

B&Q and Shelter Unite with Artist David Tovey to Shine a Light on 172,420 Homeless Children in England This Christmas

- 172,420 children in England are currently homeless and living in temporary accommodation – the highest number since records began 21 years ago
- New analysis shows that households in temporary accommodation have spent an average of 996 days homeless — with many having spent at least 3 Christmases stuck waiting for a safe and secure place to call home.
- As part of their ongoing partnership, B&Q and Shelter have joined forces with artist and homelessness activist David Tovey to create 172 temporary Christmas trees as a powerful representation of the growing number of children without a place to call home
- Unveiled last night at Shelter's annual carol concert at St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, the 'Temporary Trees' will be displayed in B&Q stores nationwide from December
- B&Q will donate £1 from every real Christmas tree sold to Shelter and between the 1st–7th December will match customer donations made in store through Pennies*.



Thursday 27 November 2025: For many people, Christmas begins by decorating a tree, but for the 172,420 children in England spending the festive season in temporary accommodation, the reality looks very different.

Families who are homeless will often face months, if not years, in cramped, insecure temporary accommodation, with little or no support. Their experience is only worsened by bitter isolation, as many are displaced miles away from their extended families, schools, and communities. Brand new analysis from Shelter on the latest government statutory homelessness statistics reveals that on average, households in temporary accommodation have spent **over two and a half years (996 days)**, stuck there while they **seek a safe and secure place to call home**.

To highlight the growing number of children living in temporary accommodation, B&Q and Shelter have partnered with acclaimed artist and homelessness activist David Tovey. Together, they have created a powerful visual statement about the growing number of children without a place to call home at Christmas.

Drawing on his own lived experience of growing up in temporary accommodation, being street homeless and working closely with Shelter to gather real-life insights from families, Tovey has created a forest of 172 'Temporary Trees' to represent the 172,420 children spending this Christmas homeless. Each of Tovey's five unique, childlike tree designs tells a story — reflecting the reality of children and families trying to celebrate Christmas in cramped, unsuitable, and often bleak conditions, and the toll that living in temporary accommodation takes on children's lives.

First unveiled last night at Shelter's Carol Concert reception at St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, the 'Temporary Trees' designs will be displayed in B&Q stores across the UK and Ireland in December. This Christmas, £1 from every real tree sold at B&Q will go to Shelter, and between 1–7 December, B&Q will match customer donations made in store through Pennies.

David Tovey, artist and homelessness activist said: *"This project is deeply personal. I know what it's like to grow up without a home, to feel fear, shame and uncertainty every day. I've also seen the courage and hope of children living through the same struggles today. These 172 Christmas trees aren't just symbols, they're a way to make children visible, to remind everyone that behind every number is a real child who deserves to be seen, believed in, and given the chance to thrive."*

The Temporary Trees	
	<p>Ordinary Ornaments</p> <p>Having spent time in temporary accommodation, Tovey draws inspiration from his own childhood, when his mother would craft a DIY Christmas tree from simple, household items. These inventive creations ranged from a simple mug stand, to coat hanger 'tree branches' with mugs, tea bags, and spoons added as ornaments. This tree embodies the challenge of preserving the joy of Christmas, using only what is at hand - a struggle faced by many families striving to keep the magic alive for their children, regardless of their housing circumstances.</p>

<p>The Gift That Matters</p> <p>Recalling a deeply personal memory of Christmas, this tree depicts the lengths Tovey's parents would go to to provide festive joy for their children despite the challenges faced in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Tovey shares: <i>"We didn't have much money, but somehow Mum and Dad always managed to get us presents. One year, we came downstairs and there was no Christmas tree but I had a pig-shaped money box. That was it - no tree, just the pig."</i></p>	
	<p>Stars Seeking Shelter</p> <p>Having grown up against the backdrop of temporary accommodation this tree explores Tovey's feelings on the long-term effects of a childhood shrouded by uncertainty.</p> <p>Tovey shares: <i>"The branches are adorned with 172 stars, each one representing over 172,000 children living in temporary accommodation in England, struggling to shine their brightest."</i></p>

<p>Time in Temporary</p> <p>Tovey has designed this tree to reflect the long stretches of time young people are in temporary accommodation. Many households in England have spent three Christmases waiting for a safe and secure place to call home and this tree shows that passage of time, illustrated through birthday memorabilia such as cards, cakes and candles. The passing of the seasons are marked by tulips for spring, peonies for summer, lightning strikes during autumn and snow for winter.</p>	
	<p>Hazardous Housing</p> <p>This tree draws on Tovey's experiences and Shelter's real life insights from families in temporary accommodation, creatively depicting conditions 'unsuitable' for children to live in.</p> <p>Tovey shares: "<i>So much temporary accommodation is completely unsuitable for families to live in. I have included a "No Ball Games" sign at the bottom - a reference to how, in temporary accommodation there is often nowhere safe where children are allowed to play. For me, losing the ability to play is one of the biggest losses of my childhood. And that's exactly what happens when you're stuck in temporary accommodation: there's simply no space to be a kid.</i>"</p>

Joanna Gluzman, Director of Responsible Business, B&Q said: "At B&Q, we believe everyone deserves a safe and secure place to call home, especially during the festive period. Sadly, this isn't the reality for the 172,420 children currently in temporary accommodation in England. That's why our ongoing partnership with Shelter is so important and reflects our commitment to helping create better homes and better lives for everyone. This year, for every real Christmas tree purchased, we'll donate £1 to Shelter, and between 1-7 December we'll also match customer donations made in store through Pennies."

Sarah Elliott, Chief Executive Officer at Shelter, said: "Every day we hear from families spending months, or even years, in shocking conditions, crammed into one freezing room with all their belongings stacked against damp covered walls. Families will often be moved miles away from their extended family, schools and local communities."



“This Christmas, Shelter will be doing everything possible to help parents fight for a better home for their children. No family should face homelessness alone. We could not carry out this vital work without the generosity of partners like B&Q, whose donations allow us to provide advice, practical support, and guidance to help families find and keep a safe home – all while campaigning for long-lasting change.”

Since 2017, B&Q and Shelter have raised over £6 million to support vital services for families in need. To find your nearest B&Q to purchase your tree and help donate towards B&Q and Shelter's shared mission, visit: <https://www.diy.com/find-a-store>.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

*** B&Q will match customer donations made in store through Pennies up to the first £150,000 of donations**

For more information, images and interview requests please contact b-and-q-press@wearetheromans.com

Government statutory homelessness statistics: Statutory homelessness statistics relate to the quarter April – June 2025. They collate information on statutory homelessness applications, duties, and outcomes for local authorities in England, as well as households in temporary accommodation (TA). Unlike other data in this dataset, the TA figures are a snapshot at the end of the quarter, not a cumulative total of all placements across a quarter.

The latest figures are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

The number of children in temporary accommodation is recorded in table TA1 of the homelessness statistics.

172,420 of children under the age of 18 were recorded to be living in temporary accommodation in England at the end of June 2025. The number of children in temporary accommodation has increased by 8% (13,110) since the end of June 2024 and is the highest number since records began (June 2004). The previous record was set in 2006 (130,470). This was broken at the end of March 2023 (131,500). It has continued to rise, and set new records, in each quarter since then.

Data on the average time spent in Temporary Accommodation is recorded in Table TA7 of the homelessness statistics

The data is presented by type of temporary accommodation so, to obtain an overall average, it is combined with data from Table TA1 on the number of households in temporary accommodation by type. On average, households in temporary accommodation in England have spent over two and a half years (996 days) waiting for secure and permanent accommodation. This equates to a total of over 131 million days spent in temporary accommodation across England.

	Total days spent by households in Temporary Accommodation	Total all households in Temporary Accommodation	Average (mean) days spent in Temporary Accommodation
East Midlands	1,216,371	4,516	269
East of England	4,898,292	9,321	526
London	103,562,515	72,711	1,424
North East	240,949	1,187	203



North West	3,874,324	9,576	405
South East	9,944,986	16,116	617
South West	2,063,159	5,882	351
West Midlands	4,500,955	8,533	527
Yorkshire and The Humber	816,595	3,817	214
England	131,118,146	131,659	996

About Shelter:

Shelter exists to defend the right to a safe home and fight the devastating impact the housing emergency has on people and society. Shelter believes that home is everything. Learn more at www.shelter.org.uk.

About B&Q:

B&Q is the UK's leading home improvement and garden living retailer with over 300 stores throughout the UK and Ireland, offering great prices, with over 2 million products available to order at diy.com for home delivery or click and collect.

For trade professionals, B&Q TradePoint offers exclusive membership to those in trades such as electricians, plasterers, fitters, plumbers, roofers, decorators, joiners, tilers, builders, landscapers and facilities and maintenance professionals. TradePoint members have exclusive access to dedicated TradePoint counters at around 200 B&Q stores as well as to Tradepoint.co.uk.

B&Q launched the UK's first home improvement marketplace in March 2022, adding additional choice for consumers. The Marketplace offers a unique, integrated experience with in-store returns for many products and, as of July 2025, Click + Collect options too. B&Q's Marketplace at diy.com offers over 2 million products from over 2,000 third-party sellers alongside products for sale from B&Q. Their team of more than 20,000 colleagues of all ages are respected nationwide for providing great home improvement help to customers. They're the beating heart of B&Q and their iconic orange aprons are worn with pride.

Every year, more than 20 million people improve their homes and make life better with B&Q, and every year the company achieves ever-higher standards for sustainable operations and sourcing, and supports our local communities, including funding B&Q Foundation grants and Shelter's DIY Skills Advisors. For more information on our community initiatives visit diy.com/corporate/community or to read our Build a Life Project annual report visit diy.com/responsible-business

B&Q is part of Kingfisher plc, the international home improvement company, operating over 1,900 stores in 7 countries across Europe. [Follow B&Q on LinkedIn](#)

About David Tovey:

David Tovey is a socially engaged multidisciplinary artist. His work gives voice to the silenced, dignity to the overlooked, and space to those society often pushes to the margins. Through collaborative projects with vulnerable groups—those facing homelessness, addiction, discrimination, or trauma—he creates art that confronts, heals, and connects. This isn't just his work. It's his calling.