

Helping Homeless People

Homelessness Statement

Ministerial Statement on Abolition
of Priority Need by 2012



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scotland
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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Ministerial Statement on Abolition
of Priority Need by 2012

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December 2005



MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

I am pleased to publish this statement as required by section 3 of the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003.

Devolved government - working with local authorities and the voluntary sector - has ensured Scotland has the most progressive homelessness legislation in the world. We are building a housing system which responds better to people's needs and which reflects the housing aspirations of everyone in Scotland.

We have in place an ambitious target to eradicate the distinction between 'priority' and 'non-priority' homeless households by the end of 2012. This will mean that all unintentionally homeless people are entitled to permanent accommodation at that time. This is a very challenging target and we remain committed to it.

Some of the challenges are already evident. Providing better rights under the homeless legislation means more people are rightly using it as a way to find a home. We must also balance the rights of those who need a home because they do not have one with those who want to move to better housing and work to ensure we have balanced, strong communities in Scotland. We will of course monitor our progress as we continue to work towards 2012 and issue revised guidance around the allocation of social lets to ensure there is sufficient local flexibility to retain balanced and sustainable communities, whilst also addressing landlords' responsibilities under the homelessness legislation.

Local authorities are key to preventing and tackling homelessness in Scotland as is partnership working to ensure we provide the housing and support that homeless people need to live in the community.

Meeting the 2012 target is dependent on adequate resources and the Executive has a central responsibility here. The private sector also has an important role to play through investment in housing stock including through low cost home ownership. Recipients of resources have the responsibility to deliver optimum solutions within available funding.

We are aiming to reduce the proportion of homeless households assessed as non-priority by half, by 31 March 2009, but we are also committed to progressing at a pace which is sustainable. We have therefore set out in the statement the range of information we will take into account in assessing local authorities' capacity to implement further legislative changes. A key factor is the impact on other households in housing need, as we are clear that local authorities must retain the ability to respond to these households also.

The supply of appropriate and affordable housing is key and we will maintain the significant investment already planned, ensuring that we reflect the implications of the target in future planning and resourcing of housing supply. We also emphasise the importance of preventing homelessness occurring in the first place - particularly among vulnerable groups such as young care leavers; providing support to prevent repeat homelessness; the meaningful engagement of the private sector and RSLs; and the provision of clear guidance to support legislative change. In all of these areas we recognise that appropriate resource provision will be required in order to ensure progress towards the target can be maintained.

We also set out the mechanisms through which we will continue to monitor progress in order to take decisions regarding future changes. In particular we will monitor local authorities' progress towards the administrative target outlined in the statement in order to identify particular issues in certain areas and consider how to address these at the local level.

We have a clear agenda for preventing and tackling homelessness in Scotland – one which is being taken forward in partnership with local authorities and others. This statement sets out the next steps which we and they will take in order to progress towards 2012.

I hope this is a statement we can all support.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Malcolm Chisholm".

Malcolm Chisholm MSP

INTRODUCTION

1. This statement sets out the measures which local authorities and Scottish Ministers have taken, are taking and will take in order to ensure that local authorities can reasonably be expected to perform their homelessness duties without having to distinguish between 'priority' and 'non-priority' households. This statement also sets out interim objectives to ensure that local authorities are in that position by 31 December 2012.

2. We are committed to removing the priority need distinction for a number of reasons. We believe that it is no longer right to assume that homelessness should be responded to on the basis of the characteristics of the household. All homeless people should have the same opportunity to access accommodation, with any distinctions being based on the severity of their current circumstances and the options which would be sustainable for them. Rather than bureaucratically categorising and labelling applicants, we want to move to a system where decision-making and outcomes are firmly focussed on applicants' needs.

3. The statement has been informed by a consultation process carried out earlier this year – which included the publication of a consultation paper; Ministerial meetings with elected members; consideration of the issues by the Homelessness Monitoring Group and its 2012 planning subgroup; a Parliamentary debate on homelessness; and various individual meetings between Executive officials and stakeholders.

4. An analysis of the consultation responses can be found at Appendix A. This statement responds to the key issues raised during the consultation process – under the following headings: making the best use of evidence; supply of appropriate and affordable housing; preventing homelessness; housing support and wider forms of support; legislative change and guidance; and monitoring and support arrangements. The statement sets out the information which is available at the moment in terms of progress being made towards the 2012 target and the next steps which need to be taken to drive and maintain further progress.

5. The Executive would like to take this opportunity to stress the importance of partnership working if homelessness is to be prevented and tackled effectively in Scotland. We reiterate that local authorities have a corporate duty to address homelessness – we expect authorities to develop and deliver homelessness strategies in a way which transcends departmental boundaries. As an Executive we will continue to explore ways in which this joint approach can be better reflected and made a reality within central government.

6. Whilst acknowledging the key and unique delivery role which local authorities play under the homelessness legislation, we also emphasise the role which a number of other agencies must play if the 2012 target set above is to be met. These include registered social landlords and other landlords, health boards, Jobcentre Plus and voluntary organisations. The causes of homelessness are many and complex. Preventing homelessness therefore depends on a wide range of organisations working together, intervening early to ensure that Scottish households are able to find and sustain a home of their own and ensuring that those at risk of homelessness are identified and assisted as necessary.

7. Much has been done to address homelessness in Scotland since the establishment of the Scottish Parliament. There is a consensus that homelessness is unacceptable in a modern Scotland. There is also growing awareness that although bricks and mortar are an essential part of the solution they are not in themselves enough. There is a need to consider the wide range of causes of homelessness and to prevent these; and to ensure that a household resettling from homelessness is given the support needed to prevent repeat homelessness.

8. Work still needs to be done however in improving knowledge, understanding and views of homelessness. It would be helpful for there to be a better understanding of the different reasons why people from a range of backgrounds become homeless; and that action to prevent and tackle homelessness is aimed at people living in a range of unsuitable circumstances – and those at risk of homelessness for a variety of reasons - and not just the minority who are sleeping rough or living in large-scale hostels.

9. Unfortunately it also remains necessary to emphasise that it is not acceptable to ignore or discriminate against homeless people; and that they should be fully accepted by the wider community of which they are a part. There still appears to be a belief that homeless people are 'less deserving' than others in housing need and homeless people are still isolated from the communities in which they live in a number of ways. There is an obvious need to address anti-social or criminal behaviour perpetrated by homeless people, just as there is a need to address this more widely and to recognise that providing suitable accommodation is an effective way to change behaviour and to reduce social exclusion and reoffending by helping to move people away from crime. However the vast majority of homeless people do not behave in this way.

10. The blueprint for the action we and local authorities are taking is the final report of the Homelessness Task Force. This set out a wide range of recommendations for improving homelessness services in Scotland – building on the legislative changes already made in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 which implemented the Task Force's first report. The Homelessness Monitoring Group was established in 2002 to oversee implementation of these recommendations and reports annually on progress.

11. We have always made clear that we will only implement changes to homelessness legislation at a pace which is sustainable and manageable for local authorities. This remains our position. A great deal of work has been undertaken - and is planned - to ensure that we and local authorities have the best possible evidence on which to base decisions as to pace and sustainability. We are clear that these decisions must rest on what is right for homeless households – ensuring that they are offered a sustainable solution – but also what is right for others in housing need so that their needs can also be addressed appropriately.

MAKING THE BEST USE OF EVIDENCE

12. In order to ensure that progress is being made and that changes are made at a sustainable rate it is important to have sound monitoring systems in place. There is a very wide range of data sources which are relevant to the 2012 target. In terms of information relating specifically to local authorities' homelessness duties and their achievement of the 2012 target the key sources are: HL1 and HL2 data; Communities Scotland's inspection reports; lettings data and homelessness/wider housing need pro-formas completed by local authorities during the course of this year (referred to as the 2012 pro-forma hereafter).

HL1/HL2 data

13. The current HL1 data indicates that:

- Nationally, 75% of households assessed as homeless were assessed as having a priority need for accommodation in 2004/05. This amounted to 29,032 households in 2004/05.
- 22,097 priority need households had their cases actioned in 2004/05 – of these 69% secured permanent accommodation as a final outcome, 4% received temporary accommodation and for the remainder the application was dropped or resolved in another way. It should be noted that a number of households assessed as non-priority also actually received permanent accommodation as a result of their application.
- However the statistics indicate that there is wide variation between local authorities – for example the proportion of households assessed as having a priority need varies from 54% to 89%. The proportion of priority need households securing permanent accommodation varies from 50% to 89%.

14. Tables showing this data at a local authority level are contained in Annex A.

15. HL2 data shows that an increasing number of households are currently living in temporary accommodation as a result of a homeless application. This has been a sustained rise from 2002/03 onwards – as at March 2005 there were 7,539 households in temporary accommodation – 4,205 in local authority dwellings; 1,619 in hostels; 1,556 in B&B and 159 in other forms of temporary accommodation.

Lettings data

16. Official lettings data, as returned by local authorities to the Executive, indicate that the number of all local authority lets going to homeless households ranges from 9% to 54% in 2004/05. A table setting out this data is at Annex A. It is notable that some participants in the consultation exercise felt that a far higher proportion of lets are being granted to homeless people. We recognise the need to understand this mismatch and to ensure that official data is as robust as possible. The proportion of social lets required to house homeless people, and the impact this has on others in housing need, was the key indicator of current and future pressure considered within the 2012 pro-formas.

17. It is more difficult to obtain reliable information about housing association lets in any local authority area as a number of associations operate across local authority borders – nationally the data indicate that 14% of housing association lets go to homeless households. We will work with Communities Scotland to ensure that more robust information on housing association lets at a local authority level is available through the Annual Performance and Statistical Return.

Communities Scotland inspections

18. Information from Communities Scotland's inspection reports of the five pathfinder authorities is summarised in *Key themes from Inspections: Homelessness* published in June 2005.

2012 pro-forma

19. Information from the 2012 pro-forma was summarised in *Analysis of Local Authorities Pro Formas to assess their ability to meet the abolition of the Priority Need Test*, published in August this year. Appendix B sets out a commentary drawing on councils' responses to the exercise; modelling of possible scenarios; and the most recent homelessness statistics.

20. We do not underestimate the scale of the challenge which faces local authorities in meeting the 2012 target. The indications are that in some areas the proportion of social lets to homeless people will need to rise significantly by 2012 unless greater use can be made of other accommodation options; preventative activity has a major impact on the number of people coming into the homelessness system; or there are greater than expected increases in the size of stock or number of lets available. It is clear that in these areas, as we have already acknowledged, further housing supply and improved housing quality are necessary to alleviate these pressures and ensure that housing need can be met effectively.

21. The 2012 pro-forma exercise was a useful one in terms of opening a dialogue with local authorities and raising awareness of key factors affecting the scale and nature of issues to be addressed in preparing for the change and in setting up future scenarios against which actual experience can be measured. As was highlighted in our earlier consultation paper, it is important in assessing and drawing conclusions from these projections to note that they represent authorities' initial response to the request to assess the impact of the change within the standard format set out in the proforma. The main indicator of the impact of the 2012 commitment on social housing – namely the proportion of available social lets required to meet the housing needs of homeless applicants – is very sensitive to all components of the projection. It is difficult for both the Executive and councils to be sure how robust the projections of future impact are at this point in time.

Future process

22. The Executive wishes to build on the processes undertaken to date to ensure a comprehensive and consistent approach to housing needs assessment. This will take account of the impact of the abolition of priority need and inform planning for affordable housing supply beyond the current spending review period.

23. We have therefore commissioned work to develop a local affordable housing needs pro-forma with a view to improving the consistency of information collected from local authorities on these needs. This will help to identify a coherent national picture of requirements for affordable housing. The researchers will provide support to assist local authorities in completing this exercise.

24. The commission will run in parallel with, and be consistent with, a research project to update the Local Housing Need and Affordability Model for Scotland that has been commissioned separately and which is running to a similar timetable. We will consider the useful comments made about the 2012 pro-forma in taking forward this commission – in the main these centred around the need to ensure that the exercise was capable of reflecting local issues within authority areas; and potential mismatches between available stock and need.

25. We would currently envisage asking local authorities to return the pro-forma during 2006 and every two years thereafter but would like to discuss this further with local authorities in light of links to local housing needs assessments, Local Housing Strategies and homelessness strategies. The Homelessness Monitoring Group will reflect the most up-to-date position in relation to homelessness in their annual reports – in order that close monitoring is undertaken on an annual basis whilst allowing local authorities a longer timescale to prepare their own returns.

26. However, we continue to recognise the need to assess authorities' capacity to respond to the 2012 target by taking account of a wide range of factors beyond the likely impact on social lets and the associated impact on waiting lists. Amongst these the key factors we will assess will be the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation and time spent there; the sustainability of solutions for homeless households; and progress towards the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

27. We will consider these factors alongside information arising from the affordable housing needs pro-forma, and other related information, to assess local authorities' capacity to achieve the 2012 target on an individual basis.

28. Other information which will be considered includes information on voids and void management; support needs and whether these are currently met; hidden homelessness; and the impact of preventative activity.

29. The data sources from which this information will be obtained are set out in the table below.

Primary Factors	Source of data
Impact on social lets	Local affordable housing needs pro-forma; HL1; Annual Performance and Statistical Return; SE lettings data collected from local authorities.
Temporary accommodation	HL1/HL2 statistics and supplementary information
Sustainability of solutions	HL1 data on repeats and potentially a revised Audit Scotland SPI
Progress towards SHQS	Scottish House Conditions Survey
Secondary Factors	
Voids and void management	Audit Scotland SPI
Support needs	Supporting People strategies, services reviews and budget monitoring reports
Hidden homelessness	Scottish Household Survey and homelessness strategies
Preventative activity	Framework for evaluation of preventative activity to be developed with the Homelessness Monitoring Group and subgroups

30. We are also in the process of undertaking a review of the HL1 in order to reflect legislative change and ensure more robust information on the causes of homelessness and the outcomes of applications and will ensure that this is accompanied by detailed guidance in order to aid consistency of returns across local authorities. We will as part of this review, consider the helpful suggestions made during the consultation process. We will also carry out a small-scale study considering the variety in local authority implementation of the homelessness legislation and recording of their actions.

31. We recognise the broader advantages of ensuring that local authorities and RSLs collect consistent data which is also reported consistently.

The interim objectives are:

- Local authorities to return the affordable housing needs pro-forma every two years, or as agreed with the Executive, linked to their Local Housing Strategy.
- Homelessness Monitoring Group to report on progress towards 2012 as part of their annual reports.
- Scottish Executive to take account of the information detailed in this section in assessing local authorities' capacity to achieve the 2012 target.
- Scottish Executive to complete the review of HL1 by January 2006.

SUPPLY OF APPROPRIATE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

32. Responses to the consultation reiterated that supply of, and access to, appropriate and affordable housing is fundamental if homelessness is to be prevented and tackled effectively. The Executive's housing policy statement *Homes for Scotland's People*, published in March this year, sets out the range of action being taken to address the housing needs of Scotland's population.

33. The key actions are as follows:

- Funding expansion in new social rented provision (to provide over 16,500 homes for social let between 2005/06 and 2007/08);
- Expansion in low-cost home ownership provision (nearly 5,000 homes between 2005/06 and 2007/08) including introduction of the Homestake scheme;
- Planning Advice Note 74 on affordable housing published – seeking to increase provision of affordable housing in new developments;
- Planning reform to speed up the planning process and improve land supply for housing;
- Investment in landbanking schemes; release of surplus public sector land for affordable housing and streamlining of processes for disposal of public sector land;
- Investment to address infrastructure constraints; and
- Reduction of council tax discount on second homes – additional funding ringfenced for affordable housing.

34. Local authorities have developed Local Housing Strategies in line with guidance from *Communities Scotland*, which set out the housing needs, and the action which will be taken to meet these needs, in their area. These will continue to be key to the identification of housing need – and planning to meet this need in local areas.

35. Following the last Spending Review, increased funding for the Affordable Housing Investment Programme has already been announced for the period 2006/07 – 2007/08. This is enabling increased provision of affordable housing, rising from well over 6,000 units in the current year, to over 7,000 units in 2006/07 and an estimated 8000 in 2007/08. As well as providing over 16,500 homes for social rent, this provision includes nearly 5,000 homes for low-cost home ownership; helping meet the aspirations of home ownership for those on low to modest incomes and meeting demand that might otherwise fall upon the social rented sector.

36. We will take careful account of affordable housing requirements to meet the 2012 target in considering priorities for the next 2 years, and in implementing the Strategic Housing Investment Framework (SHIF). *Communities Scotland* will shortly consult on the SHIF which will guide the future allocation of the Affordable Housing Investment Programme.

37. The aim is to put in place a new framework for housing investment which supports both national policy objectives and diverse local housing priorities, ensuring that development funding is applied in a more strategic manner with increased efficiency. As part of the SHIF consultation we welcome views from local authorities and others as to how the Framework and subsequent allocations can best reflect the

implications of the 2012 target and the linked resource requirements of local authorities.

38. As is set out above, the Executive will continue to work with local authorities to ensure that assessment of housing need is carried out on a consistent basis and takes account of the local impact of the 2012 target in order to inform the planning and resourcing of affordable housing beyond the current Spending Review period. The next Spending Review will therefore take account of the available evidence on housing need, including the impact of the 2012 target on demand for and supply of accommodation.

39. We will also report to Parliament next year on the effect of the Right to Buy.

40. Homes for Scotland's People emphasises the need for diverse provision and it is important that this diversity is also reflected in meeting the needs of homeless people. In particular we are conscious of the need to ensure accommodation which meets the particular needs of disabled people and people from black and minority ethnic communities is available.

41. More broadly, we would emphasise the importance of ensuring that accommodation held by Registered Social Landlords and private landlords is available for re-housing homeless people. The provision of a local authority tenancy is not the most appropriate outcome in a number of cases. We are committed to ensuring that responsibility for housing homeless people is shared among all housing providers, and that homeless people are able to access the housing most suited to their needs.

Diversity of provision – Registered Social Landlords

42. Section 5 of the 2001 Act requires that an RSL provide accommodation where requested by the local authority to house a homeless household assessed as having a priority need, unless they have a 'good reason' not to do so. We are aware that a number of studies have been carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of local arrangements under section 5 and related protocols and will review these studies in order to determine whether further guidance is required.

43. We would emphasise that RSLs have a very important role to play in preventing and addressing homelessness. In addition to responding to section 5 referrals where these are made, this responsibility also extends to providing relevant information to local authorities in order to support the operation of such referrals (e.g. information on stock profile and voids); and preventing homelessness amongst existing tenants where possible. Communities Scotland will continue to inspect RSLs on that basis.

Diversity of provision – private rented sector

44. A number of local authorities are making specific efforts to involve the private rented sector in addressing homelessness, and greater access to that sector is important in terms of finding sustainable solutions and increasing the range of supply available to meet demand under the homelessness legislation. There is now access to a rent deposit/guarantee scheme in each local authority area for example, as recommended by the Homelessness Task Force, and the National Rent Deposit Forum is being funded to develop further guidance for these schemes. A number of national initiatives to improve the sector are also ongoing – most notably the introduction of

registration of private landlords in March 2006 and the introduction of a private rented housing panel.

45. The Executive is also in discussions with private rural landowners about their potential role in the provision of affordable housing on private land which would not otherwise become available for that purpose. In all these developments we are anxious to proceed in such a way as to ensure that good landlords are not deterred from remaining in the sector, or from rehousing homeless people.

46. We are aware that the vast majority of tenancies granted with the private rented sector are short assured tenancies and that private landlords are reluctant to grant assured tenancies. We wish to explore the need for a review of the assured tenancy regime in the longer term. We will also consider a number of other options to allow local authorities additional flexibility in discharging their duty to homelessness households, where this flexibility would lead to a more appropriate and sustainable outcome for the household. Among the options we would like to explore further with stakeholders are a) reviewing the interim accommodation regulations which currently allow for the provision of interim accommodation to priority need households in certain circumstances; and b) encouraging greater use of private sector leasing and lead tenancy schemes.

47. Respondents to the consultation were of the view that there are number of issues relating to Housing Benefit which can act as barriers to homeless people accessing the private rented sector, and accessing employment opportunities. We will continue to work with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure that these barriers are properly identified and addressed insofar as possible.

Allocations policies

48. The Executive has been working with local authorities and their RSL partners to simplify access and maximise choice in relation to all social lets. Key to this has been the promotion and development of Common Housing Registers throughout Scotland and the Executive and social landlords will continue their efforts to establish these throughout the period to 2012.

49. We recognise that landlords are working hard to strike a balance between housing people under the homelessness legislation and meeting housing need more generally. We do not underestimate the difficulty of this task in some areas and are aware of the tensions which can arise in some communities. We are also aware that there is some confusion as to the options which social landlords have with regard to their duties to house homeless people – and how these duties and approaches to implementation link to wider allocations policy and practice.

50. We are clear that allocations policies must take account of a wide range of housing need – and that it is important that a reasonable proportion of social lets is available for households who are not homeless but are looking to move or who are otherwise in housing need. This is currently recognised in the legislative framework which requires that social landlords must give ‘reasonable preference’ to homeless households but also to others in particular housing need (such as large families and those living under unsatisfactory housing conditions).

51. Social landlords have flexibility in deciding upon and implementing their allocation policies as long as they take account of legal requirements. In relation to homelessness the legislation states that permanent accommodation should be offered to unintentionally homeless households. Although there is no timescale for making this offer within the legislation, the Code of Guidance currently states that this should be done as 'quickly as possible, whilst also ensuring that this is only done at a time when the household is able to sustain permanent accommodation'.

52. Current evidence shows that landlords are able to meet the needs of a wide range of households. However there is considerable variation between landlords in terms of the range of need which is being addressed. As was set out in the Housing Policy Statement, we are carrying out further work to collect wider evidence on the operation of allocations policies in order to inform the need for further guidance. This work is likely to include research on waiting lists to investigate issues of housing need; research to explore the customer perspective of allocations; and research with landlords to identify more clearly any tensions between current policy and practice.

53. In the shorter term we will discuss the particular issues regarding the interpretation and implementation of legislation and guidance on the allocation of lets to homeless people with Communities Scotland and CoSLA with a view to providing further guidance on addressing a wide range of housing need through allocation policies. In particular there is a need to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between meeting the needs of homeless people and other housing applicants and that there is sufficient flexibility in local management to achieve that balance whilst also ensuring legislative duties are met.

Housing quality/regenerating areas

54. The quality of housing available is also key to meeting the needs of homeless people and achieving the 2012 target. High quality housing will prevent homelessness and also ensure that solutions are more sustainable. The Executive has introduced a Scottish Housing Quality Standard, setting out a clear definition of what constitutes good quality housing, and local authorities and other landlords are working towards achieving this standard by 2015 through the development of local delivery plans. We will take into account progress in implementing these plans as part of assessing local authorities' capacity to achieve the 2012 target.

55. As well as addressing the quality of individual dwellings it is clear that in Scotland's most deprived areas there are a range of economic, social and environmental issues which need to be addressed to ensure that these are attractive places to live and that homeless households and others can sustain accommodation there. This is why we have set a specific Closing the Opportunity Gap target of promoting the community regeneration of Scotland's most deprived neighbourhoods through improvements in employability, education, health, access to local services, and quality of the local environment.

56. We are taking action across the Executive to achieve this target and, through the £318m Community Regeneration Fund, providing dedicated funding to Community Planning Partnerships as a catalyst for focusing their own resources and efforts on these areas. Furthermore, Housing Renewal Area powers will allow local authorities to take a more comprehensive approach to the renewal of private housing, taking account of broader strategies for community regeneration.

Furnished tenancies

57. In rehousing homeless households it is often important to consider the provision of furniture and basic household goods in order to ensure that the accommodation is more likely to be sustained. Communities Scotland administer the Furnished Tenancies scheme which delivered over 2000 such tenancies in its first two years of operation. Ministers will consider whether this scheme should be extended beyond 2005/06 in light of evidence regarding its impact to date and the continuing need to provide furnished tenancies. Ministers will also consider whether the remit of the scheme should be widened to ensure a greater focus on preventing homelessness.

The interim objectives are:

- Scottish Executive to take account of the local impacts of the 2012 target in finalising the Strategic Housing Investment Framework.
- Scottish Executive to take account of the local impacts of the 2012 target in the next Spending Review.
- Scottish Executive to review interim accommodation regulations by January 2007.
- Scottish Executive to commission allocations research in 2006.
- Scottish Executive, CoSLA and Communities Scotland to commence discussions to inform clarification of guidance on allocations in January 2006.
- Review of operation of section 5 to be commenced by June 2006.
- Scottish Executive to take decision on furnished tenancy scheme by March 2006.

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

58. The importance of preventing homelessness cannot be overstated. Prevention activity is a priority for Ministers and local authorities – it is more cost effective than responding at a time of crisis and far better for the quality of life of the individuals concerned. As is stressed above, a wide cross-section of agencies have a role to play in preventing homelessness – we would reiterate the importance of all these agencies coming together to develop and implement the local homelessness strategy.

59. There is a wide range of activity already being undertaken throughout Scotland with a view to preventing homelessness. Interventions range from general advice and information which may be provided in a mainstream setting to dedicated support schemes which kick in when there is an imminent threat of homelessness. Schemes led or supported by local authorities include early intervention or enforcement measures to tackle antisocial behaviour at an early stage before such behaviour escalates; school-based housing education; financial and debt advice and family mediation services.

Advice and information

60. Local authorities have a legislative duty to provide advice and information regarding homelessness and the prevention of homelessness free of charge to anyone in their area who requires it. Guidance makes clear that these services should meet the Homepoint National Standards. The Executive and Communities Scotland are reviewing current arrangements to ensure a more strategic approach to national policy development on advice and information and to ensure that policy on housing and homelessness advice and information is consistent with that on money/debt and legal issues.

Housing options

61. The Executive and local authorities are keen to ensure that homelessness and other forms of housing need are handled in a manner which ensures the most appropriate and sustainable solution for the household. We will therefore work together to ensure that guidance on the prevention of homelessness emphasises the importance of considering the full range of options available to all households in housing need, and informing the household of these options as early as possible. A social rented tenancy will not always be the best or most sustainable solution for someone in housing need.

62. Some local authorities have developed this approach through the provision of a 'housing options' service, which is predicated on the view that in a number of circumstances homelessness can be prevented if tackled early enough. If someone is already in a tenancy, regardless of tenure, it is important that services are put in place to ensure they can remain there safely. This early prevention work also has parallels within the health sector for example. It is also important to respond to those who wish to move on from the current tenancy – perhaps to smaller or larger accommodation or to accommodation which better suits their current mobility.

63. In order for a housing options approach to be successful, staff need to have accurate and up to date information on all local services in their area, including stock profile information across all sectors. Any directory of local services should cover all

available resources within the area, recognising that many people in housing need will also have a range of other needs which should be addressed if their housing situation is going to be resolved effectively. Another option is the Mortgage to Rent scheme which helps home owners in danger of being made homeless by offering them the flexibility to change the tenure of their home to a tenancy in the social rented sector. The scheme has helped 227 households avoid homelessness since 2003.

High risk groups

64. There are a number of groups of people who appear to be at particular risk of homelessness and arrangements have therefore been put in place to attempt to minimise the risk of homelessness amongst young people leaving care; people leaving the armed forces; and patients leaving hospital. In particular, new regulations and guidance on the provision of accommodation and support for young people leaving care came into force in April 2004. Housing advice projects in prisons have also been evaluated and discussions are taking place with a view to placing these services on a more permanent footing. It is crucial that housing issues are addressed early so that accommodation is available on release, reducing the risk of re-offending. The Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act 2005 provides an important opportunity to address these issues, building on improved joint working which is already taking place.

Legislation

65. Legislation is in place to ensure that courts must take delays or failures in Housing Benefit into account when considering whether to grant repossession on the basis of rent arrears. Local authorities have also incorporated targets relating to the administration of Housing Benefit in their homelessness strategies.

66. We will bring into force section 11 of the 2003 Act, and associated statutory guidance, in 2006. This requires landlords (both social and private) and creditors to inform local authorities of any repossession proceedings. This means that local authorities will be alerted to households at risk of homelessness at an earlier stage – and may be able to respond either on an individual basis or by reassessing their strategic approach.

Further guidance

67. There is a need to take stock of the different approaches which are being taken throughout Scotland – to evaluate whether or not these are successful and to what extent prevention activity can impact on demand under the homelessness legislation (and therefore affect authorities' ability to respond to the 2012 target).

68. We will work with the Homelessness Monitoring Group and its subgroups to develop a framework for evaluation. We will also work with these groups and Communities Scotland to develop and disseminate practice guidance which sets out the approaches which have been put in place to prevent homelessness and which have had a positive impact. We will also create an innovation fund from 2006/07 which will enable local authorities to develop demonstration projects.

The interim objectives are:

- The Executive to ensure section 11 of the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 is brought into force by the end of 2006.
- The Executive and Communities Scotland to begin work with the Homelessness Monitoring Group in March 2006 to produce practice guidance on preventing homelessness, including guidance on adopting a housing options approach.
- The Executive to create an innovation fund to support the prevention of homelessness by March 2006.

HOUSING SUPPORT AND WIDER FORMS OF SUPPORT

69. As is outlined above, the Executive's approach to preventing and addressing homelessness is predicated on the belief that accommodation alone cannot be a realistic solution. A key element in preventing homelessness, arresting the cycle of repeat homelessness and resolving antisocial behaviour and other behavioural issues is the provision of housing support and other wider forms of support. Repeat homelessness must be tackled as an important element of making progress towards the 2012 target – for the sake of the individuals concerned but also to ensure that more efficient use is made of available housing stock.

70. Local authorities - through developing their homelessness strategies with partners - have put in place a wide range of arrangements to provide the support required by homeless households in their area.

Housing support

71. The Supporting People programme came into effect in April 2003 and provides a coherent policy and funding framework to support vulnerable people in different types of accommodation and tenure. A revised funding formula was put in place in December 2004 and local authorities are currently carrying out reviews of their Supporting People services. The Executive is currently taking forward work to ensure more effective co-ordination between Supporting People and other linked funding streams.

72. It should be noted that:

- While the overall Scottish budget for Supporting People fell by about 6%, following a review of the programme that indicated improved efficiencies were achievable, the budget grew dramatically before then.
- At over £400m, it is still eight times higher than it was in 2000/01.
- The huge rise in funding between 2000/01 and 2003/04 provided councils with considerably more resources to meet the housing support needs of homeless people.
- Supporting People was therefore able to help 19,000 homeless people in 2003/04, with £50m invested in services for homeless clients – the same amount as the total budget available for all 18 different Supporting People client groups in 2000/01.

73. We recognise the concern expressed by respondents to the consultation regarding Supporting People funding. As is set out above, we will therefore continue to assess local authorities ability to meet support needs in their area as part of our overall assessment of their capacity to move towards the 2012 target. Arrangements have been put in place to monitor the impact of the recent funding changes on service capacity and on related strategies such as homelessness. The first returns have been received and are being analysed for discussion with external stakeholders.

74. Research is also being commissioned to provide a full cost / benefit analysis of the impact of Supporting People funding on all its many different client groups, including homeless people.

Accommodation with intensive support

75. Some homeless households require more intensive intervention, supervision and support if they are to be able to live successfully within a settled community. Whilst the Executive is committed to finding appropriate accommodation and support for every homeless household we also note the right of other households to enjoy their homes free from neighbour harassment, nuisance or noise.

76. The Executive will be funding demonstration projects to provide intensive intervention and supervision to particularly troubled or troublesome families. The aim of the demonstration models – called Breaking the Cycle: Intensive Intervention and Supervision – is to widen the range of intervention models available and share experience and good practice with other local authorities. An independent evaluation of the projects will be carried out, considering their effectiveness in changing behaviour, the sustainability of the outcomes achieved and links with homelessness.

77. We will also aim to reflect the necessary balance between finding appropriate accommodation for homeless households and safeguarding the rights of other households in implementing the new regime for intentionally homeless households (see below).

Social work

78. The 21st Century Social Work review has explored the context in which the social work profession is operating in the Scotland of the early 21st century and how to make best use of the significant resources that society invests in social work services. The review recognises the need to bring to bear social work knowledge, skills and intelligence about the needs of communities to the design, planning and delivery of services to support vulnerable people and communities. Its report will emphasise the need for Social Work to contribute to a joined up approach to prevention and early intervention, ensuring people get the help they need in order to address the causes of homelessness before a crisis occurs.

79. Social workers will increasingly work as members of integrated teams working with those individuals and families where there are high levels of complexity and risks. Their knowledge and skills are needed in multi disciplinary working to address the support needs of the most vulnerable homeless people to make accommodation sustainable and prevent recurring homelessness.

Health

80. All Health Boards have Health and Homelessness Action Plans. The experience of assessing these plans led to the development of the Health and Homelessness Standards published in March of this year and these provide a framework for Board performance. The standards are at the centre of the Scottish Executive's commitment to improve the health of homeless people and require NHS Boards to re-state and further refine their commitment to meeting the health needs of all homeless people. NHS Boards are expected to implement the standards from April 2005 onwards and actions will be incorporated into the wider plans of the Board.

81. Strategic links are being made and developing well in many areas ensuring that the needs of homeless people are reflected in a wide range of appropriate strategies

including drug and alcohol misuse. Strategic links are seen as vitally important and where such links have been established there is evidence of the complex needs of homeless people being mainstreamed through the wider planning process. We are also working to ensure that the needs of homeless people with addictions are identified, and that they are able to access appropriate treatment.

82. Standard 1 of the Health and Homelessness Standards reinforces the need for NHS Boards to incorporate the health needs of homeless people into the Board's Health Inequalities Strategy and all other relevant strategic planning frameworks.

Employability

83. The Scottish Homelessness and Employability Network was launched in 2004 to improve opportunities for homeless people through engagement with education, training and employment. The network builds links between organisations and individuals working in homelessness services, education and training providers, policy officers and statutory organisations. It also works with businesses and employers to develop practices which will enable vulnerable people to gain employment.

84. In 2006 the Executive will publish an Employability Framework for Scotland which will support action at national and local levels to increase the numbers of people in sustained employment. We will continue to pursue the recommendations of the Homelessness Task Force within the context of this Framework and in liaison with DWP and Jobcentre Plus.

Social networks

85. The Scottish Social Networks Forum has been established to support the development and integration of befriending, mentoring and mediation services for people affected by homelessness or at risk of homelessness. The Forum aims to raise awareness of the important role these services can play in enabling homeless people to (re)build positive social networks; test and develop approaches which support the building of social networks; share good practice and information; provide a forum for discussion and support and assist the local authorities and homelessness projects in the delivery of the Homelessness Task Force recommendations.

The interim objectives are:

- Scottish Executive to complete Supporting People research by Summer 2006.
- Scottish Executive to complete evaluation of the Breaking the Cycle projects by the end of 2008.
- A national conference on strengthening and promoting homeless people's social networks to be held by July 2006.
- A survey of Health Boards to gauge progress against implementation of the Health and Homelessness Standards ('One year on') by March 2006.
- The Scottish Executive to publish the Employability Framework in early 2006.
- The Scottish Executive to publish the 21st Century Social Work review in January 2006.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGE AND GUIDANCE

86. There have been significant changes to homelessness legislation since 1999. The Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2001 ensured that all homeless people are entitled to a minimum of temporary accommodation, alongside advice and assistance to assist in finding more secure accommodation. The 2001 Act also required that local authorities publish homelessness strategies; and that RSLs comply with requests for permanent accommodation.

Priority need

87. The Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 set the framework for fundamental changes to the eligibility criteria which currently apply to homeless applications. The most significant of these changes is the abolition of the priority need distinction. Local authorities have responded well to the initial expansion of priority need which came into effect in January 2004. As set out previously local authorities currently assess 75% of all households assessed as homeless as having a priority need for accommodation – although this figure varies between 54% and 89% in different areas.

88. Taking account of the current circumstances, it is not felt that a major expansion of priority need categories at a national level should be planned at this time. However it is important that local authorities are given a clear steer as to how the expansion and ultimate abolition of priority need should be taken forward in the medium term. We therefore propose that an administrative target be set – this will not require a change to legislative duties but will set a clear expectation as to the progress expected.

89. We will therefore request that local authorities reduce by 50% the proportion of homeless households which they assess as non-priority over the period to 31 March 2009. This will allow local authorities to progress flexibly taking account of local needs and circumstances. We will expect local authorities to respond to the target through their local homelessness and housing strategies and will consider what additional guidance local authorities might need on the various options open to them to achieve it.

90. Progress towards these targets will be monitored through annual progress reports on homelessness strategies, HL1 data and LHS updates. Outcomes for households assessed as having a priority need will also be monitored closely. As well as checking progress the monitoring process will also ensure that barriers to progress are identified, assessed and responded to.

91. Steps have also been taken towards implementation of the other key changes contained within the 2003 Act – local authorities and other stakeholders have participated in research to inform the modification of local connection provisions and implementation of the new regime of accommodation and support for intentionally homeless households.

Local connection

92. The local connection research has been published and a commitment given to making the legislative changes during 2006 – prior to making these changes the Executive will work with local authorities and other stakeholders to ensure that

monitoring processes are in place; and that a statement setting out the criteria for reversing the changes if necessary is consulted upon and published.

Intentionally homeless households

93. Research on the accommodation and support needs of intentionally homeless households has been commissioned and will be published shortly. Further work will then be required to ensure that implementation can proceed – picking up on the consultation on regulations under section 7 of the 2001 Act which was undertaken this year; and on emerging findings from the Breaking the Cycle demonstration projects for example.

94. We also want to ensure that the provisions are implemented in such a way as to be clear as to the relationship between homelessness and anti-social behaviour policy. Several stakeholders have requested greater clarity, particularly around the provision of 'bottom line' accommodation and we will address these issues in guidance on implementation. One option to be considered is how and when local authorities can be said to have discharged their duty to an intentionally homeless household. We need to ensure that whilst individuals are supported they are aware of their responsibilities towards others as well as their rights. Given the various strands of work which will feed into successful implementation these provisions will not be brought into force before 2007.

Guidance

95. We recognise the need to ensure that legislative change is accompanied by clear guidance as to how this should be implemented locally. We are also aware that local authorities would welcome further guidance on some of the existing duties. A good deal of guidance has already been produced – most notably the revised Code of Guidance on Homelessness which was published earlier this year. However it is important that guidance is informed by, and revised in line with the views of, its end users and the Executive would wish to work together with Communities Scotland, local authorities and others on the Awareness Raising and Good Practice Subgroup of the Homelessness Monitoring Group to ensure that further guidance is produced as required. In particular we will consider further guidance on the following issues:

- Allocations (see paragraphs 48-53);
- Preventing and addressing homelessness amongst households from black and minority households;
- Prevention of homelessness more generally (see further discussion in section on prevention above);
- Discharge of homelessness duties and what constitutes a 'reasonable offer' of accommodation;
- The best interests of children under the homelessness legislation;
- The links between homelessness and anti-social behaviour policies (see paragraph 94); and
- Operation of referrals under section 5 of the 2001 Act (see paragraph 42).

96. The Awareness Raising and Good Practice Subgroup is also overseeing research into knowledge, understanding and views of homelessness amongst service providers to help inform understanding of barriers to effective service delivery.

The interim objectives are:

- Local authorities to consider how they will reduce the proportion of non-priority assessments by 50% by 2009 through their local housing and homelessness strategies.
- The Executive to consult on and implement changes to local connection rules during 2006.
- The Executive to work with the Intentionality subgroup of the Homelessness Monitoring Group to implement the new regime for intentionally homeless households during 2007.
- Scottish Executive to work with the Awareness Raising and Best Practice sub-group of the Homelessness Monitoring to develop guidance as set out in paragraph 95.

MONITORING AND SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

97. We have referred throughout to a number of information-gathering and reporting processes which are already in place or will need to be put in place in order to monitor progress in preventing and tackling homelessness and to assess capacity to make the necessary changes to achieve the 2012 target.

Capacity

98. We have set out above that the main indicators against which we will assess capacity to progress towards the 2012 target are as follows:

- Number of social lets required to house homeless people and associated impact on waiting lists;
- Number of homeless households in temporary accommodation and time spent there;
- The sustainability of solutions for homeless households; and
- Progress towards the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

In addition we have indicated that we also take account of information relating to:

- Voids and void management;
- Support needs;
- Hidden homelessness; and
- Impact of preventative activity.

99. In the main the information used will be from existing data sources – however we have also commissioned a new pro-forma to assess local affordable housing need and will discuss the frequency of returns with local authorities. Audit Scotland are also considering a replacement for the current SPI on homelessness which may contain a sustainability element.

100. The Homelessness Monitoring Group will reflect the situation in their annual reports – we will reassess progress and would anticipate that another statement should be made following analysis of authorities' ability to meet the targets of reducing their non-priority assessments by 50% by 2009.

Homelessness services and related Homelessness Task Force recommendations

101. In terms of local authorities' homelessness strategies we note that the process of resubmitting the entire strategy would be resource-intensive and may divert resources from delivery. We will continue to request an annual progress report and outcome agreement against the strategy, which should remain a live document and be subject to local monitoring, review and revision. The annual report should include an indication of progress towards the target set for the authority in terms of reducing non-priority assessments. Communities Scotland will also continue to inspect against the current version of strategies, taking into account the progress reports as well as compliance with statutory duties and Performance Standards.

102. We will provide further guidance to local authorities on the format of the progress reports and local outcome agreements which will focus on performance against the topline outcomes set out by the Homelessness Monitoring Group:

- No-one need sleep rough;
- Existing homelessness becomes more visible;
- Sustainable resettlement is secured for people who have become homeless;
- Fewer people become homeless in the first place; and
- The duration of homelessness is reduced.

103. The Monitoring Group will also continue to report on progress against these outcome at a national level, taking account of the following data sources:

Indicator	Data source
No one need sleep rough	New national data source being considered following on from evaluation of the RSI
Existing homelessness becomes more visible	HL1 data (presentations) Scottish Household Survey Local information
Sustainable resettlement is secured for people who have become homeless	HL1 data (repeats) Potential Audit Scotland indicator
Fewer people become homeless in the first place	HL1 data (homelessness assessments) Also hidden homelessness data
The duration of homelessness is reduced.	Audit Scotland SPI HL1 data (time to close case) HL1/HL2 (time spent in temporary accommodation)

Financial monitoring

104. In line with our culture of efficient government, we will aim to reduce bureaucracy in relation to homelessness funding by amalgamating currently distinct homelessness funding streams. Our intention is to have one funding stream which will be subject to the outcome agreements outlined above.

Joint working

105. The importance of working in partnership in achieving the 2012 target will continue to be crucial. Joint working arrangements between the Executive and local authorities have been significantly strengthened during the evidence gathering and consultation stages for preparation of this statement.

106. A greater understanding of the issues and challenges faced in implementing the target has been gained through the work of the new 2012 Planning Subgroup to the Homelessness Monitoring Group established at the beginning of this year and its substantial local authority representation. This has been supported by increased political dialogue between CoSLA and Ministers and the secondment of a local authority homelessness practitioner to the Executive. We will continue with, and build

on the success of, these arrangements as we move forward. Two additional new posts will be established with Executive funding as dedicated support to local authorities in addressing issues relating to meeting the 2012 target under the joint direction of ALACHO, CoSLA and the Executive.

The interim objectives are:

- The Homelessness Monitoring Group to report on local capacity to meet the 2012 target and national performance against top-level outcomes as part of their annual reporting.
- The Executive to provide further guidance on the format of local progress reports and outcome agreements by March 2006.
- Local authorities to report progress against their homelessness strategies on an annual basis – including a report on progress against the 2009 target.
- The Executive to streamline homelessness funding streams by for financial year 2007/08.
- New posts to provide support to local authorities in place by Summer 2006.
- A further Ministerial statement to be published following analysis of local authorities' ability to meet the target of reducing non-priority need assessments by 50% by 2009.

ANNEX A

Households assessed as homeless/in priority need by local authority: 2004-05

	All	Homeless		Priority homeless	
		Number	% of all households	Number	% of households assessed as homeless
Scotland	52,670	38,609	73	29,032	75
Aberdeen City	1,739	735	42	528	72
Aberdeenshire	1,178	764	65	558	73
Angus	1,344	860	64	694	81
Argyll & Bute	788	502	64	284	57
Clackmannanshire	1,049	565	54	429	76
Dumfries & Galloway	1,526	1,063	70	792	75
Dundee City	1,069	397	37	354	89
East Ayrshire	1,062	827	78	560	68
East Dunbartonshire	513	338	66	244	72
East Lothian	743	421	57	253	60
East Renfrewshire	348	258	74	198	77
Edinburgh, City of	4,932	4,584	93	3,313	72
Eilean Siar	218	162	74	101	62
Falkirk	1,500	1,042	69	782	75
Fife	3,759	2,687	71	1,709	64
Glasgow City	10,085	9,031	90	7,788	86
Highland	2,057	1,570	76	851	54
Inverclyde	777	420	54	317	75
Midlothian	518	472	91	365	77
Moray	889	531	60	285	54
North Ayrshire	1,597	1,052	66	824	78
North Lanarkshire	3,714	2,795	75	2,267	81
Orkney	192	88	46	70	80
Perth & Kinross	1,267	859	68	631	73
Renfrewshire	1,551	733	47	589	80
Scottish Borders, The	763	475	62	316	67
Shetland	144	72	50	64	89
South Ayrshire	968	543	56	379	70
South Lanarkshire	2,175	1,471	68	1,044	71
Stirling	938	546	58	314	58
West Dunbartonshire	1,403	1,113	79	944	85
West Lothian	1,864	1,633	88	1,185	73

Notes: Percentages are based on all households assessed in period, including lost contact/ withdrawal/resolved. In the case of repeat applications, the most recent assessment was selected. There is therefore no double counting within household.

Housing outcome by assessment decision and local authority area: 2004-05

	Priority homeless			Non-priority homeless			Not homeless			All
	Number	Accommodation secured		Number	Accommodation secured		Number	Accommodation secured		
		Permanent %	Temporary %		Permanent %	Temporary %		Permanent %	Temporary %	
Scotland	22,097	69	4	8,291	13	8	4,363	8	1	34,751
Aberdeen City	463	69	-	184	3	-	53	-	-	700
Aberdeenshire	485	73	-	183	14	2	248	6	-	916
Angus	679	69	-	167	1	-	77	-	-	923
Argyll & Bute	213	71	*	197	21	2	51	10	-	461
Clackmannanshire	329	84	-	87	15	1	47	6	-	463
Dumfries & Galloway	585	78	*	222	11	-	140	3	1	947
Dundee City	329	84	3	43	33	19	10	-	-	382
East Ayrshire	458	76	1	249	39	3	112	4	-	819
East Dunbartonshire	198	75	1	71	27	1	102	11	4	371
East Lothian	243	77	1	153	16	1	172	7	1	568
East Renfrewshire	186	73	-	38	58	-	49	4	-	273
Edinburgh, City of	2,864	69	4	1,230	10	12	192	15	2	4,286
Eilean Siar	59	76	2	37	27	-	10	10	-	106
Falkirk	658	75	4	200	14	13	72	14	1	930
Fife	1,281	72	-	1,004	9	3	462	16	1	2,747
Glasgow City	4,648	53	15	715	10	35	440	3	1	5,803
Highland	694	79	-	596	17	3	107	6	-	1,397

Inverclyde	272	78	1	103	14	4	59	22	2	434
Midlothian	161	58	16	88	-	59	17	-	6	266
Moray	258	80	1	233	4	1	133	13	2	624
North Ayrshire	608	74	4	188	3	1	167	8	-	963
North Lanarkshire	1,840	78	*	425	16	2	330	15	*	2,595
Orkney	61	79	-	14	57	7	18	11	-	93
Perth & Kinross	476	78	2	142	4	15	96	10	2	714
Renfrewshire	492	71	1	128	18	-	415	3	1	1,035
Scottish Borders, The	321	71	-	202	8	-	106	5	-	629
Shetland	48	50	6	10	50	-	3	-	-	61
South Ayrshire	275	85	2	135	45	13	130	14	4	540
South Lanarkshire	894	65	-	429	15	*	167	6	1	1,490
Stirling	229	64	1	212	8	1	136	5	1	577
West Dunbartonshire	673	89	-	153	9	-	73	4	-	899
West Lothian	1,117	57	1	453	10	4	169	9	1	1,739

Notes: All applications actioned during period, **excluding lost contact/withdrawal/resolved prior to assessment or discharge of duty**.
A more detailed version of this table is available on the Housing Statistics website.

Summary of lettings 2004-05

	Vacants	All lets	New lets¹	Lets to homeless	% new lets to homeless	% all lets to homeless
Scotland	37,886	34,061	26,110	9,512	36	28
Aberdeen City	3,023	2,650	2,039	266	13	10
Aberdeenshire	1,246	1,246	1,060	271	26	22
Angus	953	882	782	325	42	37
Argyll & Bute	473	523	424	202	48	39
Clackmannanshire	317	442	372	197	53	45
Dumfries & Galloway	na	na	na	na	na	na
Dundee City	2,208	1,886	1,345	167	12	9
East Ayrshire	1,334	1,487	1,114	222	20	15
East Dunbartonshire	334	314	222	124	56	39
East Lothian	489	461	357	143	40	31
East Renfrewshire	285	250	211	87	41	35
Edinburgh, City of ¹	3,147	3,397	2,701	1,088	40	32
Eilean Siar	130	132	117	47	40	36
Falkirk	1,477	1,359	1,042	489	47	36
Fife	4,579	3,117	2,348	695	30	22
Glasgow City	na	na	na	na	na	na
Highland	1,337	1,364	1,039	415	40	30
Inverclyde ²	2,116	948	671	265	39	28
Midlothian	228	242	195	131	67	54
Moray	400	373	325	176	54	47
North Ayrshire	1,212	1,165	954	489	51	42
North Lanarkshire	3,932	3,680	2,715	1,356	50	37
Orkney	71	62	53	17	32	27
Perth & Kinross ³	583	610	521	322	62	53
Renfrewshire	1,226	1,489	1,025	279	27	19
Scottish Borders, The	na	na	na	na	na	na
Shetland	190	199	156	28	18	14
South Ayrshire	1,030	829	641	239	37	29
South Lanarkshire	2,614	2,492	1,706	482	28	19
Stirling	529	460	357	136	38	30
West Dunbartonshire	1,102	1,123	879	428	49	38
West Lothian	1,321	879	739	426	58	48

Please note that due to stock transfers figures for Dumfries & Galloway, Glasgow City and The Scottish Borders are not included in this table

1. Excludes transfers.

2. Includes estimates for 2004Q2, 2004Q4 and 2005Q1 due to outstanding returns

3. Includes estimates for 2005 Q1 due to outstanding returns

¹ City of Edinburgh Council have indicated that the lets to homeless figure is likely to be an underestimate due to the way in which certain allocations under their Choice Based Lettings scheme are recorded.



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