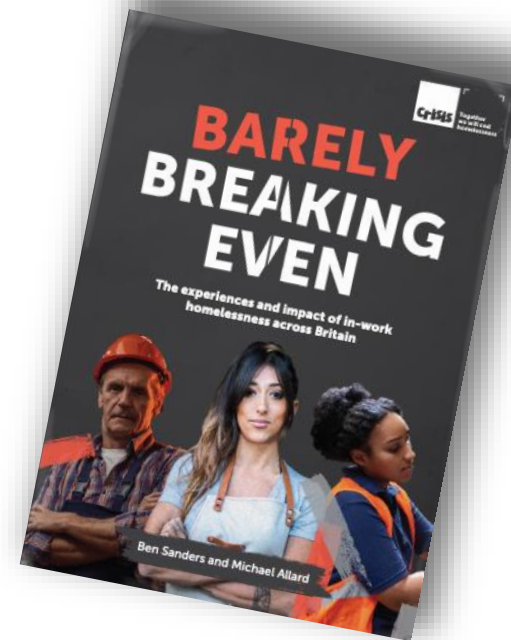




'Barely breaking even': the experiences and impact of in-work homelessness across Britain

Ben Sanders, Senior Research Officer



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homelessness



Raising awareness of in-work homelessness

- We know homelessness can be a devastating experience
- Often assumed work/jobs prevent and can end someone's homelessness
- Recent changes in labour market and cost of living crisis



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Disruption of work

- Work is no longer 'working'
- Rise of gig economy & precarisation of work
- Atomization of work
- In-work poverty effects 1 in 8 workers

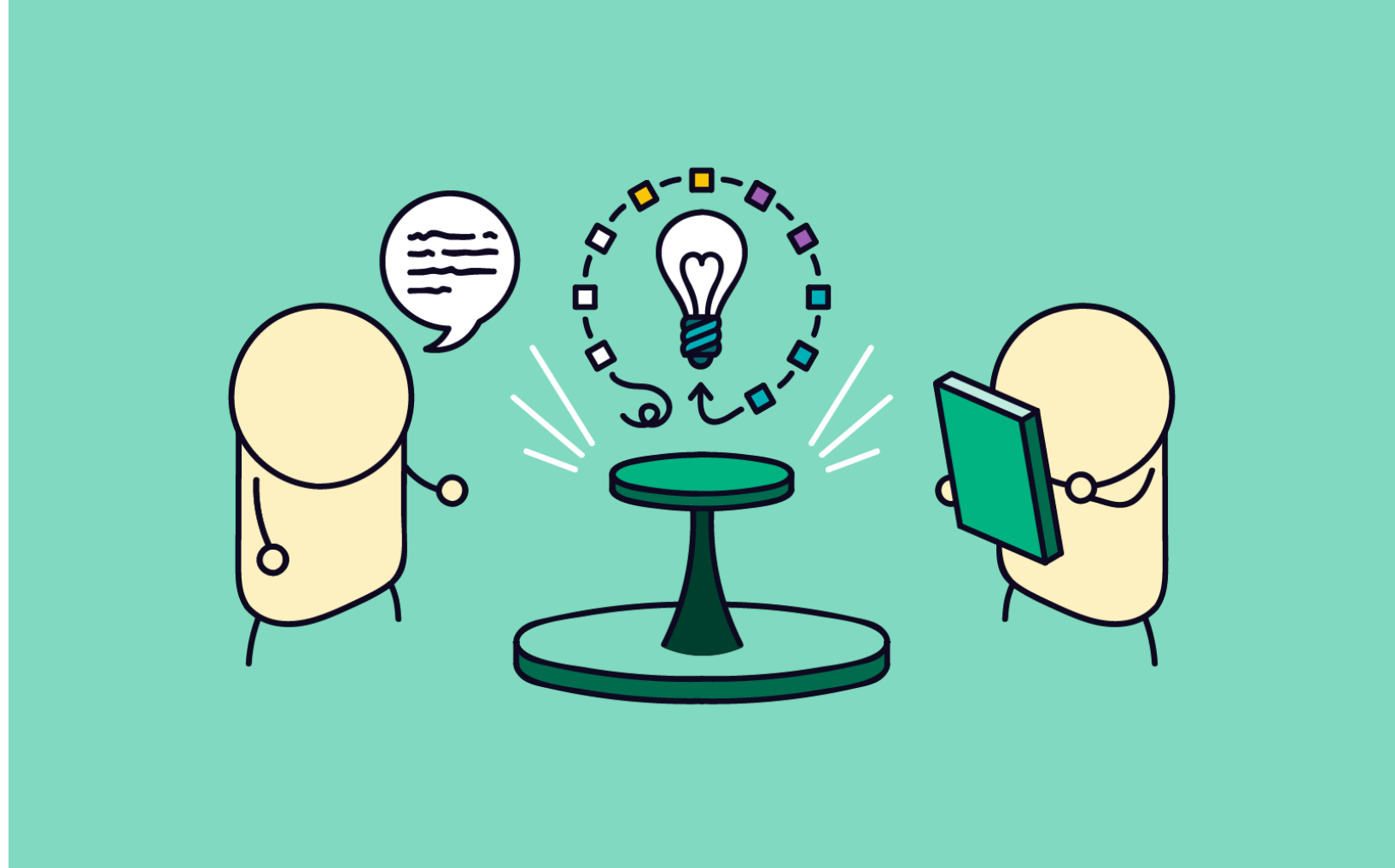


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How we did this...

- Employers survey
- Digital ethnography
- In-depth interviews
- Existing datasets



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A man wearing a black cap and a high-visibility yellow safety vest over a grey shirt is sitting in the driver's seat of a car. He is looking down at a tablet computer he is holding in his hands. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a parking lot or a similar outdoor setting. The overall tone of the image is somewhat somber and focused.

Crisis

What we found out...

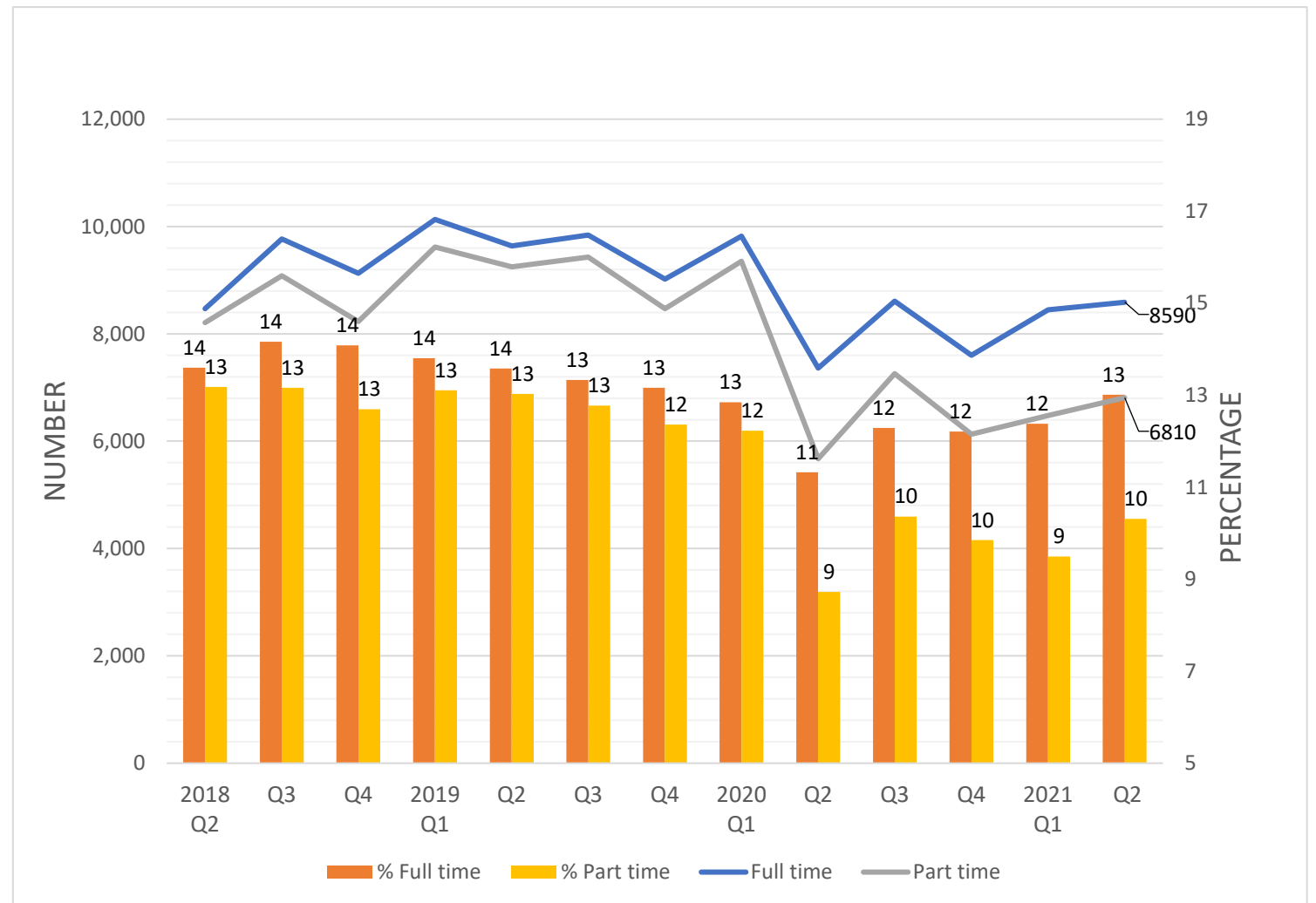


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Scale

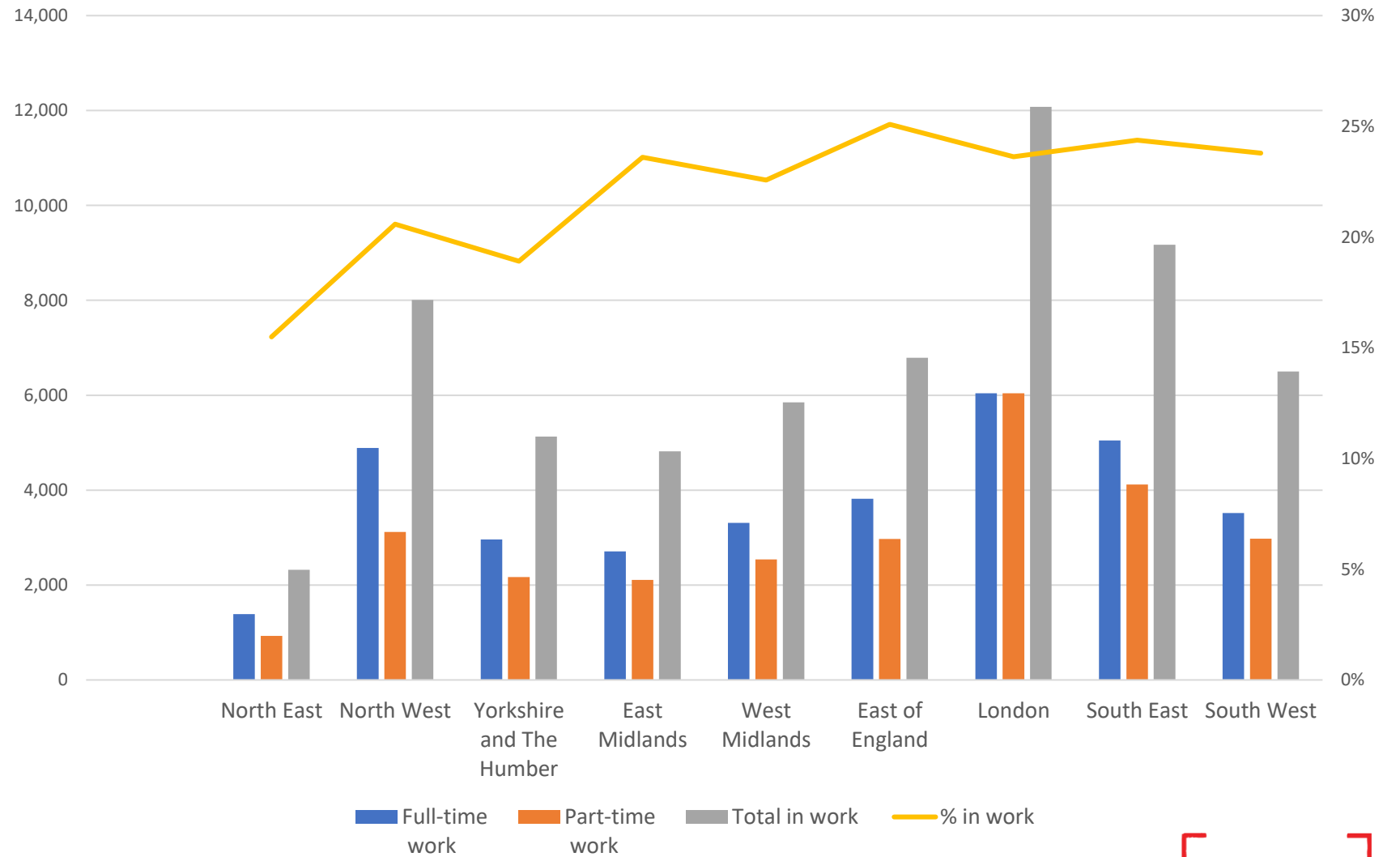
- Almost 1 in 4 people needing homeless support is in work
- 60,660 households (22% of those seeking support in 2020)



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Where?



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Working without a home is hard...

- Managing the daily practicalities of working life were all the more difficult without a stable home:
- Sleeping, washing, eating, commuting, personal admin were all problematic

I had nowhere to wash my clothes or have a shower or anything like that. So I would just have to do it while on the train and in the toilets and try and wash my face and stuff.

It was a nightmare to be honest because I didn't know each day where I was going to be sleeping so I didn't know how I was going to get to work in the morning.



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Stigma and perception

- Managing who knows and who doesn't
- The 'good, the bad and being let go...'

There's no one I would risk with it at the moment. I think there's just too many, there are too many unknowns. And knowing as I do how people react to it, yeah, I wouldn't want to disclose it to them. Not just to the risk of me losing the job, also because some people can be so narrow minded and cruel without really understanding what has led to this, why this is a thing.

My manager, he rang me as soon as my colleague told him and he said to me, whatever we can do to help, because I was moving, because I was living half an hour from where my job is. So, he said, whatever I can do to help, to facilitate you in coming to work. But she did, she helped in a way.



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Negative consequences for...

- Mental well-being
- Physical health
- Relationships
- Future employability

I'm nowhere near the person I used to be. Is that a lack of confidence that, or sense of, yes, confidence that's been eroded and things over time? Yes, lack of confidence, anxiety, stress, all different sorts really if I'm honest

it's obviously the past year has stressed me out a lot, I've had what's called mini strokes, and apparently that is directly linked to stress, so, so yeah.

Why is it hard to leave IWH behind...?

- Housing affordability
- Nature of jobs, low pay and welfare
- Lack of support – council & employer



What about employers?

- Understanding of homelessness?
- Support?
- Actions?
- What they want?





Understanding

Understand the reasons behind the situation. Is it short term and could the company offer a temporary solution. Perhaps they could stay with a work colleague for a while. The situation would be monitored to ensure it didn't adversely affect work performance.

- Many claim to have employed someone with homelessness experience –
 - 40% said they had
- But employers have a narrow understanding of homelessness └
 - 58% employers vs. 44% gen. public see homelessness only = rough sleeping



Support

- Majority would want to be supportive
 - 47% don't know
- However, many were unsure about how
 - 44% had no specific support in place for those currently exp. homelessness

We would seek through their manager and HR to provide all the help and assistance we could in referring the individual to an agency and even help financially and of course on a human nature basis.

We'd help them as much as possible but ultimately domestic issues are not the employer's responsibility.



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Actions...

- Possible discrimination
 - 42% would likely fire employee of homeless
- Negative impacts:
 - Potential employees
 - 58% detrimental to application
 - Current employees
 - 56% detrimental to their job

I wouldn't hire him because the worker should be relaxed and has good health and mentality to give the best at his work.

Understand the reasons behind the situation. Is it short term and could the company offer a temporary solution. Perhaps they could stay with a work colleague for a while. The situation would be monitored to ensure it didn't adversely affect work performance.





What employers wanted...

99% want to know what to do...

- Advice on what to do
- Better understanding of government support/welfare and benefits
- Training for managers and staff
- Where to signpost employees to (council/local services & organisations)



Best Practice Guide

- Development of a practical guide and toolkit for employers
- Published soon...

