



# The picture of Housing First in England 2020

Key findings from our *Picture of Housing First in England* research, which outlines current provision and explores variation in delivery of the approach. Based on a survey completed by 87 out of 105 active Housing First services identified in England, in August to October 2020.<sup>1</sup> Selected data is compared with findings from a similar survey undertaken in 2017.

# Our research found...



**105** active services in England, compared to **32** in 2017

**87 services** that responded can support

**1,995**

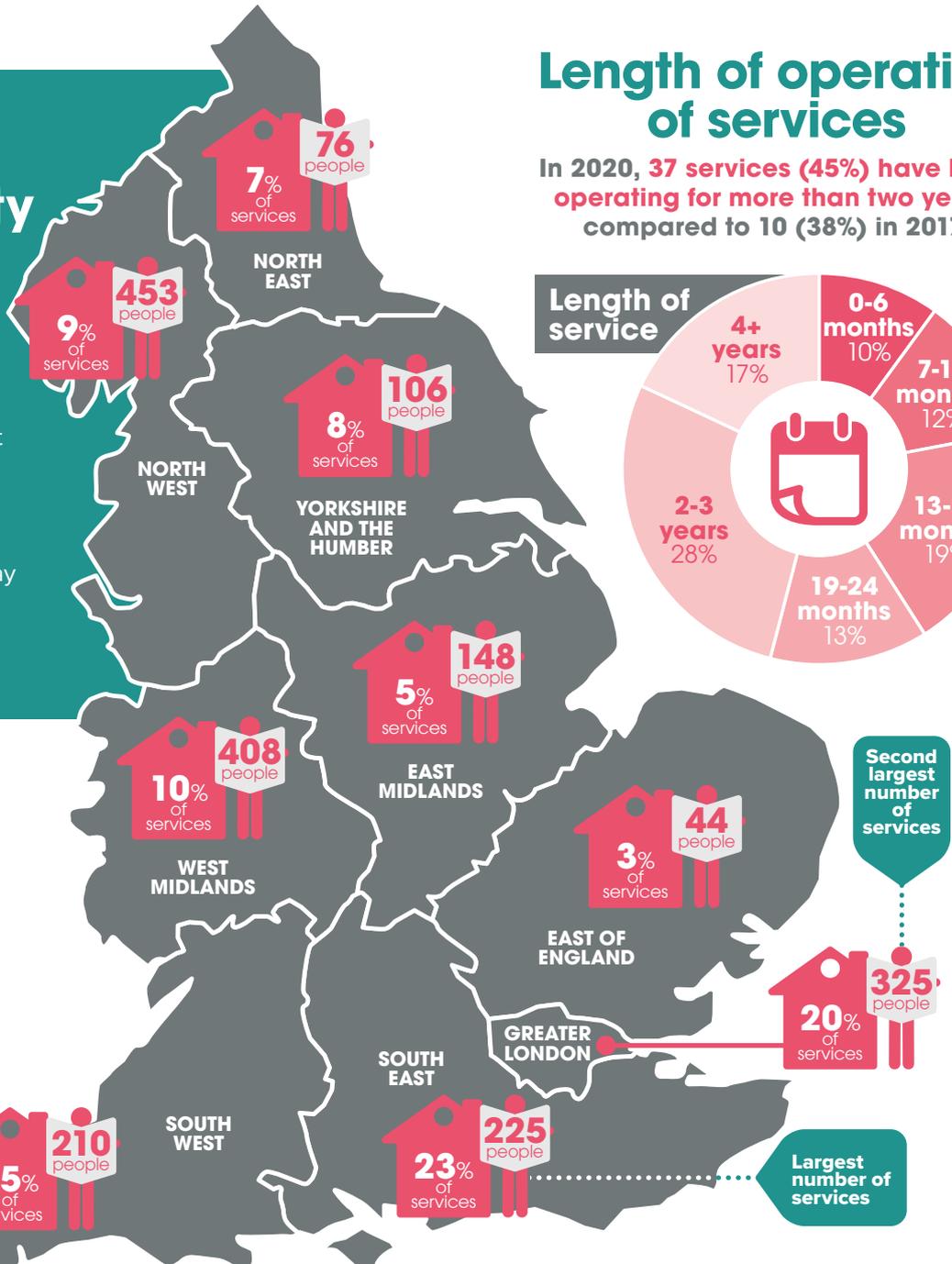


**1,995** individuals at any one time between them – nearly **6x** as many as in 2017<sup>2</sup>

- **On average** services support **6 to 20 people** but the range is very wide from just one client to over 250
- **71%** of services have **caseloads of 6 or less people per worker**, and **nearly all** services have caseloads of **less than 10 people**
- **On average** services have just over **4 staff members**

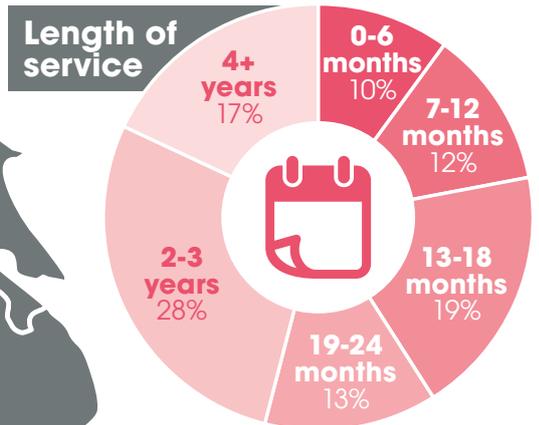
## Location and capacity of services by region

There is an uneven distribution of services across the country. It doesn't necessarily follow that regions with more services have greater capacity to provide support. Regions may have few large services or several small services.



## Length of operation of services

In 2020, **37 services (45%)** have been operating for more than two years, compared to 10 (38%) in 2017.



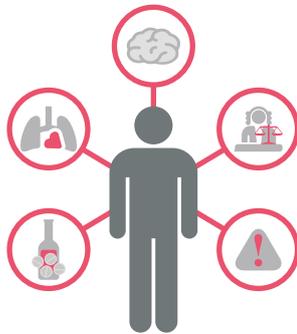
Greatest increase in services since 2017

Second largest number of services

Largest number of services

## Who services support

A high proportion of Housing First clients experience **multiple disadvantage**. On entry to the service:\*



**97%**

of services report their clients have a **substance misuse issue**

**95%**

of services report their clients have a **mental health issue** (diagnosed or undiagnosed)

**88%**

of services report their clients had been in contact with the **criminal justice system**

**68%**

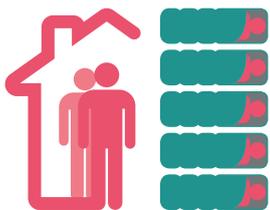
of services report their clients have a **physical health issue**

**64%**

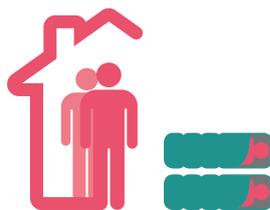
of services report their clients had experienced **violence or abuse**, compared to 75% in 2017

\* Proportion of services where 'most' or 'almost all' residents have a particular support need

Services house people who have experienced **homelessness for long periods** of time prior to accessing this support. On entry to the service:



**47%** of clients have been homeless for **3-9 years** on average.



**14%** of clients have been homeless for **10+ years** on average.

## How services are funded

The majority of services are funded, at least in part, by a **local authority**, although there is some evidence of **other funders supporting** the approach.



**66%** of services receive all or part of their funding from a **local authority**

**26%** of services receive funding from **multiple sources**

**Funding for many services is short-term**, and this continues to pose a challenge to an approach that commits to providing an open-ended offer of support for residents. However, providers and their funders are usually committed to continuing services in the long term, even though funding is not guaranteed.



Up to **1 year (40%)** and **2-3 years (43%)** are the most common **funding periods**

## The accommodation used

Services draw on a variety of sources for accommodation and gain access to housing through a variety of means. **81% of services use social housing** - a significant increase on 2017 - while the use of private rented accommodation has decreased.



**Housing associations**



**Local authority housing** (including ALMO)



**Private rented sector**



**Support provider uses own accommodation**

**45%** of services use accommodation from **more than one source** compared to 39% in 2017

The **type of housing** provided to residents:

**89%** provide **entirely self-contained** accommodation

**11%** provide a **shared accommodation option** in addition to self-contained accommodation

**97%** provide accommodation **scattered across an area**

**4%** provide **congregate** accommodation



# Housing First England

**For more information:**

[www.hfe.homeless.org.uk](http://www.hfe.homeless.org.uk)

[@hf\\_england](https://twitter.com/hf_england)

## What we do

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for frontline homelessness services. We work to improve services through research, guidance and learning, and campaign for policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

## Let's end homelessness together

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[www.homeless.org.uk](http://www.homeless.org.uk)

[@Homelesslink](https://twitter.com/Homelesslink)

[@homelesslink](https://facebook.com/homelesslink)

## Notes

1. Based on work conducted by Housing First England to identify all Housing First services. The survey was launched in March, but postponed due to lockdown, with the bulk of responses gathered once the fieldwork resumed in August.
2. The 2017 figures were medium estimates based on mid-point of responses to a question that presented a range. The 2020 figures are based on exact figures provided. Comparisons should be treated with caution.
3. Multiple treats all LA funding as one even if, for example, there is RSI funding and homelessness grant funding.