

Homeless Children in Plymouth Reach Record High

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A record number of children in Plymouth are now classified as homeless and living in temporary accommodation, according to the latest government data. The figures highlight a deepening crisis in housing stability for families, raising urgent questions about affordability, supply, and long-term solutions.

Between January and March 2025, 399 children in Plymouth were living in temporary housing, an increase from 390 in mid-2024, and more than triple the number recorded in June 2019. The statistics, published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), represent the highest local total since quarterly records began.

Nationwide, the trend is even more concerning. Across England, 169,050 children were living in temporary accommodations during the first quarter of 2025. This figure marks a historic peak, rising from 159,380 in June 2024 and more than tripling the count from March 2010, when 51,310 children were reported in such housing.

Although the broader picture is troubling, some progress has been made. The number of families with children living in bed and breakfasts (B&Bs) for more than six weeks has declined. Nationally, 2,300 households were in long-term B&B stays as of March 2025, down from a high of 3,770 in mid-2024. In Plymouth, this figure dropped sharply from 21 families in June 2023 to just one by March this year.

Ben Twomey, Chief Executive Officer of the advocacy group Generation Rent, emphasised the personal toll behind the numbers. “Behind every statistic are thousands of stories of people facing some of the most stressful, traumatic, and insecure times of their lives,” he said. “More and more children are spending their formative years trapped in temporary accommodation, often in overcrowded and unsafe conditions, and at a huge cost to local authorities.”

Twomey urged action to address the core issues behind the crisis. “Renting is broken. With rent prices soaring far beyond what people earn, they’re being forced into temporary housing because they can’t find something affordable,” he added. He called for immediate measures such as halting rent hikes and unfreezing the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), a government subsidy that helps low-income tenants afford private rentals.

The government has allocated £1 billion to support local councils this year, targeting homelessness prevention. A £39 billion investment plan aims to build hundreds of thousands of social and affordable homes over the next decade. Alongside that, planned reforms include abolishing Section 21 “no-fault” evictions and improving housing standards across the board.

While structural changes and long-term investment are underway, advocates and families alike stress that urgent, short-term action is needed to protect vulnerable children from the

lasting effects of housing instability.