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## Homelessness Figures Show Landlords Not the Root Cause, Say New Government Data

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The latest government statistics suggest that the private rented sector is not the main driver behind rising homelessness in England, pushing back against the frequent portrayal of landlords as the chief culprits.

Fresh data from the “Statutory Homelessness in England” report for the first quarter of 2025 reveals a small drop in Section 21 evictions compared to the same period last year. This goes against widely circulated claims that landlords are routinely evicting tenants without justification. The report breaks down both legal duties local authorities must follow when

assisting households at risk of homelessness: the prevention duty, which applies to those at risk within 56 days, and the relief duty, which supports people already homeless and seeking stable housing.

Figures show that 6,640 households faced the threat of homelessness due to receiving a Section 21 notice, down by nearly 2% from the same quarter in 2024. Section 21, often referred to as a “no-fault” eviction, allows landlords to regain possession of their property without citing a specific reason. Despite its controversial reputation, the small decrease highlights that it is far from the sole factor contributing to the housing crisis.

What is perhaps more telling is the steep rise in the number of households forced to leave government-provided asylum support accommodation. A total of 1,920 households were pushed toward homelessness due to this, a jump of almost 50% compared to the previous year. This trend is not tied to the actions of landlords, but rather the result of changes in how asylum support is administered.

Another significant cause of homelessness remains households being asked to leave by family or friends. This accounted for 8,890 cases, representing 23.6% of those owed a prevention duty by their local authority. The total number of households assessed as being at risk and owed prevention support fell by 4.5% year-on-year, now standing at 37,610.

Among those owed prevention support, 13,790 households saw their private rented Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) come to an end. This figure is 7.7% lower than in the same period of 2024. The majority, 8,950, of these were down to landlords either selling or re-letting the property. Notably, 6,520 households were affected because their landlord intended to sell. While no specific reasons for selling are outlined in the report, the data challenges the popular idea that landlords are acting irresponsibly. Instead, it suggests many may be leaving the sector due to ongoing legislative uncertainty or changes.

Despite some media narratives, the private rented sector no longer dominates the picture. Although still the most common form of housing for those facing homelessness, its share fell by 9.1% from the previous year, to 16,240 households. The proportion of cases linked to this sector also declined by 2.2 percentage points, reinforcing the idea that other systemic pressures are at play.

The most frequent reason for relief duty being triggered was again tied to strained relationships; 13,470 households were left homeless after family or friends could no longer

house them. This figure dropped by 5.5% compared to early 2024 but still accounted for 29.4% of all relief duty cases.

Meanwhile, domestic abuse continued to be a pressing issue, with 7,110 households becoming homeless for this reason, making up 15.5% of relief duty cases.

The most troubling statistic is the record number of households placed in temporary accommodation. As of March 31, 2025, 131,140 households were in temporary housing, an increase of 2.6% since the previous quarter and nearly 12% higher than a year ago. This figure includes close to 169,000 dependent children now living in insecure settings.