This report provides information about homeless men and women who used the winter shelters funded under the RSI during 1998/99. CRASH, the Construction and Property Industry Charity for the Single Homeless, helps to provide 583 bedspaces each winter in temporary cold weather shelters in Central London, Cambridge, Brighton and Bristol. For six consecutive years, CRASH have organised, funded and published a survey of the users of the shelters.

**Key findings and recommendations**

* In the winter of 1998/99, 500 beds were made available in London, and 83 in the shelters outside London. Occupancy in London was 93% and ranged between 88% and 97% for the shelters outside London.
* The proportion of shelter users who slept rough prior to using the shelter in London (80%) was found to have increased considerably over the last three winters, as had the proportion of people who had slept rough for longer than a month before using the shelter (84% of those who had slept rough).
* A higher proportion than in previous years were referred to the shelters by outreach workers. However, the report notes local variation in the effectiveness of outreach workers.
* Needs for resettlement services, physical healthcare and drugs advice were found to have risen since previous years. 84% of shelter users were found to require help with resettlement. The proportion of users receiving the resettlement advice they wanted was found to have increased.
* It was found that 49% of shelter users in London were resettled as a result of resettlement interviews, and an overall proportion of 61% of London shelter users moved into some sort of accommodation.

**Methods**

Information presented in this report is based on a user questionnaire which was completed by shelter workers on behalf of each user entering the shelters. This questionnaire comprised admission details collected at the initial entry, and departure details completed on departure.

**Location**: London, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge  
**Geographical scope**: national (England)

**Comments**

This report provides very useful, and annually updated, quantitative information on the circumstances and needs of winter shelter users. It represents an accessible source of statistical information and enables trends in this group of homeless people to be tracked. The information is usefully presented separately for each of the different shelters, as well as grouped for those in London.