



Squatters' Action For Secure Homes

# Squatting Statistics 2015

The link between rising homelessness and the criminalisation of squatting - May 2016



## Executive Summary

Squatters Action for Secure Homes (SQUASH) has been tracking implementation of section 144 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (s144 LASPOA)<sup>i</sup> since it came into effect in September 2012. Section 144 criminalises squatting in empty residential properties, gives the police new powers, and guilt is determined by a lay magistrate, rather than a trained judge. The four key messages in *The Case Against Section 144* (2013)<sup>1</sup> are used to assess its impact in 2015:

**Undemocratic** since this new criminal law had an unusually short parliamentary process, and the consultation process was ignored;

- Section 144 is the first piece of legislation criminalising homelessness nationally,
- Section 144 removed an important buffer and alternative for the homeless, resulting in the rise of rough sleeper numbers, even as 610,000 residential properties lie empty;

**Unjust** since it ignored the irrefutable link between squatting and homelessness;

- There were at least 148 arrests under s144 LASPOA in 2015. This brings the total confirmed arrests to date to 736 people since 2012. The percentage of those charged with the offence was 64% of those arrested in 2015 (94),
- Those arrested were predominantly male (83%), young (average age of 30) and homeless,
- Prosecutions of section 144 offences has been rising year on year since 2012, and is currently averaging around 13 prosecutions a month.

**Unnecessary** since displaced residents were already protected under the Criminal Law Act 1977;

- When asked, no police force was able to cite a single case of a displaced residential occupier for a squatting arrest,
- Arrests for section 144 have been averaging around 160 arrests per year, suggesting an annual arrest target for this offence, whether a crime was committed or not,
- Squatters are arrested for a number of alternative offences (eg Criminal Damage, Burglary), and section 144 is used as a backup charge, requiring a lower burden of proof.

**Unaffordable**, because it transferred the social and financial costs of eviction from private owners to the public purse.

- Analysis shows a link between rising house prices, the number of long-term empties and criminalising homelessness in London and England,
- Private landlords are three times wealthier than the general British population, yet their operations are being subsidised by legislation such as section 21 and section 144.

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<sup>i</sup> Referred to as "section 144" in this report, and commonly cited as the criminal offence "Knowingly as a trespasser intending to live", Home Office offence code 125/86.

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# Squatting Arrests, Disposals & Prosecutions 2015

As part of SQUASH's commitment to tracking the impact of the new law, section 144 LASPOA, SQUASH sent Freedom of Information Requests (FOI) to 37 (out of 43) police forces in England and Wales (Appendix 1), and three government departments, the Ministry of Justice, Crown Prosecution Service and the Home Office (Appendix 2), in February 2016. Thirty-four (34) of the forty institutions sent a response, but only twenty (60%) provided some information (Appendix 3). The information obtained and analysed comprises the majority of this report. From the 2015 statistics, the following key information was obtained:

## Arrests & Disposals

- **Arrests:** There were at least **148 arrests** under s144 LASPOA in 2015. This brings the total confirmed arrests to date to **736 people since 2012**;
- **Charged:** The percentage of those **charged** with the offence was **64% of arrested** in 2015, and half of those charged were remanded in custody before their court hearing;
- **Other Disposals:** Those who were not charged in 2015 were either issued a **Caution** (28) or released with **No Further Action** (26);
- **Arrest Targets:** Arrests for section 144 have been **averaging around 160 arrests per year**. This suggests that there is a target for annual arrests under this offence.

## Prosecutions

- **Displaced Residents:** When asked, **no** police force was able to cite a single case of a **displaced residential occupier** for a squatting arrest;
- **Alternative Offences:** Squatters are arrested for a number of alternative offences (eg Criminal Damage, Burglary), and section 144 is often used as a secondary offence when the more serious offences can't be successfully prosecuted;
- **Prosecutions:** Prosecutions of section 144 offences has been rising year on year since 2012, and is currently averaging around **13 prosecutions a month**, up from 10 in 2014-15. This brings the total number of section 144 prosecutions brought for a first hearing at a Magistrates court **since 2012 to 326**.
- **Case Length:** During 2015, 66 cases prosecuting section 144 offences were completed, taking an average of **83.6 days (or 12 weeks) to complete**. This suggests a quick turnaround of cases, and summary judgements;
- **Convictions:** There is too little information to gauge the true number of those convicted for section 144, their profile or the sentences handed down to them. The number of known convictions stands at **60 since 2012**.

## Evictions (Anecdotal)

- **Fast-track evictions**, using Interim Possession Orders and High Court Bailiffs, are increasing and becoming more common;
- **Illegal evictions** by landlords, the police and security firms continue, as it is widely believed that section 144 criminalises all squatting, and that squatters are "criminals";
- **Length of Occupation:** Squats last little more than 3 weeks in general, three months at most. This is in sharp contrast to pre-2012 lengths of occupation, between 6 months to a year. This entails constantly moving from one property to another, which is severely draining and disruptive to people's lives.

# 1] Arrests and Disposals

## 1.1] Police Arrests & Disposals

The number of people arrested for section 144 offences continues to rise, with 148 known arrests in 2015, bringing the cumulative total since 2012 to 736 people. Of the 2015 arrests, 104 (74%) were in London, with Kent (10), Surrey (8), Leicester (6) and Sussex (6) the next highest (Appendix 3). The spread of arrests across the country is concentrated in areas with the highest house price growth (Map 1)

This much the same geographical spread as was found on SQUASH's 2015 report "Homes Not Jails" (2012-14): London had by far the highest level of arrests in the country for s144 LASPOA offences, accounting for 75% of arrests in the period (441). Regions outside London reported smaller, but not insubstantial arrests for the period, with the South East being the highest (50 arrests), followed by the Midlands (39), the North (32) and the South West (23).

The most common disposal on arrest (i.e. the subsequent action by the police) was a charge being brought, at 64% (94) of arrests in 2015. The next popular option was a Caution (19%) and then No Further Action (or Released without charge) at 18%. Those who were charged, had a 50/50 chance of being bailed (i.e. released till court) or held in remand (i.e. imprisoned until a court hearing); in 2015, of those charged, 47 were bailed, and 47 held in remand.

The London Metropolitan Police appears to be more punitive in its disposals compared to non-London forces, with 66% of arrestees charged (compared to 57%), 42% held in remand (compared to 7%) and less likely to release without charge (only 12% in London, compared to 32% elsewhere).

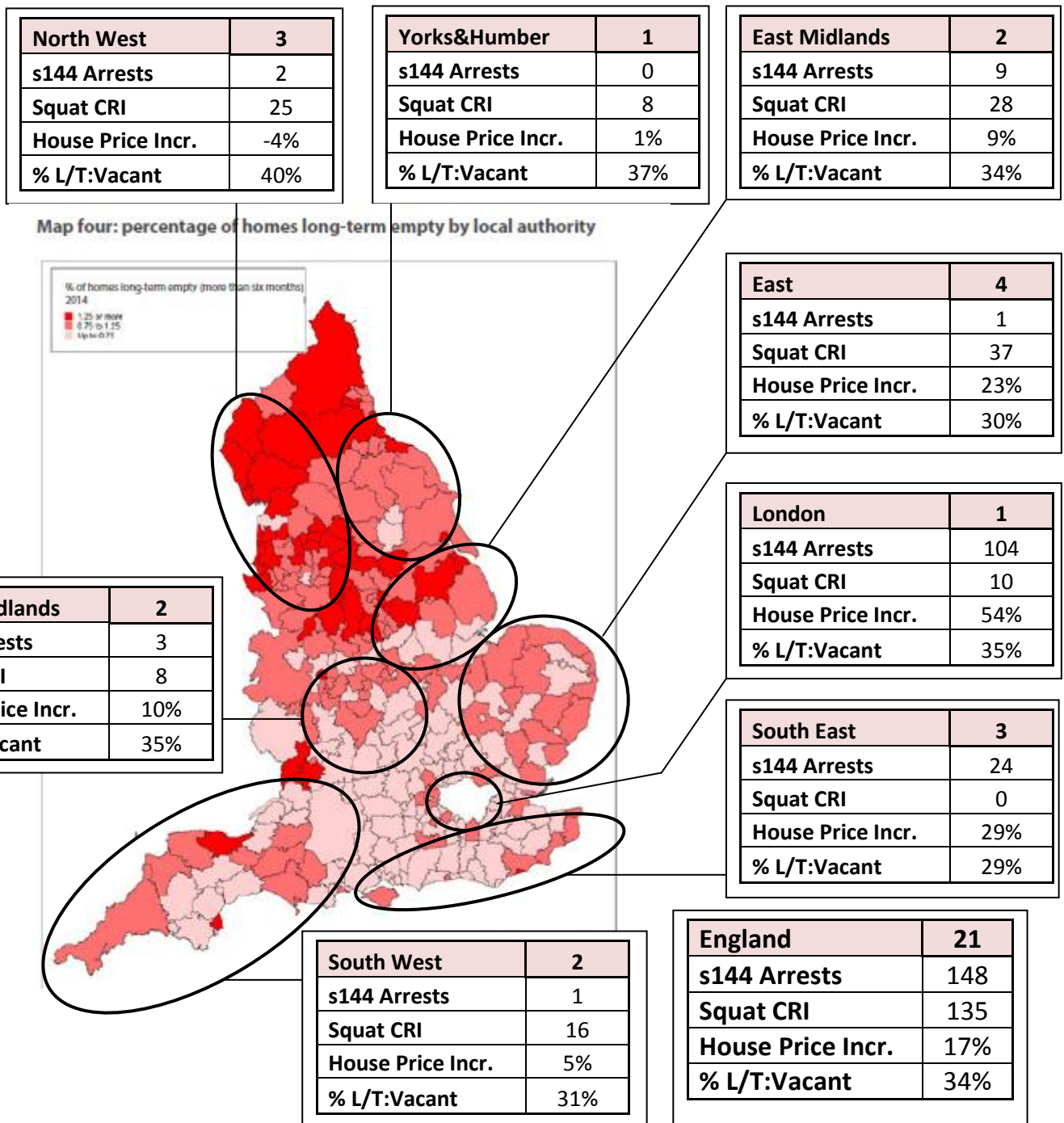
**Table 1: Section 144 Arrests and Disposals Summary for 2015, and cumulative 2012 to 2015**

	2015	2012-15 (cum)
<b>Arrests</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>736</b>
Of which:		
<b>Cautions</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>Charged</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>No Further Action</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Unknown</b>		<b>341</b>
<b>Total Disposals</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>736</b>

(Source: SQUASH FOI, 2016)

There appear to be more people being charged with a section 144 offence than initially thought in previous SQUASH reports. The *Homes Not Jails* reported that only 18% of those arrested were charged between 2012-14<sup>2</sup>; however this figure was probably too low considering the large number of "Unknown" disposals. The 2015 statistics show that those arrested are now more likely to be charged, 64% of those arrested. Rising prosecutions by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), and arrest figures relatively stable at around 160 per year, suggest the number of arrestees being charged is rising.

**Map 1: Section 144 Arrests Map, England (2015)**



**Underlying Map Source:** *Empty Homes in England*; Empty Homes, Autumn 2015, Pg 9

**Map Key:** Deeper red, higher the percentage of long-term empties as a proportion of dwellings

**See Appendix 11** for data tables, tables' explanation and information sources

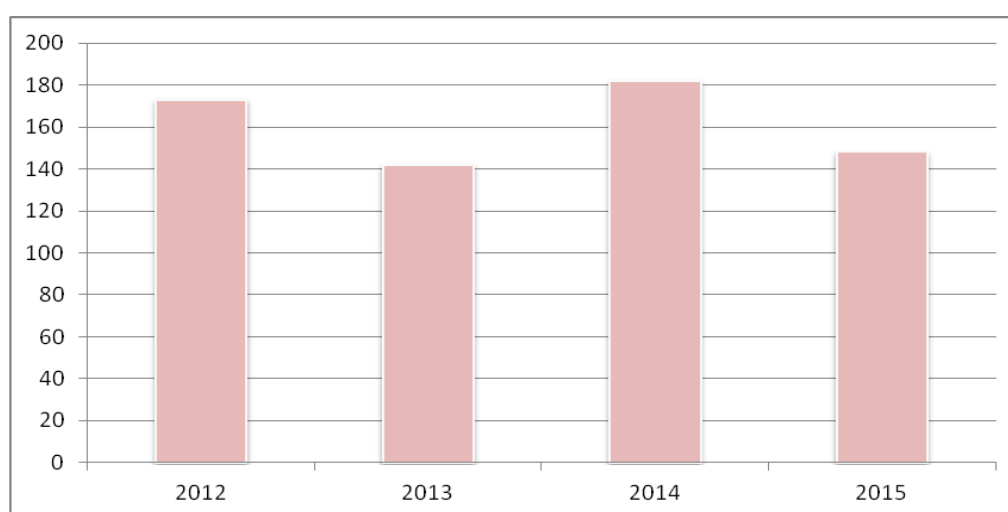
## 1.2] Application of section 144

### 1.2.1] Arrests

The application of section 144 LASPOA shows that this anti-squatting legislation is not being used for the purposes stated at the time of its introduction, namely the protection of people's homes. SQUASH's FOI requests to police forces across England and Wales found:

- **No Displaced Occupiers:** All police forces who responded to Question 6 (Appendix 1) stated: There was ***not one*** case of a "squatting" arrest under section 144 where a displaced residential occupier was involved. This shows that although arrests continue, none are related to removing squatters from people's homes.
- **Number of Arrests for section 144** has remained fairly static, fluctuating between 140 and 182 arrests a year, an average of 161 a year (Graph 1). Even though section 144 was only introduced in September 2012, there was a massive spike of 173 arrests in the four months to December 2012. This suggests that there may be annual arrest targets set for police forces regarding section 144, which the Ministry of Justice alluded to in its 2011 estimated cost savings for criminalisation, forecasting that 680 squatters would be criminalised every year for the next five years.<sup>3</sup>

**Graph 1: Total Annual section 144 Arrests in England & Wales (2012 to 2015)**



(Source: SQUASH "Homes, Not Jails" (April 2015), SQUASH 2016 FOI)

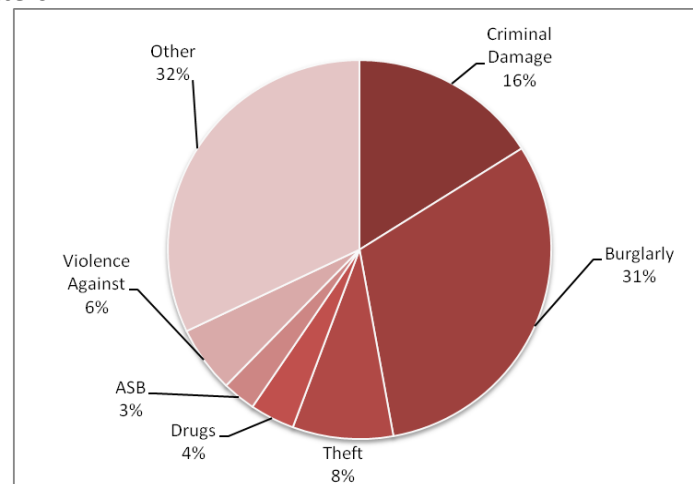
### 1.2.2] Alternative Offences

The arrest of squatters, and young homeless, is understated by the section 144 arrest data, as Alternative Offences are commonly used to charge people opening, or living in, a squat. Many of the police forces which responded stated zero (0) arrests under s144 LASPOA, but noted a number of crime incidents which *might* have involved squatting. Of the non-London police forces who searched their databases for "squatting"/ "squatters"/ "squat" retrieved **125 Crime Related Incidents (CRI)** with these terms<sup>ii</sup>.

<sup>ii</sup> Caution has been used in interpreting this data, as not all incidents will refer to squatters, but could refer to the sitting position - "to squat" - for example.

The data shows that common alternative offences used against squatters are “Burglary” (33), “Criminal Damage” (17) and Theft (9). These are the more “traditional” charges used by the police against squatters, and seems to predominate in the areas where these charges still work in deterring squatting (eg North West, South West) and section 144 is seldom used. Similarly, these charges reflect the dominant view of squatting as “stealing other people’s buildings”, often cited by politicians and the media. Other identifiable charges include possession of drugs, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Violence against the Person.

**Graph 2: Breakdown of Offences Cited by Police in 125 Crime Related Incidents regarding “Squatting”/ “Squatters”**



(Source: SQUASH FOI, 2016)

### **1.2.3] Charging**

Section 144 is being used as a back-up offence to charge those squatting, especially if the prosecution of the original, and more serious, arrest charge is not feasible. This is indicated by the following FOI responses:

- The single person arrested by the Cumbria Police was brought in for “Criminal Damage”, but probably because the police did not have conclusive proof of this, they charged them with section 144, or “Knowingly as a trespasser living or intending to live in a residential building”. It is unknown if the building was residential, but the police probably wanted to charge them with something that did not require the same burden of proof as “Criminal Damage” (Appendix 4).
- The police force will try to press the most serious charges first, but if this does not prove possible, they will use whatever lesser offences are at their disposal, as this response from the Suffolk Police suggests:

Please note that where incidents which have resulted in a crime, often the offence code 125/86 is deemed a lesser offence as there may be an assault also, therefore would be crimed under the Assault offence.

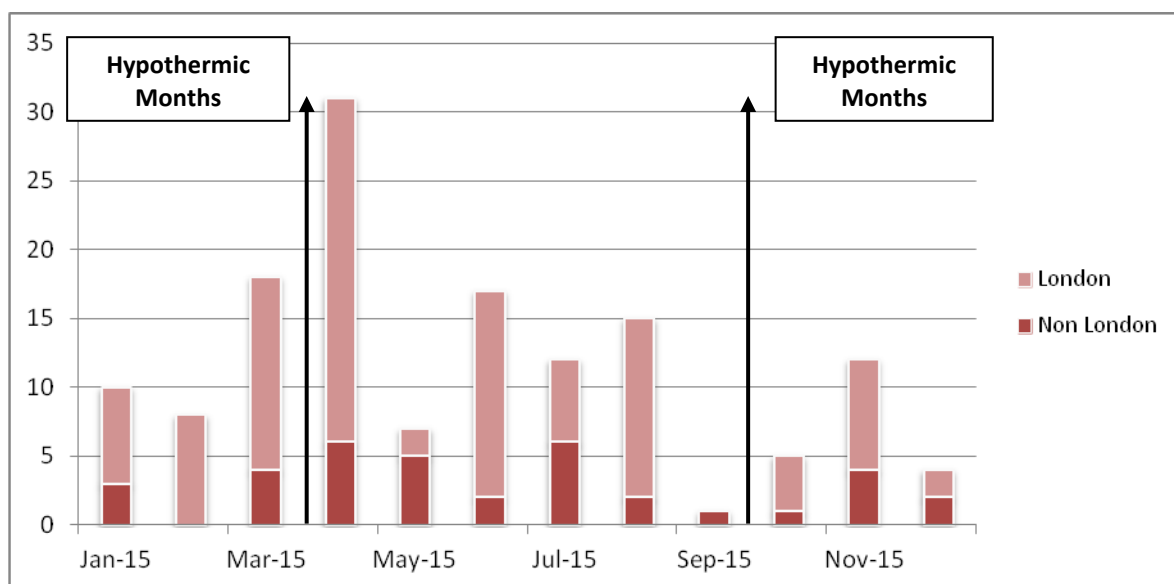
(Source: Suffolk Police response to SQUASH FOI, 2016)

### 1.3] Timing of Arrests

A major concern in SQUASH *Homes Not Jails* report was that section 144 arrests, and therefore squat evictions, were predominantly taking place in the winter months (between October and March), when the danger of hypothermia to evictees was the highest (“Homes Not Jails”, Appendix 1.1, Table 1.5). Hypothermia claimed the life of Daniel Gauntlett, aged 35, who was found dead outside a derelict bungalow in Kent in 2013<sup>4</sup>. Evictions and arrests in the coldest winter months continue.

The 2015 data shows that arrests are peaking in the spring months of March/April instead. One reason could be, as stated by Kate Osamor, Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities: “[Spring is] a season of buying and selling in the market, and it is consequently the season of evictions.”<sup>5</sup>. This demonstrates that the tax-funded police may be assisting private owners to reclaim their properties without a civil process, for the owner’s private benefit.

**Graph 3: London and Non-London Arrests by Month in 2015, with Hypothermic Periods**



(Source: SQUASH FOI Responses, 2016)

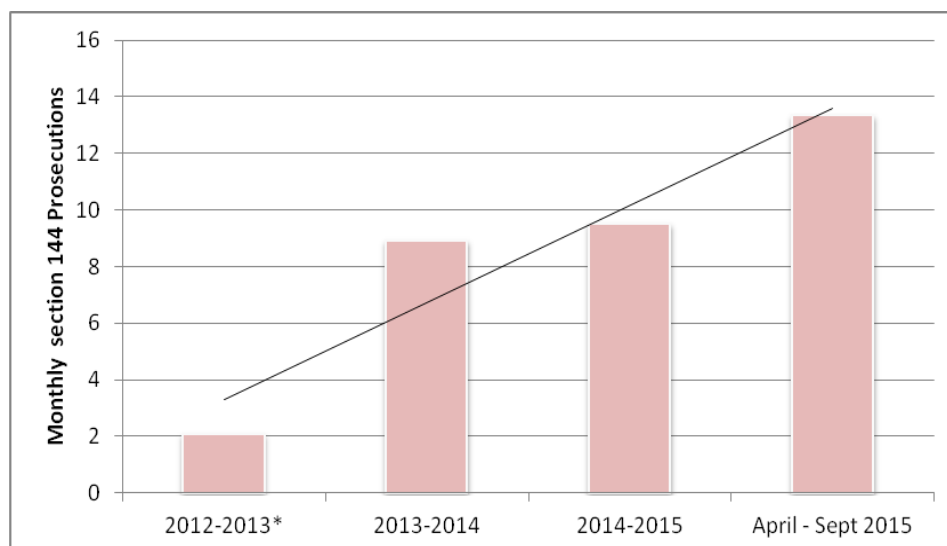


## 2] Prosecutions

The number of prosecutions of section 144 offences has been rising since 2012/13, according to Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) statistics:

- **Prosecutions Rising:** The average number of monthly prosecutions by the CPS has risen from 2 in 2013/14, to 13 in the first six months of 2015/16 (Appendix 6). Graph 4 below shows the growth in monthly prosecutions since 2012.
- **Total Prosecutions:** There were **80** prosecutions for section 144 the first six months, April to September, of 2015. This brings the total number of section 144 prosecutions brought for a first hearing at a Magistrates court since 2012 to **326**.
- **Length of Prosecution:** The Ministry of Justice states that 66 prosecutions of section 144 LASPOA were completed between January and September 2015, taking an average of **83.6 days** (12 weeks) to complete. (Appendix 7).

**Graph 4: Average Monthly Prosecutions of section 144 Offences (2012 – 2015)**



(Source: SQUASH FOI response from Crown Prosecution Service, 2016)

SQUASH's *Homes Not Jails* report found there were major issues with regards section 144 prosecutions going before a magistrate, notably:

- **Magistrates** do not have the legal training to interpret key terms such as “residential”, “living” or “intending to live.” This needs to be decided by a professional judge, and not a magistrate or police officer. Magistrates tend to be biased against defendants, and tend towards summary convictions.
- **An Appeal Courts** set the evidence threshold to prove “living” or “intending to live” in a residential property requires 1) Observation, 2) Forensics, 3) Detailed Interviews, and 4) The normal requirements of residence<sup>6</sup>. There is nothing to suggest this is being followed.

Since there is little information forthcoming on the outcomes of these section 144 prosecutions, it is difficult to tell whether magistrates continue to deliver summary judgements, and the Appeals Court ruling for proving “living” or “intending to live” is being adhered to. A small sample of four non-London police forces reported convictions. Of 18 arrests and 9 charged, 5 were convicted for s144 LASPOA, or **27% of those arrested and 56% of those charged** (Appendix 8). This seems fairly high, suggesting summary convictions, and since all convictions result in a criminal record, punitive for the crime of sheltering in empty premises.

Since police forces seldom have access to the outcomes of prosecutions, there is not much information about convictions. Sentencing of s144 LASPOA convictions is varied, inconsistent and largely unknown, with the median – most common - sentences during 2012 being 9.5 weeks in prison and/or £100 fine, or 7 month conditional discharge. A sample of **sentences for convictions** in 2015, from police forces which disclosed this information:

- “offender being found guilty of squatting in a residential building and given a £75 fine and ordered to pay £85 costs” – **Cumbria**
- “At court 1 charge was discontinued and the other was sentenced to one days detention (time already served in custody).” – **Leicester**
- “There was a total of one conviction for this offence in 2015: Sentence was Community Order, 12 months Supervision Agreement, 60hrs Unpaid Work Requirement and payment of Costs and Victim Surcharge.” - **Avon & Somerset**

The Crown Prosecution Service claims that its “decisions on whether to prosecute are made in accordance with the two stage test set out in the code of crown prosecutors”<sup>7</sup> and its Trespass and Nuisance on Land legal guidance<sup>8</sup>.

Both the Ministry of Justice and Home Office would not reveal information about convictions and sentences for section 144 prosecutions. They state that they “plan to publish court proceedings data for 2015 in May this year” (Home Office response to SQUASH FOI, 2016). Even though the Ministry of Justice had the information, it claimed it could not release it to SQUASH because: “We reached the view that, on balance, the public interest is better served by withholding this information under Section 22 of the Act [future publication] at this time.”

# The Impact of section 144

The impact of section 144 LASPOA, which criminalises squatting in residential properties in England and Wales, and other homeless criminalisation, is two-fold; that is it:

- **Increases the number of those who resort to street homelessness and rough sleeping,** degrades their quality of life and criminalises them further;
- **Provides public protection for the properties of residential landlords,** including those who leave them empty, driving up property prices in general.

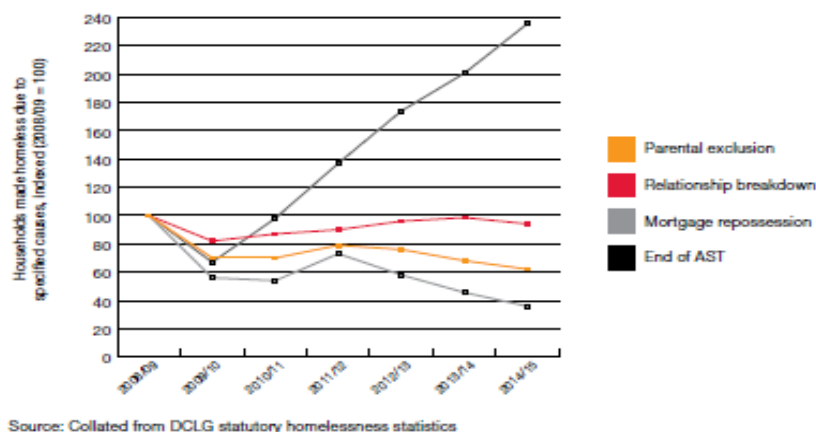
## 3.1] Criminalising Homelessness

The criminalisation of squatting in England and Wales was first discussed in 2010, and quickly made its way through the Parliamentary process during 2011 and 2012, even though the legislation was criticised by the police, lawyers and housing charities. The law was passed by the House of Lords in March 2012, and was the first legislation to criminalise homelessness on a national scale. Since the law came into effect in September 2012, **at least 738 people have been arrested, 326 prosecuted and 60 convicted for the offence.** Nevertheless, these figures present the lowest estimate, since information from police forces, the Crown Prosecution Service and Ministry of Justice is incomplete and limited.

Those who have been arrested and prosecuted have been men and women, aged between 17 and 57, but predominantly in their 20's and 30's (Appendix 5.2). It is this demographic that Crisis, in its *The homelessness monitor: England 2016*<sup>9</sup> identified as a serious and growing concern in England with respect housing security. These age groups faces serious challenges in both social housing, where the new Single Accommodation Rate is too low to cover rent, and in private housing, where the end of Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST) has led to rocketing evictions (pg 19) – see Graph 5. Single people aged between 25-34 were a demographic 54% of Local Authorities “often” found difficult to house, as were the 18-24 (44%) and over 35 (39%) age brackets (Pg 18). The result is that “young people are **three times** more likely to have experienced homelessness in the last five years than older members of the general UK population” (Pg 26).

**Graph 5: Reasons for Homelessness, including Ending of Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST)**

Figure 4.8 Change in number of households made homeless due to selected immediate causes, 2008/09-2014/15 – indexed



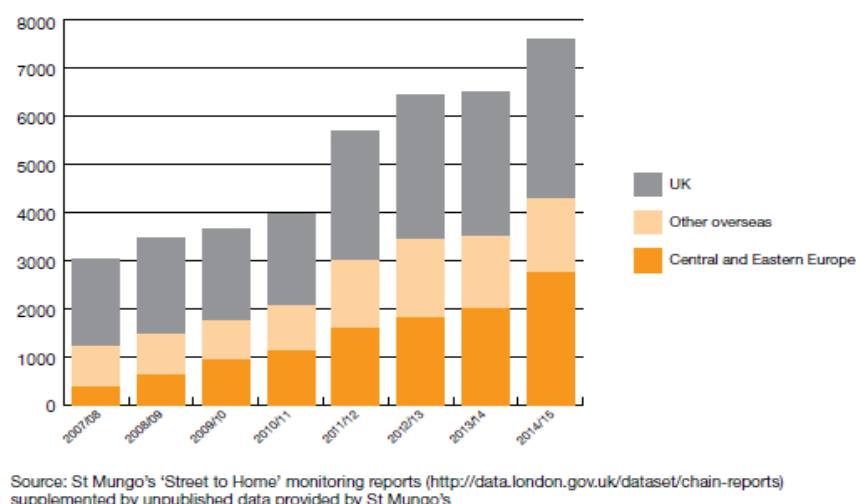
(Source: *The Homeless monitor: England 2016*; Crisis, Pg 60)

The Crisis report *Squatting: a homelessness issue* (2011) found “that 40% of single homeless people squat. Furthermore, squatting is often —a prominent feature of peoples' homelessness career...”<sup>10</sup>. Traditionally, squatting offered a buffer for many homeless people, temporary accommodation when they needed it most, such as the winter months. Squatting provides a refuge for women of all ages facing eviction or fleeing sexual/ domestic violence. For example the presence of an 18 year old Bangladeshi female in Sussex Police 2015 arrest statistics or, Kate Osamor, Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities, giving evidence on Homelessness: “One woman, a former lawyer, was homeless for over six months. She and her disabled adult daughter resorted to squatting, and to sleeping in churches or on night buses.”<sup>11</sup> With the introduction of section 144, the opportunity to squat has been made extremely difficult, forcing homeless women onto the streets.

Rough sleeping has been on the rise in England since 2010, especially in London, where it doubled in the period. There was a marked increase in the rough sleeping numbers between 2010/11 and 2011/12 in London, when section 144 was being deliberated in Parliament and anti-squatting media was at its height (Graph 6). The numbers of rough sleepers in London has continued to rise, with another significant increase in 2014/15, by 16%, especially among Central and Eastern European (CEE) nationals, a notable demographic in squatting (Appendix 5.3).

**Graph 6: Number of Rough Sleepers in London, 2007/08 to 2014/15, by Nationality**

Figure 4.2 Rough sleeping in London 2007/08-2014/15: breakdown by nationality



(Source: *The Homeless monitor: England 2016; Crisis, Pg 51*)

A major issue for the street homeless is de-generating health and a higher mortality risk. Crisis' *Homelessness Kills* report (2012) states that: “Homeless people are more likely to die young, with an average age of death of 47 years old and even lower for homeless women at 43, compared to 77 for the general population, 74 for men and 80 for women.”<sup>12</sup>. The young and homeless, whether ex-squatters or evicted tenants, are facing destitution and a shorter future. “In London in 2015, there were 194 deaths of rough sleepers, but the true figure is almost certainly higher”, according to Jon from Streets Kitchen, a homeless action group based in North London; “Other English cities, such as Birmingham, Manchester, and Brighton, are facing similar homeless crisis’ and the situation is serious.”

The response to this crisis by the British government has been to understate the extent of the problem. The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) rough sleeper statistics came under serious scrutiny in 2015 from the UK Statistics Authority, who found they “do not currently meet the required standards of trustworthiness.”<sup>13</sup> Calculations by other housing charities found that the government statistics were understating young homeless figures, with the true figure some three times higher, at around 83,000.<sup>14</sup>

Another response to the increasing numbers of street homeless in British towns and cities has been to criminalise rough sleeping itself. A major step in this direction has been Operation Encompass, launched in January 2014, a joint operation between the London Metropolitan Police, UK Border Force and six local authorities (Camden, Croydon, Islington, Lambeth, Southwark and Westminster) “to combat begging and rough sleeping”. The Met Police press release states that the purpose of the Operation is to concentrate “[...] on engaging, disrupting and deterring rough sleeping and begging”, with “all agencies [...] committed to dealing with this matter in a robust and proportionate fashion.”<sup>15</sup> The Operation has since been rebranded the “Safer London Business Partnership”, but its tactics remain the same, to “arrest people found begging and issue Anti-Social Behaviour Orders [ASBO]” and to share “information and intelligence via a secure intelligence platform”<sup>16</sup>. The result has been large-scale police operations to round-up rough sleepers<sup>17</sup> and to drive the homeless out of certain areas using harassment and ASBOs to prevent them returning<sup>18</sup>.

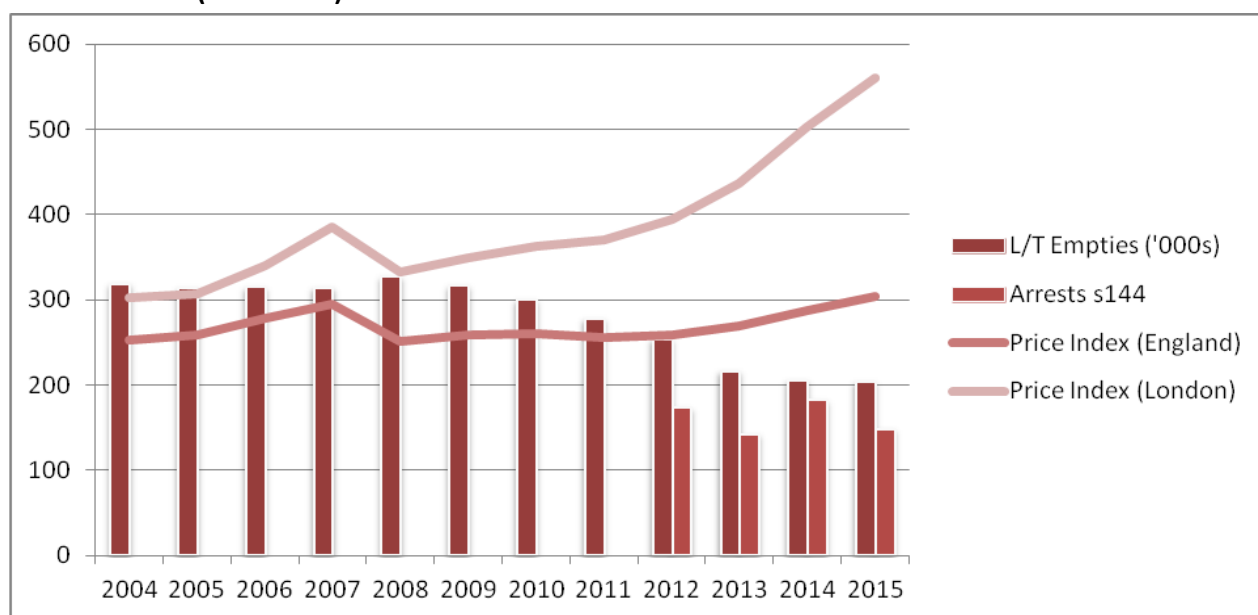
### **3.2] The Market Effect of Criminalising Homelessness**

One of the major reasons for the introduction of section 144 LASPOA, was public protection for residential landlords who wanted to keep their properties vacant or derelict. The original anti-squatting clause was formulated in 2010 by landlord lobby group, Landlord Action, and Tory MP Mike Weatherley. Section 144 became yet another legal instrument for residential landlords to fast-track evictions, along with the ending of Assured Shorthold Tenancies and section 21 notices. The result has been rising house prices, higher rents and a wholesale transfer of wealth to Private Rented Sector (PRS) landlords.

There were still *at least* 610,123 empty residential dwellings in England according to the Empty Homes Autumn 2015 report<sup>19</sup>, of which 205,821 (33%) were long-term empty (i.e. empty for more than six months). The number of long-term empties has been falling rapidly since around 2010, due to a combination of actual reductions and underreporting (Appendix 9). As seen in Graph 7 below, the sharp reduction in long-term empties from 2010 is concurrent with the upsurge in house prices, especially the London market, where house prices rose by 54%. The massive supply of long-term empties to meet housing demand should have depressed prices, suggesting that renovated or unreported long-term empties are still uninhabited.

Rising house prices are also concurrent with the criminalisation of squatting in 2012, and London has been the primary focus for this legislation, accounting for 75% of all arrests. Section 144 was introduced to provide added protection for residential landlords to leave property empty, and the arrest of more than 100 people a year for the offence has proved an effective deterrent to those seeking to use these properties for shelter. The result has been rising confidence in the London property market from speculative, buy-to-leave and foreign investors, who can leave property empty with total immunity. By keeping property out of the market, demand outstrips supply and house prices rise.

**Graph 7: Long-term Empties, Land Registry House Price Index (England, London) and Arrests under section 144 (2004-2015)**



(Source: Price Index: Land Registry, L/T Empties: Gov.uk, s144 Arrests: SQUASH)

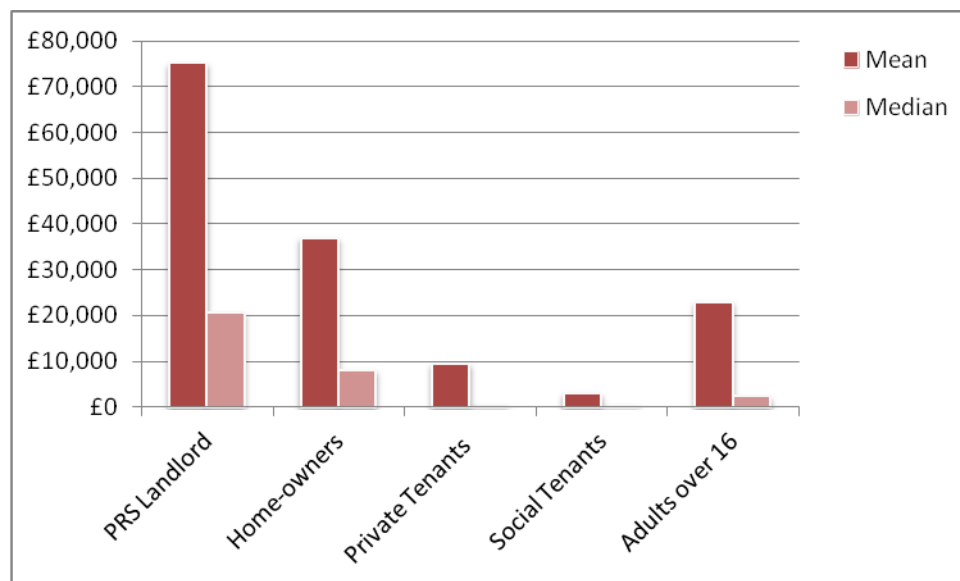
The connection between criminalising homelessness, empty properties and rising property prices is illustrated using a sample of two types of local authorities in London (Appendix 10); these types are:

- High Empties, High Risers, Punitive (HHP) – Westminster, Hackney, Lambeth**  
 These boroughs have had a consistently high level of long-term empties (average 2% of dwellings), have seen dramatic increases in the property values in the borough (average 139%, 2004-15) and are engaged in aggressive tactics against street homeless, such as Operation Encompass (2/3).
- Low Empties, Low Risers, Tolerant (LLT) - Harrow, Hounslow, Richmond-upon-Thames**  
 These boroughs have had a consistently low level of empties (average 0.4% of dwellings), a more modest rise in house prices (average 74%, 2004-2015), and are not notable for their anti-homeless actions.

There is a clear link between keeping housing off the market (and unused), rising property prices and the criminalisation of homelessness, even if causation is not clear. A probable explanation is that a mixture of lower supply and targeting the homeless for removal, through government subsidy and legislation, drives private property prices higher. This is borne out by the spread of section 144 arrests in England (Map 1 – s144 Arrests 2015), concentrated in London, the South East, East of England and the Midlands, where there is higher house-price growth compared to the rest of the country.

The result of pro-landlord legislation by the government, whether section 144, Operation Encompass or ending ASTs, has meant a massive transfer of wealth to Private Rented Sector Landlords (PRS). The *Understanding Landlords*<sup>20</sup> survey of PRS landlords, Home-owners and Tenants in 2013 shows the massive disparity in wealth between PRS Landlords and the rest of the general British populace (Graph 8). The big difference between the Mean and Median suggests that PRS landlord are concentrated in a small number of very wealthy landlords, who aggressively drive financial gains by evicting tenants, raising rents, leaving properties empty, and selling property when prices hit their peak.

**Graph 8: Total Financial Assets of Landlords, Homeowners & Tenants (2013)**



(Source: *Understanding Landlords: A study of private landlords in the UK using the Wealth and Assets Survey, 2013*)

## Conclusion

In 2011, SQUASH and other housing campaigners warned that criminalising squatting during a housing crisis was irresponsible and would lead to increased suffering for the homeless<sup>21</sup>. The consequence of the new law, which came into effect in September 2012, are now starting to be felt. This includes arbitrary enforcement, widespread confusion caused by the new law, and the arrest of more than 700 people, prosecution of over 300, and conviction of at least 60 under section 144.

The latest statistics, three and a half years on, show that arrests are continuing, and prosecutions rising. The publically-funded protection provided to residential landlords through section 144, is causing an explosion in rough sleeping and youth homelessness. In 2011, the Crisis report *Squatting: a homelessness issue* found “squatting is often —a prominent feature of peoples' homelessness career...”<sup>22</sup>, and this remains true today. The single young, facing increasing housing insecurity, are swelling the number of the hidden homeless and rough sleepers, and are being prevented from accessing the traditional buffer of squatting as an interim solution to dire housing need.

Once on the street, the life expectancy of this demographic diminishes rapidly, as stated in Crisis' *Homelessness Kills* report (2012): “At the ages of 16-24, homeless people are at least twice as likely to die as their housed contemporaries; for 25-34 year olds the ratio increases to four to five times, and at ages 35-44, to five to six times.”(Pg vii)<sup>23</sup>. At least 194 people living on the streets died in London in 2015, but the mortality rate of rough sleepers across the country is still unknown. Those squatting, or using any other forms of temporary shelter, are being criminalised in a legal sense, thus reducing their chances of returning to mainstream housing and secure employment<sup>24</sup>. Criminalising squatting and rough sleeping while more than 83,000 young people have been made homeless through private sector evictions and reduced welfare benefits, is perpetuating a cycle of poverty for a whole generation. While there are still 610,000 empty residential properties in England, a third of them long-term empty, the desperate situation of the young surviving harsh winters outdoors and exploitation on the street, is unnecessary, negligent and criminal.

When SQUASH analysed house prices, long-term empty property and squatting arrest statistics in England, it found a certain correlation between these three factors. In England, the majority of known arrests under section 144 have taken place in London and the South East (134/148 in 2015), where the average house price increase has been 42% between 2010-2015, more than double the national average of 17%. Other regions are less likely to use section 144 to ensure empty properties are left empty, preferring to use the traditional list of alternative offences (eg Criminal Damage, Burglary). Throughout the country, long-term empties as a proportion of all vacants, is fairly consistent at a third (Appendix 11), or 205,821 long-term empties in 2014.

London is at the centre of the largest rise in house prices (43% since September 2012), and the largest number of people arrested for squatting under section 144 (545 since September 2012). Some London boroughs are also spearheading anti-rough sleeper operations, such as Operation Encompass, which harass, fine and arrests rough sleepers in police-led swoops. Analysing the boroughs which are acting punitively against the homeless, have a higher proportion of long-term empties to dwellings, and a higher rate of house-price growth (Westminster, Hackney, Lambeth), and comparing to ones with the opposite characteristics (Harrow, Hounslow, Richmond-upon-Thames), we find there is a link between the three characteristics. More research needs to be conducted in this area to clarify the causation and correlation, but SQUASH believes that State-sponsored legislation is helping to drive up house prices, for the benefit of a wealthy few, by criminalising the most vulnerable.



In order to fully assess the scale of the problem, SQUASH would like to see the following **information and research** available in the public domain:

- The **full extent of arrests**, disposals, prosecutions and convictions of section 144 since September 2012, and accurate homeless statistics for the country, including deaths;
- Credible reasons for the massive drop in **empties and long-term empties** since 2010, and a proper assessment of the number, and quality, of empty residential properties in England and Wales;
- A full assessment and econometric analysis of the link between criminalising homelessness and rising house prices, and the resulting **public subsidy** to private sector landlords.

SQUASH continue to demand the **end to the unjust persecution** of those squatting empty properties:

- 1] **A repeal of Section 144** of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (2011) by an Act of Parliament, and an immediate end to arrests and prosecutions under this law;
- 2] Possession claims must return to being a **“civil” , rather than a “criminal”, matter** with a proper examination of the evidence in the presence of a trained judge,
- 3] **An end to fast-track, illegal and unlawful evictions** by private and public agencies,
- 4] The curbing of the use of alternative offences against squatters, and an **expansion of rights and protections** for those using empty properties for its “use” rather than “exchange” value.

#### **Squatting Statistics 2015:**

The link between rising homelessness and the criminalisation of squatting - May 2016



# Appendices

## Appendix 1&2: SQUASH Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests, 2016

### Appendix 1: SQUASH Freedom of Information Requests to Police Forces, February 2016

Sent to:	37 Constabularies	in February, 2016
Avon and Somerset	Essex	London Met
Cambridgeshire	Gloucestershire	Merseyside
Cheshire	Greater Manchester	Norfolk
City of London	Gwent Police	North Yorkshire
Cleveland	Hertfordshire	Northamptonshire
Cumbria	Humberside	Northumbria
Derbyshire	Kent	South Wales
Devon and Cornwall	Lancashire	South Yorkshire
Dorset	Leicestershire	Staffordshire
Durham	Lincolnshire	Suffolk
Dyfed-Powys	Warwickshire	Surrey
Warwickshire	West Midlands Police	Sussex
West Mercia	Wiltshire	

“We would like to know, for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015, answers to the following questions (Please provide a breakdown by calendar month where possible, and any personal data collected, such as age, ethnicity, sex, etc.):

- 1] How many people have been arrested under s144 LASPO (or offence code 125/86)?
- 2] How many people have received cautions for a s144 LASPO (or offence code 125/86) arrest (including, if possible, the number of simple cautions and conditional cautions)?
- 3] How many people were charged for a s144 LASPO (or offence code 125/86), and of these how many held on remand for court, and bailed to court?
- 4] How many people were released without charge/ no further action taken for a s144 LASPO (or offence code 125/86) arrest?
- 5] If known, how many convictions for s144 LASPO offences (or offence code 125/86) have been secured, and if so, what were their sentences?
- 6] How many Crime Related Incidents (CRI) involving “squatters”/”squatting” have been recorded? Please note: CRI relates to incidents such as police assisting bailiffs to remove squatters, “illegal raves”, ‘Burglary – Dwelling’, ‘SOCAP Arrest Powers – Non Crime Reportable’. Please provide dates and details where possible.
- 7] In how many cases of arrest, or caution, was there a Displaced Residential Occupier (or a person displaced from their primary residence) involved? Please give dates and details where possible.”

## **Appendix 2: SQUASH Freedom of Information Requests to Three Government Departments, February 2016**

### **Appendix 2.1: FOI to Crown Prosecution Service**

"We would like to know, for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015:

- 1] How many cases, under s144 LASPOA, has the Crown Prosecution Service decided to prosecute at a First Hearing in a Magistrates Court?
- 2] Please provide background details for those prosecuted, such as age, sex, ethnicity, etc. where available.
- 3] Please clarify where the decision comes from that decides whether the CPS prosecutes or not?
- 4] Does the CPS have a set of guidelines with relation to the prosecution of s144 LASPOA offences? If so, please attach relevant sections."

### **Appendix 2.2: FOI to Ministry of Justice**

"We would like to know, for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 (data by month where possible):

- 1] How many cases, under s144 LASPOA, have been prosecuted at a Magistrates Court during the period?
- 2] How many convictions for s144 LASPO offences have been secured (please include case name, date and court where possible)?
- 3] How many cases, prosecuting s144 LASPO offences have not secured a conviction (please include case name, date and court where possible)?
- 4] What were the sentences given to those convicted of a s144 LASPOA offence in a Magistrates Court (individual or amalgamated average)?
- 5] What was the background of those prosecuted, and those convicted, of s144 LASPOA offences (eg sex, age, ethnicity, etc)?
- 6] What is the average cost and time to prosecute a s144 LASPOA offence?"

### **Appendix 2.2: FOI to Home Office**

"We would like to know, for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 (numbers per month, and geographical location where possible):

- 1] How many people have been arrested under s144 LASPO (or offence code 125/86)?
- 2] How many people have received cautions for a s144 LASPO (or offence code 125/86) arrest (including, if possible, the number of simple cautions and conditional cautions)?
- 3] How many people were charged for a s144 LASPO (or offence code 125/86), and of these how many held on remand for court, and bailed to court?
- 4] How many people were released without charge/ no further action taken for a s144 LASPO (or offence code 125/86) arrest?
- 5] How many convictions for s144 LASPO offences (or offence code 125/86) have been secured, and if so, what were their sentences?
- 6] What was the background of those prosecuted, and those convicted, of s144 LASPOA offences (eg sex, age, ethnicity, etc)?
- 7] In how many cases of arrest, or caution, was there a Displaced Residential Occupier (or a person displaced from their primary residence) involved? Please give dates and details where possible."

# Arrests

## Appendix 3: Data Tables for Police Forces Responding to SQUASH FOI, 2016

Police Forces	Q1. Arrests	Q2. Cautions: simple	Q3. Charged: Bail	Q3. Charged: Remand	Q4. RWC/ NFA	Q5. Convicted	Q6. CRI
<b>Non-London Police</b>							
Avon and Somerset	1		1			1	6
Cumbria	1		1			1	1
Hertfordshire							3
Humberside	3		3				
Kent	10		5	1	4	2	
Lancashire	1		1				
Leicestershire	6	1	2		3	1	17
Lincolnshire	3	2	1	0	0	0	11
Merseyside							24
Norfolk							7
South Yorkshire							8
Suffolk							19
Sussex	6	1			5		
Warwickshire							3
West Mercia	3	1		2		3	5
Cambridgeshire	1				1		8
Gwent Police	1		1				3
Devon&Cornwall							10
Surrey	8		7		1		
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>London</b>							
<b>Metropolitan</b>	104	23	25	44	12		10
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>135</b>

## Appendix 4: Cumbria Police Arrest and Disposal section 144, 2015

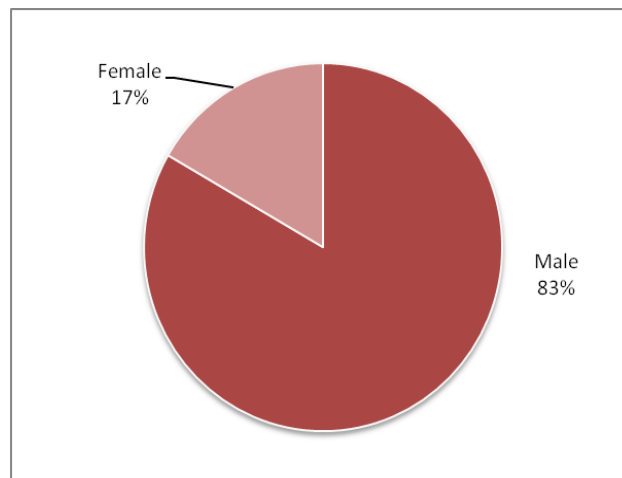
Table 1: Cumbria Police Arrest and Disposal regarding section 144 Offences, 2015

First Arrest Offence	Most Serious Disposal	Arrest Date	HO Stats Offence Code	HO Stats Offence Sub Code	IJ Document Disposal	Offence Title
Criminal Damage	Charged and Bailed To Court	25-Jul-15	125	86	Charged and Bailed To Court	Knowingly as a trespasser live / intend to live in a residential building

(Source: Cumbria Constabulary response to SQUASH FOI, 2015)

## Appendix 5: Demographic Profile of those Arrested for section 144, 2015

### Appendix 5.1: Sex of those Arrested for section 144 Offences (2015)



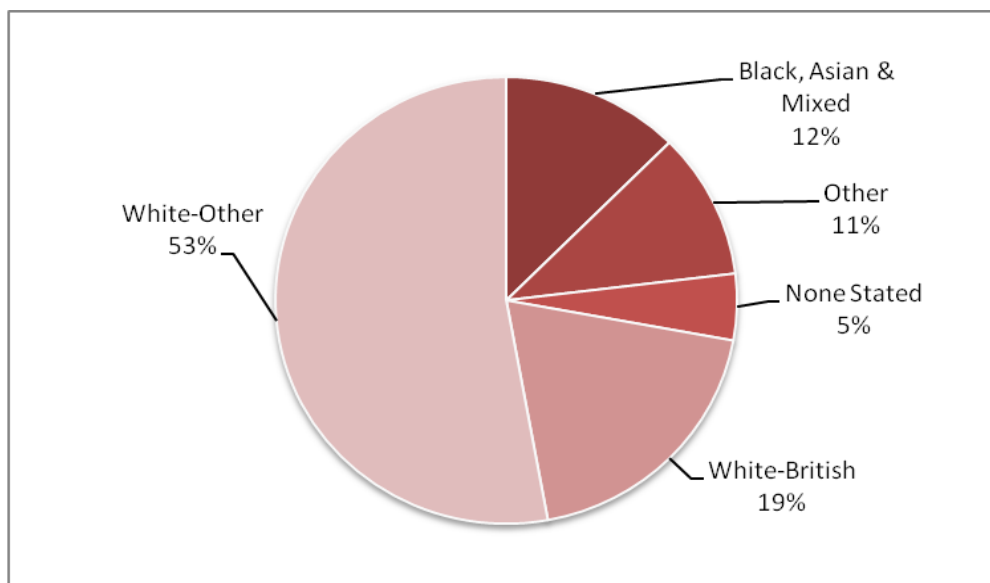
(Source: Sample of 5 Non-London police forces and London Metropolitan police, SQUASH FOI 2015; total sample size 30+104=134 arrestees)

### Appendix 5.2: Age of Those Arrested for section 144 Offences (2015)

The demographics of those arrested and prosecuted during 2015, are much the same as those established in SQUASH's 2015 report, "Homes Not Jails"; that is young homeless men and women, with an overall average age of 30. Women make up a smaller part of arrestees (17%), while men make up the majority of arrestees (83%). These proportions are exactly the same for a sample of five non-London police forces and the London Metropolitan Police data. Women tend to be younger than the men on average (26 years); however ages range between 17 and 40. Men tend to be older, with an average age of 31; again, the age range in the sample is large, between 17 and 45. The Met Police data for 2015 shows similar characteristics in terms of age profile of the majority of those arrested (between 18-50), as well as the presence of under-18's and over-50's.

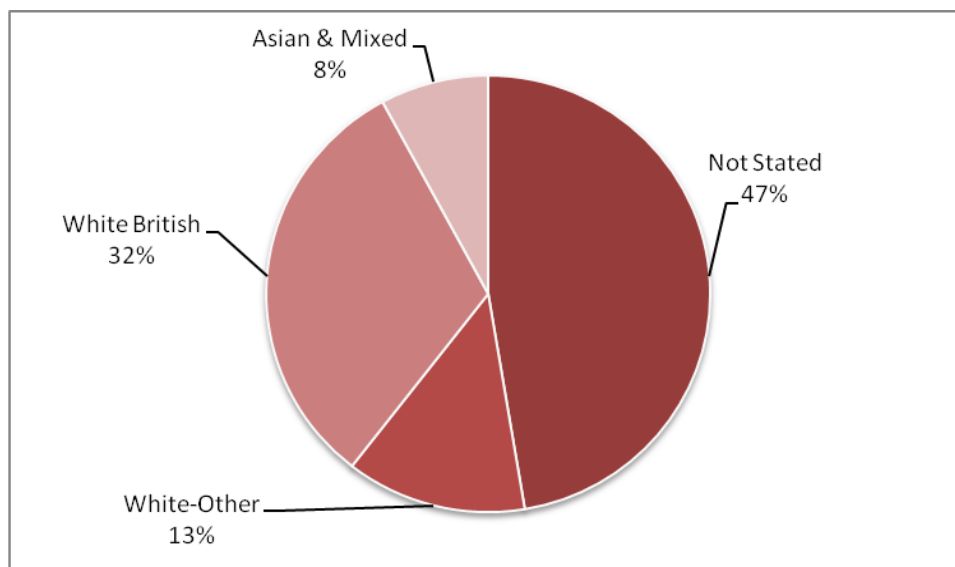
Sample 1: Scatter Diagram of Ages Arrested from a sample of 30 Arrests (Non-London police)	Sample 2: Age Ranges of those Arrested by the London Metropolitan Police in 2015 under section 144
<p>Source: SQUASH FOI responses from Lincolnshire, Avon, Kent and Sussex, 2016</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sample Size:30</b></p>	<p>Source: SQUASH FOI response from Metropolitan Police, 2016</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sample Size: 104</b></p>

### Appendix 5.3: Ethnicity of Those Arrested for section 144 Offences – London (2015)



(Source: SQUASH FOI response from Metropolitan Police, 2016; 104 arrestees)

### Appendix 5.4: Ethnicity of Those Arrested for section 144 Offences – Non-London (2015)



(Source: SQUASH FOI response from Lincolnshire, Avon & Somerset, Kent, Sussex, Surrey; sample size: 38)

#### **Notes:**

**White – Other:** this includes, Europeans, Central and Eastern Europeans and White Irish. The exact breakdown is not known, but “Homes Not Jails” (2015), Appendix 2.1, some estimate for this: of all arrests, White-Other made up of 21% European and 36% Central and Eastern European (CEE).

## Prosecutions

### Appendix 6: Prosecutions of section 144 Offences by the Crown Prosecution Service

	2012-2013*	2013-2014	2014-2015	April – Sept 2015
<b>s144 LASPOA Prosecutions - CPS</b>	25	107	114	80
<b>s144 LASPOA Prosecutions - average monthly</b>	3	9	10	13
<b>s144 LASPOA Prosecutions - projected for 2015-16</b>	25	107	114	160

(Source: SQUASH FOI to Crown Prosecution Service, 2015 & SQUASH calculations)

### Appendix 7: Days Taken for Completion, of Prosecutions for Squatting Offences

<b>Table 1</b> Average number of days taken from offence to completion for 'Squatting' in England and Wales 2015 Q1-Q3 <sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>		
	Number of defendants whose cases have completed	Offence to completion (days)
	Number	Mean
2015 (Q1-Q3) <sup>6</sup>	<b>66</b>	83.6

(Source: SQUASH FOI to Ministry of Justice (Justice Statistics Analytical Services), 2015)

### Appendix 8: Known Convictions for section 144 Offences, 2015

<b>Constabulary</b>	<b>Q1. Arrests</b>	<b>Q2. Cautions: simple</b>	<b>Q3. Charged: Bail</b>	<b>Q3. Charged: Remand</b>	<b>Q4. RWC/ NFA</b>	<b>Q5. Convicted</b>
Avon and Somerset	<b>1</b>		1			1
Cumbria	<b>1</b>		1			1
Kent	<b>10</b>		5	1	4	2
Leicestershire	<b>6</b>	1	2		3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>

(Source: SQUASH FOI responses from four non-London police forces, 2016)

# Housing Market

## Appendix 9: Empty Dwellings in England, Autumn 2015

The rapid decline in long-term empty properties since 2010 – **68% in just four years** – is unheard of, even during the 2002-2007 property boom, and can only be accounted for by:

- **Mass Demolition/ Renovation:** Mass decant and demolition of council, and other social, housing, and/or the rapid renovation and inhabitation of long-term empties. Coalition Government regeneration schemes such as HMR Pathfinder, and its £60 million Clusters of Empty Homes Fund, may have reduced some of the long-term empties figures (Pg 16), but not massively.
- **Unreliable Statistics:** In April 2013, legislation was introduced giving local authorities the option to charge up to 50% extra Council Tax for properties empty for 2 years or more. The result is that many landlords would have reclassified their properties, and stopped reporting their empty buildings because they could not rely on the council tax discount which had previously been offered (up to 50% off) - (Pg 11)
- **Incomplete Statistics:** The official vacant dwellings statistics do not take into account buildings listed as “derelict and uninhabitable”, second homes, property guardians, buy-to-leave and other forms of property vacancy/ underuse. (Pg 11) For example, the London Borough of Islington conducted a survey of 1,979 new build properties in the borough, and concluded that 30% were “buy-to-leave” properties (see Table B below).

The official empty homes statistics only provide a snapshot of a proportion of vacants (2.6% of dwellings), and long-term empties (0.88%), in England in 2014 – see Table A.

**Table A: Empty and Long-term Empty Dwellings in England, By Region (2014)**

Table one: Number and percentage of dwellings empty by region				Table Two: Number and percentage of dwellings long-term (more than six months) empty by region			
Region	Number of dwellings	Number of dwellings empty	Percentage of dwellings empty	Region	Number of dwellings	Number of dwellings recorded as long-term empty	Percentage of dwellings recorded as long-term empty
North East	1,196,943	40,708	3.40%	North East	1,196,943	16,052	1.34%
Yorkshire and Humber	2,357,866	77,117	3.27%	Yorkshire and Humber	2,357,866	27,058	1.15%
North West	3,193,675	109,485	3.43%	North West	3,193,675	40,461	1.27%
East Midlands	2,014,514	55,737	2.77%	East Midlands	2,014,514	19,490	0.97%
West Midlands	2,413,862	63,991	2.65%	West Midlands	2,413,862	22,257	0.92%
East of England	2,590,719	58,197	2.25%	East of England	2,590,719	17,202	0.66%
London	3,470,247	56,715	1.63%	London	3,470,247	20,795	0.60%
South East	3,768,624	84,666	2.25%	South East	3,768,624	23,956	0.64%
South West	2,457,713	63,507	2.58%	South West	2,457,713	18,550	0.75%
<b>England</b>	<b>23,464,163</b>	<b>610,123</b>	<b>2.60%</b>	<b>England</b>	<b>23,464,163</b>	<b>205,821</b>	<b>0.88%</b>

For local authority level data from the official statistics of the total number of empty homes please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants> and click on table 615.

For local authority level data from the official statistics of the number of long-term empty homes please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants> and click on table 615.

(Source: Empty Homes in England; Empty Homes, Autumn 2015, Pages 6 & 10)



The London Borough of Islington attempted to find out the scale of “Buy-To-Leave” in the borough by surveying 14 of its new-build developments, by finding how many electors lived in the premises. If there were zero electors in the unit, LB Islington assumed that it was a buy-to-leave property. The results of the survey in Table B.

**Table B: Number of Units & Zero Electors (Buy to Leave properties) in 14 new-builds by LB Islington in 2014/15.**

Development	Postcode area	Units	Zero electors	
			Number	Percent
Bezier Apartments, Old Street <sup>11</sup>	EC2	188	88	42%
24 Leonard Street	EC2	45	26	58%
1 Lambs Passage	EC1	79	42	53%
12A Islington Green	N1	70	34	49%
Worcester Point	EC1	160	72	43%
1 Gifford Street	N1	154	57	37%
Dance Square	EC1	268	90	33%
Northstand Apartments	N5	213	55	26%
9 Clerkenwell Road/25 Goswell Road	EC1	174	44	25%
Eaststand Apartments	N5	111	23	21%
Weststand Apartments	N5	116	17	15%
Stadium Mews	N5	28	4	14%
Southstand Apartments	N5	254	34	13%
52 Holloway Road	N7	119	9	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,979</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>30%</b>

(Source: “Preventing Wasted Housing Supply: Draft Supplementary Planning Document”; London Borough of Islington, July 2015; <http://www.islington.gov.uk/publicrecords/library/Planning-and-building-control/Publicity/Public-consultation/2014-2015/%282014-12-05%29-Preventing-Wasted-Housing-Supply-Draft-SPD-December-2014.pdf>)

## Appendix 10: Two Types of London Boroughs, Tolerant/ Punitive

Low Empties, Low Risers, Tolerant (LLT)		
	L/T Empties 2010 % of dwellings	House Price Rise 2004-2015 % increase
<b>Harrow</b>	0.3%	61%
<b>Hounslow</b>	0.5%	65%
<b>Richmond upon Thames</b>	0.4%	95%
<b>Average</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>74%</b>

High Empties, High Risers, Punitive (HHP)		
	L/T Empties 2010 % of dwellings	House Price Rise 2004-2015 % increase
<b>Hackney</b>	2.0%	138%
<b>Lambeth</b>	1.6%	120%
<b>Westminster</b>	2.1%	159%
<b>Average</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>139%</b>

(Source: SQUASH Analysis using House Price Rise: Land Registry, Long-term Empties: Gov.uk statistics)

**Notes:**

**2010 Long-term empty statistics** have been used because SQUASH believe they represent a better measure of the number of long-term empties in England. The rapid decline since 2010 is unexplained and 2015 proportions for the boroughs above are similar, but less exaggerated.

**Italics** – Local authority engaged in Operation Encompass

## Appendix 11: Section 144 Arrests, Vacant Dwellings & House Price Indices

	Arrests 2015	CRI 2015	Vacant 2015	L/T Empty 2015	% L/T 2015	Price 2010	Price 2015	Price % change	Areas
<b>Suffolk</b>		19	8,303	2,782	<b>34%</b>	273.9	321.3	<b>17%</b>	East
<b>Cambridgeshire</b>	1	8	5,949	1,866	<b>31%</b>	274.4	343.3	<b>25%</b>	East
<b>Norfolk</b>		7	10,914	3,171	<b>29%</b>	270.8	310.0	<b>14%</b>	East
<b>Hertfordshire</b>		3	8,342	2,087	<b>25%</b>	302.1	407.3	<b>35%</b>	East
<b>Kent</b>	10		15,470	4,496	<b>29%</b>	269.9	341.7	<b>27%</b>	South East
<b>Surrey</b>	8		10,223	3,114	<b>30%</b>	292.0	401.4	<b>37%</b>	South East
<b>Sussex</b>	6		13,930	3,902	<b>28%</b>	291.5	356.0	<b>22%</b>	South East
<b>Leicestershire</b>	6	17	6,710	2,268	<b>34%</b>	240.6	263.8	<b>10%</b>	East Midlands
<b>Lincolnshire</b>	3	11	9,207	3,111	<b>34%</b>	221.4	241.0	<b>9%</b>	East Midlands
<b>Merseyside</b>		24	23,999	8,956	<b>37%</b>	206.5	205.2	<b>-1%</b>	North West
<b>Cumbria</b>	1	1	9,492	4,413	<b>46%</b>	242.9	235.0	<b>-3%</b>	North West
<b>Lancashire</b>	1		20,758	7,681	<b>37%</b>	195	183	<b>-7%</b>	North West
<b>Devon&amp;Cornwall</b>		10	17,777	5,780	<b>33%</b>	316.0	333.1	<b>5%</b>	South West
<b>Avon and Somerset</b>	1	6	7,266	2,078	<b>29%</b>	272.8	287.7	<b>5%</b>	South West
<b>West Mercia</b>	3	5	11,806	4,023	<b>34%</b>	248.3	262.0	<b>6%</b>	West Midlands
<b>Warwickshire</b>		3	6,282	2,265	<b>36%</b>	251.4	289.9	<b>15%</b>	West Midlands
<b>South Yorkshire</b>		8	16,730	6,140	<b>37%</b>	205.0	206.6	<b>1%</b>	Yorks&Humber
<b>London</b>	104	10	59,881	20,915	<b>35%</b>	363.2	559.6	<b>54%</b>	London
<b>England (Overall)</b>	148	135	600,179	203,596	<b>34%</b>	260.1	303.9	<b>17%</b>	

(Sources: Arrests & CRI: SQUASH FOI 2016, Vacants: Gov.uk statistics, House Price Index: Land Registry)

[Region]	Explanation	[No. of Police Forces Responding]	Source
s144 Arrests	Arrests for section 144 LASPOA (2015)	No. of People	SQUASH FOI, 2016
Squat CRI	Crime Related Incidents for "squatting" (2015)	No. of Incidents	SQUASH FOI, 2016
House Price Incr.	Change in house prices (2010-2015)	% Increase or (Decrease)	Land Registry Index
% L/T:Vacant	Long-term empties as a proportion all vacant	% L/T Empties: All Vacants	Gov.uk Statistics, 2016

## About

SQUASH (Squatters Action for Secure Homes) is a campaigning organisation which, since the early 1990s, has worked to protect squatters and other vulnerably housed people. We campaign to raise awareness of the impact of new laws, and give voice to squatters and others experiencing insecure housing. Our broader aim is to provide resources for the achievement of secure housing for all.

### Contact Information

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Streets Kitchen is a homeless action group operating in the UK & Ireland, organising Food Runs, Housing & Benefit Advice, and other Services. Our website offers information & news that benefits those on our streets. We work in partnership with grass-roots groups across the UK and beyond. Our motto is: Solidarity NOT Charity.

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