# Better Data, Better Results

An options appraisal for a national data system for street homelessness

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# Centre for Homelessness Impact

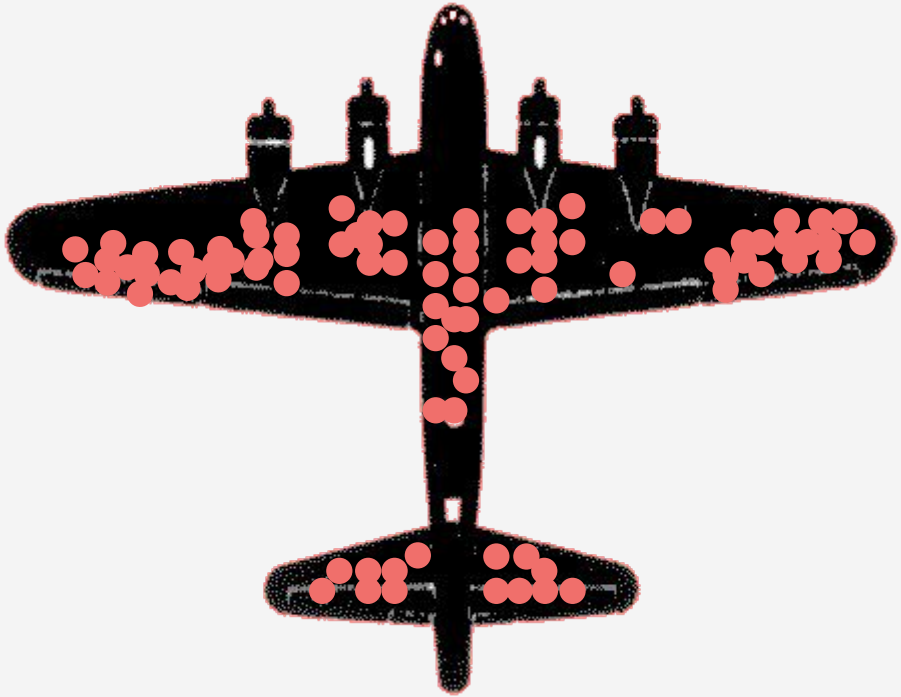

AJ-C

# Improve safety

Tasked with helping improve the safety of bomber aircrafts, at a time where the probability of a pilot surviving a tour of duty was little better than fifty-fifty.

# The pattern seemed clear

Many of the airplanes were riddled with gunfire. Most most holes could be found on the wings and fuselage in the middle.




THE MILITARY'S RESPONSE

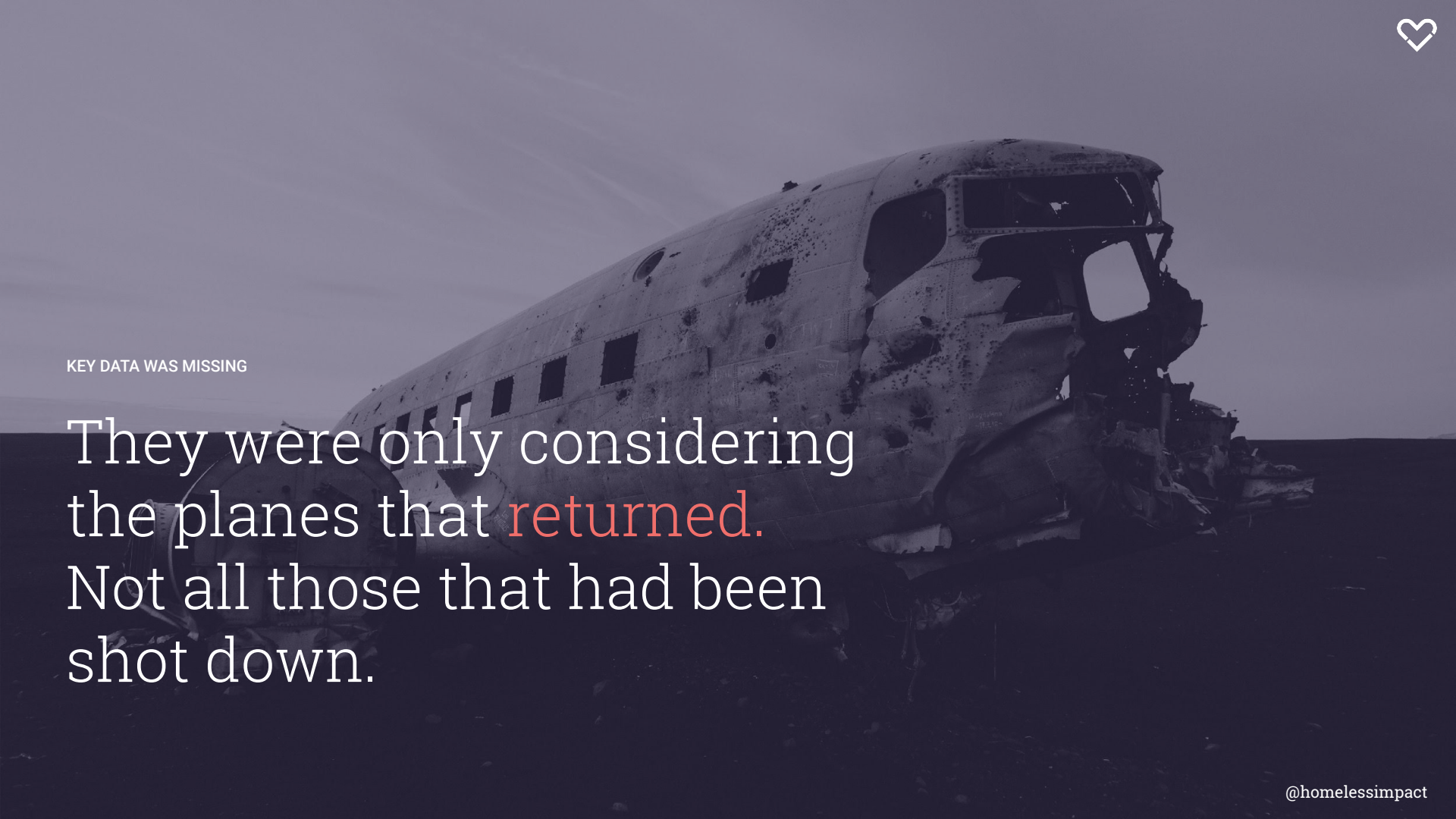
"Let's place extra armour on the wings and fuselage – where there are most holes."

ABRAHAM WALD

# “Not so fast...

ABRAHAM WALD

# “Not so fast... Where are the missing holes?”



KEY DATA WAS MISSING

# They were only considering the planes that returned. Not all those that had been shot down.

01

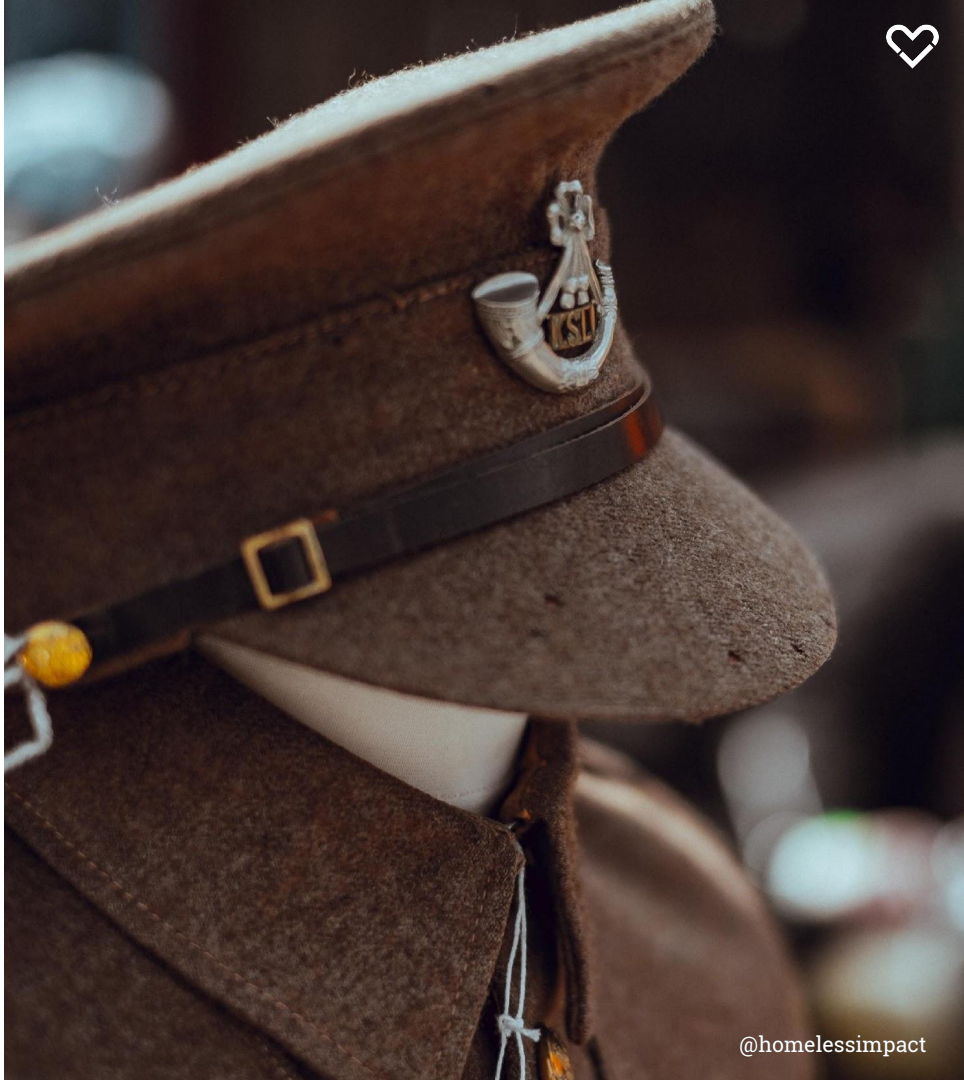
# Learnings from data aren't always easy or obvious.

02

You have to take into account all data you cannot immediately see.

03

It’s important to question basic assumptions.



TODAY

# The rate of aircraft accidents is at a historical low. Why?


The use of data and evidence has been designed into the whole system.

What if we applied the same rigour and meticulous testing to the homelessness issue?

# What we were asked to do

1

A clear set of **shared ambitions** for what the new system should be designed to achieve

2

**Options for a system design** (based on stakeholder research and a review of examples from across the world)

3

**Benefits and limitations** for each system design.

4

A **roadmap** for development and implementation (including short and long term actions)

# The recommendations

1

Co-ordinate efforts across agencies and organisations working to end street homelessness.

2

Understand and assess progress to reducing rough sleeping.

3

Improve the ways in which street homelessness is tackled using reliable data.

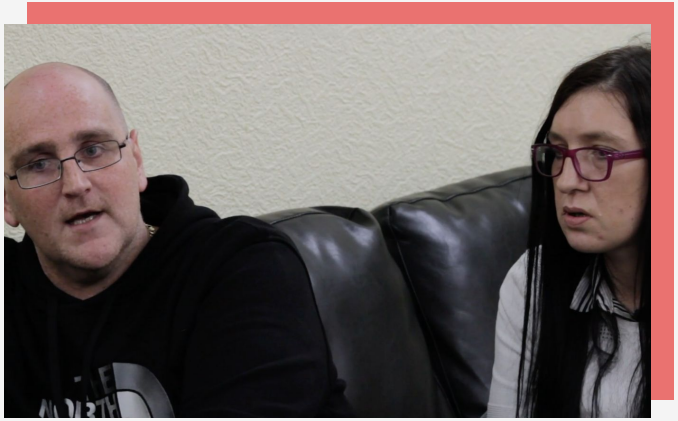
THE CHALLENGE

# The data we have in Scotland today only shows a partial picture.

# What we do know is incomplete, and it isn’t joined up.

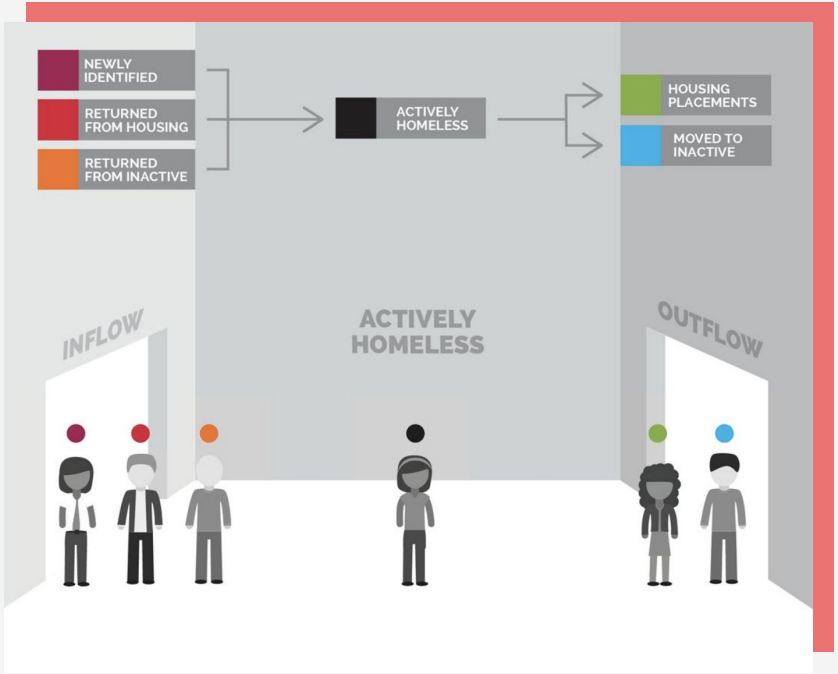
# Stakeholder research

- Local authorities
- People with lived experience
- Partnerships
- Service providers
- Street outreach
- Homelessness data collection systems and software providers



# Other data collections

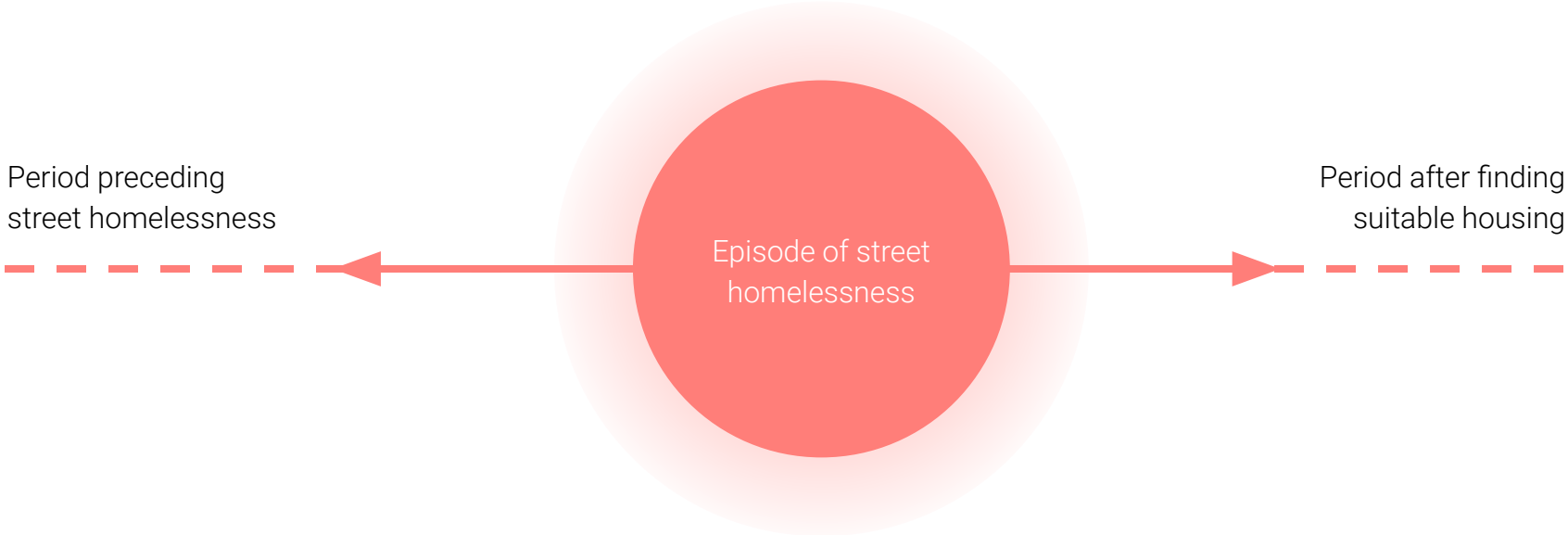
- SHIN (The Street Homeless Information Network), Wales
- CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and a Network), London
- PASS (The Pathway Accommodation and Support System), Ireland
- Built For Zero, Community Solutions, US
- CDPSoft Software Solutions (Liverpool, among others)
- Better Futures




Built for Zero – illustration of 'functional zero' homelessness

AN EARLY INSIGHT

# Measuring street homelessness alone is not enough



# Key Learnings

1. Moving towards an everyday culture of collaboration
2. Creating a single source of information
3. Data collection as a jigsaw puzzle, not a snapshot
4. Reframing the role of data

# Key Learnings

5

From reactive to responsive practice

6

Making progress visible for everyone

7

Enabling a big-picture view of the homelessness system

8

Letting the data reflect the voice of the user

# Design principles

**Person-centred interactions**
The system needs to support the needs of individuals first and foremost, before the needs of the data collection. This means information is collected in a way that respects people's agency, dignity and preferences.

**Useable tools**
The system needs to be usable for those inputting data and those for whom data is being collected. This means it is simple to use, builds on familiar conventions and is useful beyond its core purpose of data collection.

**Flexible approaches**
The system needs a core of consistency for the data collected on it to be useful. However, service providers require a certain amount of flexibility around that core to do their work effectively.

**Sensitivity to context**
The system needs to account for people's wider context so that interactions between staff and clients are sensitive to their situations as they change.

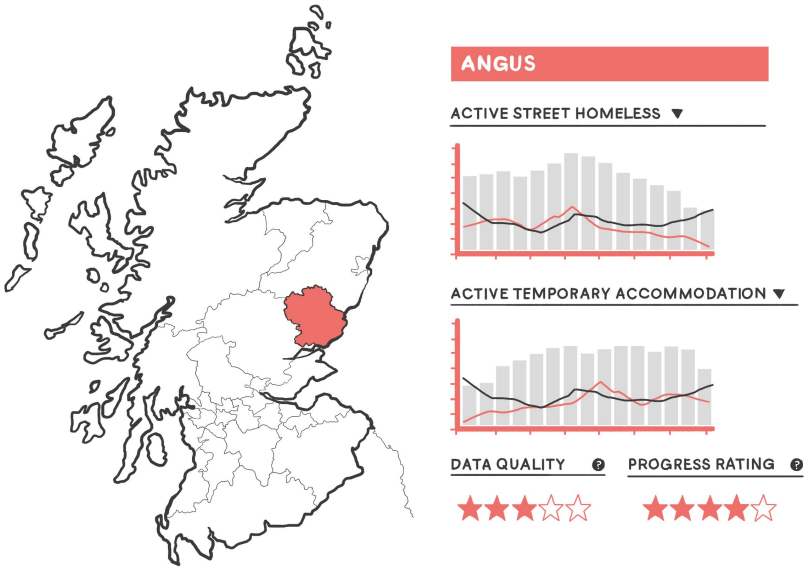
**Private by default**
The system needs to protect people's privacy by default, while supporting consensual sharing of information where it benefits individuals.

# System options

**OPTION 1**

# Centralised reporting

A standard for data returns from organisations working with people experiencing street homelessness, used to build a picture of street homelessness and service usage. Client data is collected by a number of organisations and periodically reported back to a central data store.



OPTION 1

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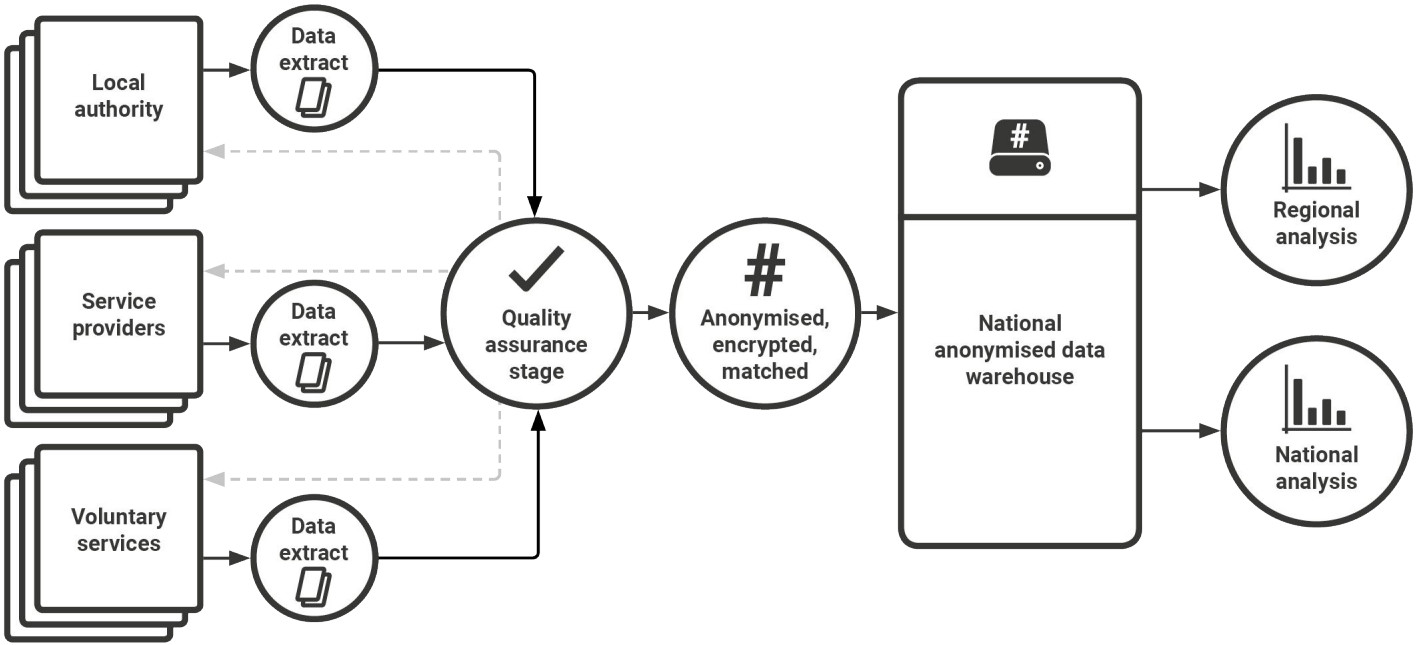

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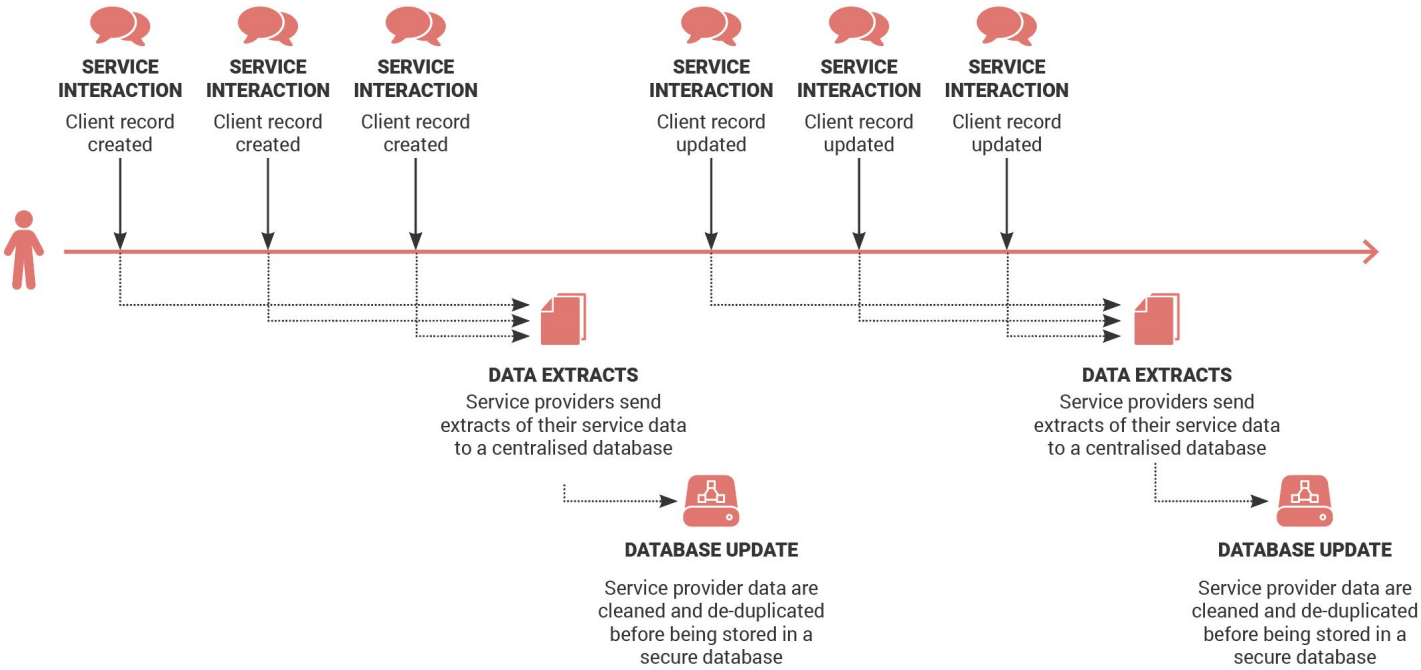


## OPTION 1 – CENTRALISED REPORTING

**Information recorded**

Client records
- Demographic and identifying information
- Accommodation status

Administrative data
- Arrival and departure date from accommodation
- Street contacts
- Date of other service interactions

**Insights it can provide**

- A figure for the number of people affected by street homelessness nationally.
- Indication of how the figure varies by local area and how it changes over time.

**Key benefits**

- Very focused collection.
- Lightest burden on service providers and local authorities.
- Lower update frequency is probably more palatable for providers and reduces technical barriers.
- Fewer requirements for data security – contributing agencies will be responsible for their own data security until they submit their returns.

**Key limitations**

- No real-time case management benefits.
- Requires lots of data sharing protocols.
- Less clear feedback loop, meaning less clear benefit to users.
- Will likely require significant data cleaning in order to make the records matchable.
- Requires new data to be collected with some providers – this could take time to build momentum and reliability.

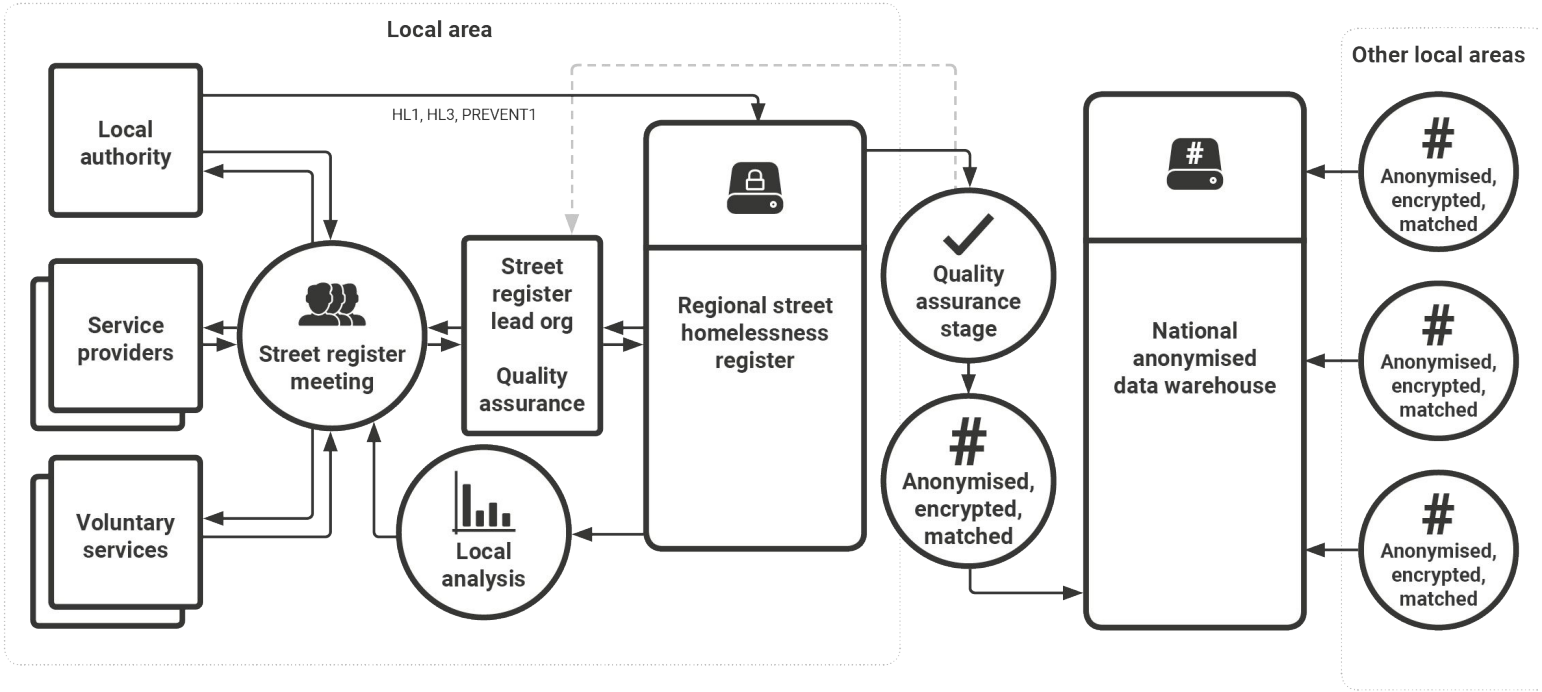
**OPTION 2**

# Street homelessness register

A simple and focused offline register of people experiencing or at risk of street homelessness in each local area, used for monitoring numbers of rough sleepers and to support information sharing between agencies assisting people experiencing street homeless. The register is hosted, maintained and managed by a lead organisation but its content is provided by other partner agencies via informal knowledge-sharing.

OPTION 2

# Street homelessness register



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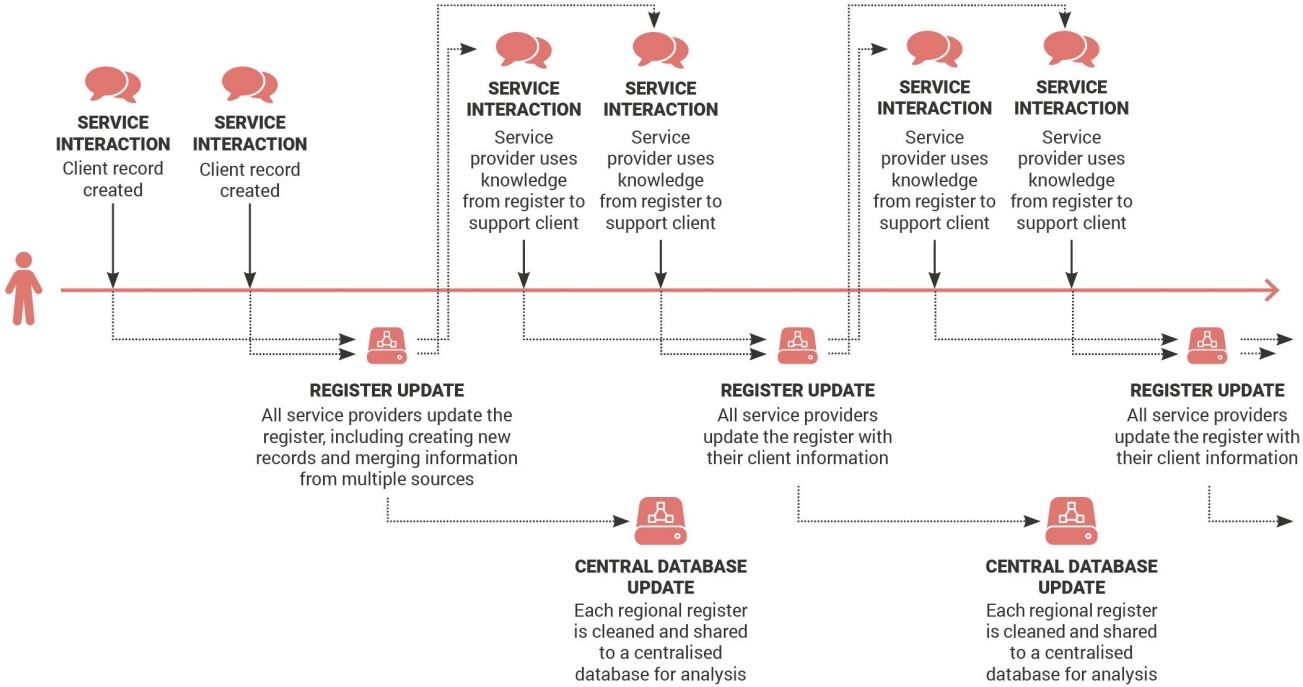


## OPTION 2 – STREET HOMELESSNESS REGISTER

### Information recorded

Client records

- Demographic and identifying information
- Current accommodation status
- Current support needs
- 'At risk' measure
- Warning flags

Administrative data

- Case worker information (e.g. which organisations have been working with each client)
- Actions taken to support individuals

### Insights it can provide

- A figure for the number of people affected by street homelessness nationally.
- Indication of how the figure varies by local area and how it changes over time.
- Indication of the duration of different types of homelessness for individuals.
- More complete information about outcomes from support for people experiencing street homelessness.

### Key benefits

- Relatively focused collection.
- Potential for quick impact (thanks to minimal technology requirements).
- Potential to develop this collection into a broader shared case management system once it has been fully established.
- Strongly supports joined up working.
- Continuous quality improvement approach builds in a mechanism that holds everyone accountable for progress collectively.
- Doesn't require national scale buy-in to be useful (i.e. is useful at a local level).
- Can be done at very low cost without much resource investment from participating organisations.
- Simple for local areas to use.

### Key limitations

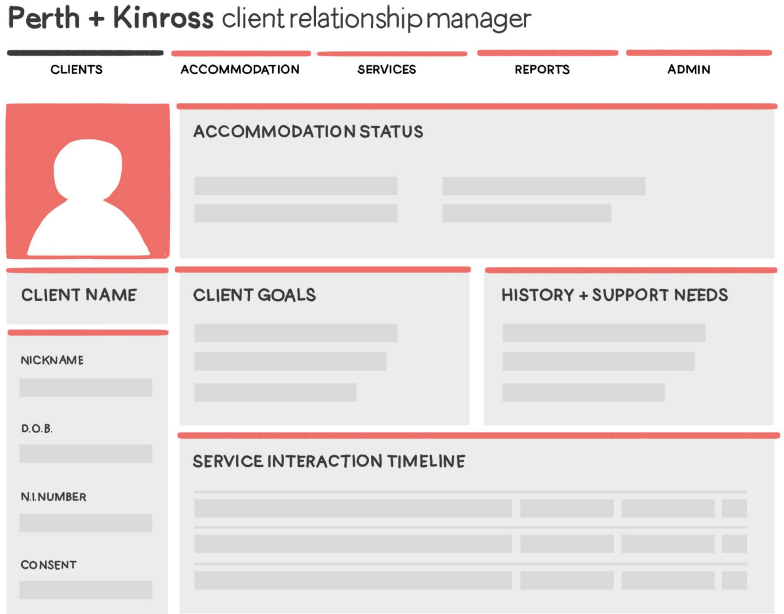
Non-participation from services may create blind spots in the data.

- May not be able to provide the same richness of data as some of the other options.
- Reliability of the data for reporting purposes is heavily dependent on which services are represented at multi-agency meetings.
- Unable to capture information about service use or resource management.
- Careful consideration needed for the privacy requirements around multi-agency meetings.
- The basic premise of reductions in street homelessness doesn't necessarily take into account the longer term sustainability of accommodation placements.

**OPTION 3**

# Shared case management

A real-time person-centred, shared client relationship management software system, used to better coordinate client support across services. The system is structured around client records (rather than organisations), which can be accessed and updated by organisations working with the client.



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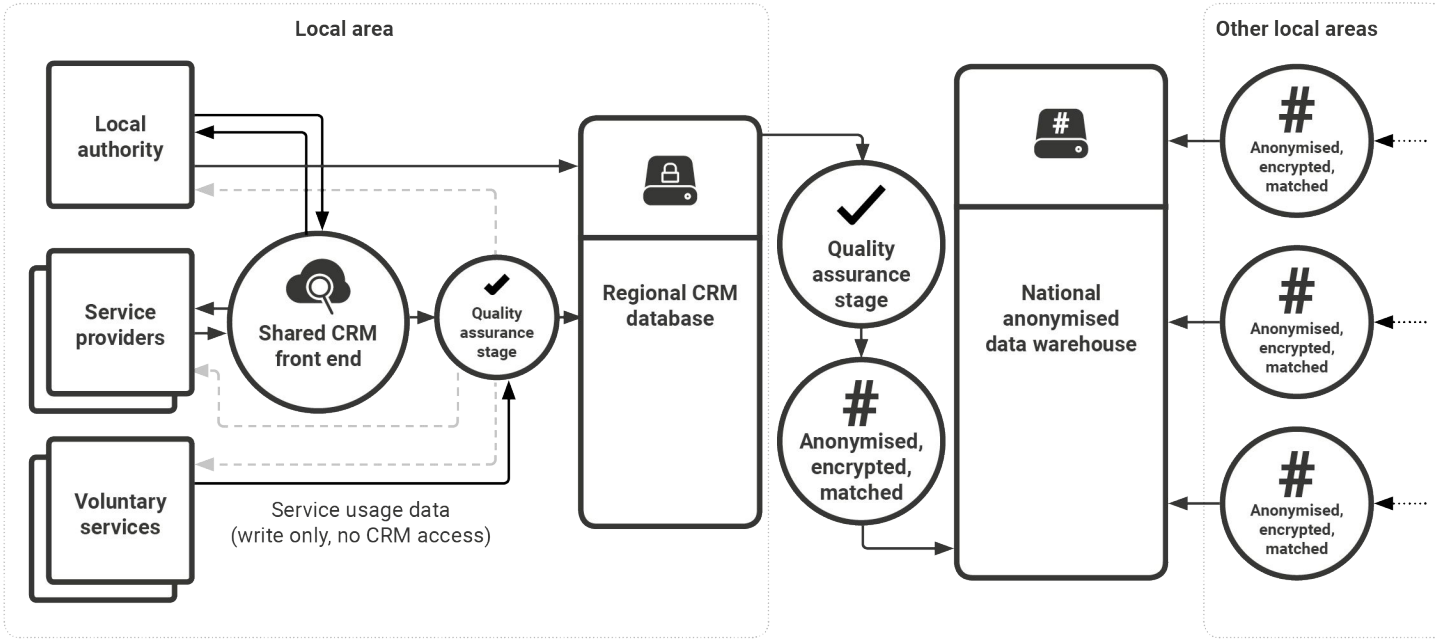

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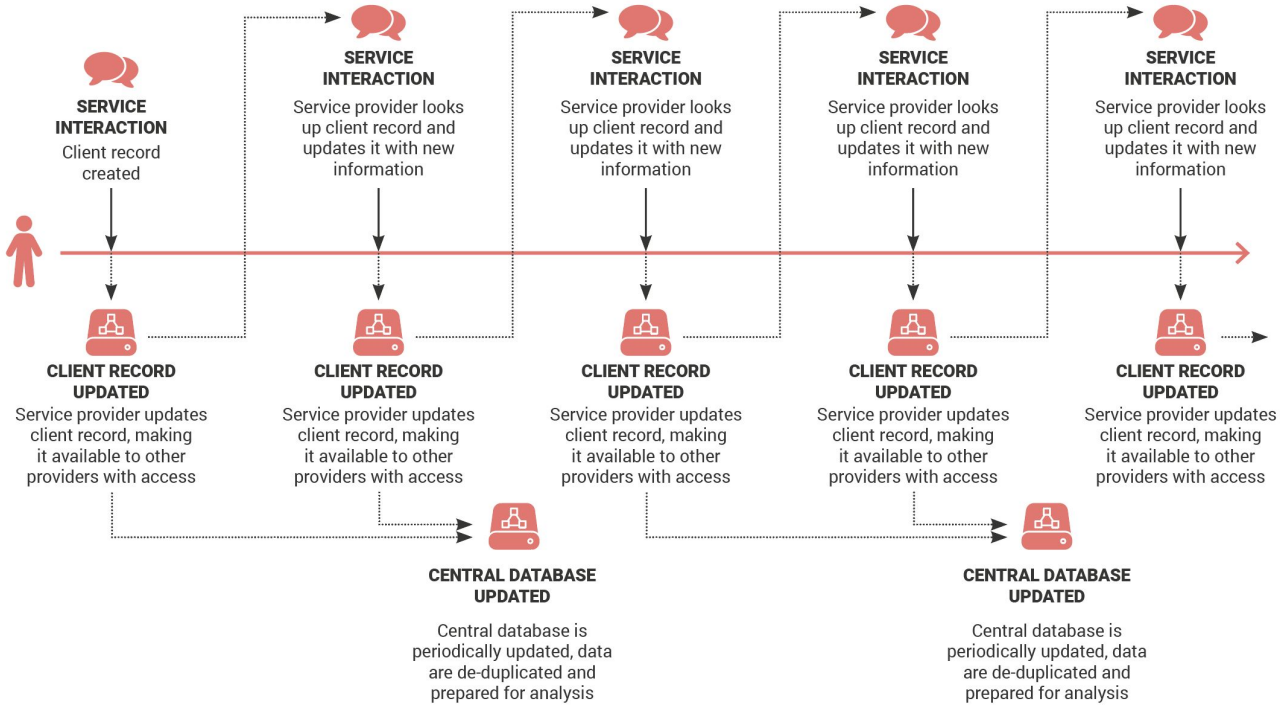


## OPTION 3 – SHARED CASE MANAGEMENT

### Information recorded

Client records

- Demographic and identifying information
- Current accommodation status
- Assessments
- People's 'story' – the information about their background and situation that they choose to share with providers
- Current support needs
- Referrals
- Warning flags

Administrative data

- Arrival and departure dates from accommodation
- Interactions with non-residential services
- Actions taken to support individuals
- Resource information (e.g. accommodation project occupancy, cost of support)

### Insights it can provide

- A figure for the number of people affected by street homelessness nationally.
- Indication of how the figure varies by local area and how it changes over time.
- Indication of the duration of different types of homelessness for individuals.
- More complete information about outcomes from support provided to people who are street homelessness.
- Demographic and support needs data about people experiencing street homelessness nationally.
- Potential to measure resource usage relative to outcomes (e.g. where is money being spent most effectively).

### Key benefits

- Built on the idea of joined up working and closer case-level collaboration between services.
- Case-level collaboration is being called for by service providers, service users and the advisory team.
- Potential for quick impact where systems are well adopted.
- Doesn't require national scale buy-in to be useful (i.e. is useful at a local level).

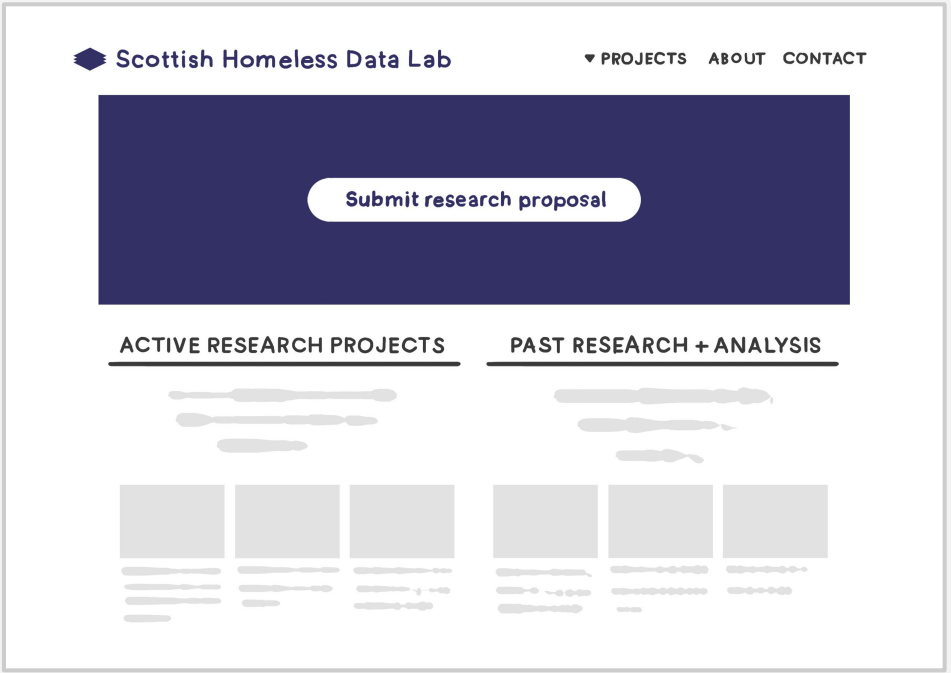
### Key limitations

- Likely to be challenging to establish due to the complexity of the data sharing protocols and navigating different organisational priorities, and the potential need for service providers to duplicate or replace existing case management systems.
- Currently no obvious mechanisms in place to incentivise participation from services (e.g. funding). Scottish government is unlikely to be able to require participation.

**OPTIONAL DATA LAYER**

# Homelessness Data Lab

An additional layer that could be applied to any of these options would be the creation of a permanent and accessible research resource that collates various administrative data relevant to homelessness. This would enable government, local authorities and third sector organisations to undertake analysis on a broad pool of linked administrative data.



DISCUSSION PROMPTS

# We'd love to hear examples of how data is being collected and used across Scotland.

**1**
How does your organisation collect or use data? How has this practice changed over time? What makes it work? What gets in the way?

**2**
Do you have any examples of insights drawn from client data or service usage data? How did it inform practice / service delivery?

**3**
What do you feel are the biggest gaps in your knowledge? How could data collection start to inform these unknowns?

# Any questions?

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