

Surge in Homeless Leicestershire Children in Temporary Housing

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The number of homeless children living in temporary accommodation across Leicestershire has hit alarming levels, reaching a record high in late 2024. While there has been a slight recent dip, the figures remain significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels and have sparked concern among housing advocates and local authorities alike.

According to data from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 1,390 children were in temporary accommodation such as hotels and bed and breakfasts, as of September 2024. This marked a dramatic increase from fewer than 250 recorded before 2020. By March 2025, the number decreased slightly to 1,367, though it still reflected a long-term crisis exacerbated by cost-of-living pressures and rising rent.

Leicester City bears the brunt of the crisis, with 923 children recorded in temporary housing as of March. Although this was a slight decline from the previous September high of 999, the numbers underscore persistent demand and strained local resources. Elsewhere in the county, smaller districts like Blaby and Charnwood have also seen increased cases, with 107 and 91 children respectively in similar circumstances.

Across England, the number of children living in temporary accommodation reached a record 169,050 by 31 March 2025, a 12% rise from the previous year. This figure marks a sharp rise of nearly 10,000 from the previous year and a staggering jump from the 51,310 recorded in March 2010. In urban centres like London, the problem is particularly severe. Newham alone reports over 10,000 homeless children.

Commenting on the figures, Ben Twomey, chief executive of Generation Rent, emphasised the human cost behind the statistics. “Behind every statistic are thousands of stories of people facing some of the most stressful, traumatic and insecure times of their lives,” he said. Twomey warned that children are growing up in unstable conditions that can be unsafe and overcrowded, often leaving a lasting impact on their development.

The root causes of the crisis are largely economic, driven by years of stagnant wages, increasing rental demand, and a limited supply of affordable housing. Experts argue that the current market leaves low-income families vulnerable to eviction and housing insecurity. While house-building plans are in motion, the long timelines involved mean solutions are not immediately on the horizon.

Minister for Homelessness Rushanara Ali acknowledged the crisis and confirmed government commitments, including a £1 billion fund for homelessness prevention and a £39 billion housing investment over the next decade. “We must dig deep to tackle the root causes of homelessness,” Ali stated, emphasising the importance of expanding the housing supply and protecting tenants from unjust evictions.

As pressures rise on families and local authorities, the call for targeted and practical reforms becomes more urgent. The long-term resolution to this crisis will require not just financial investment but structural change that supports responsible renting, safeguards vulnerable families, and ensures children are not left without stable homes.