

PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

HOMELESSNESS IN SCOTLAND: 2016-17

Update to the frequency of future publications

As a result of consulting with users on the frequency of future publications, **we have reduced publications on homelessness from quarterly to bi-annually**. This frees up resources for other analyses. For example, we are currently working on a project to link health and homelessness data.

Under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics¹, we publish a timetable of statistical releases for the twelve months ahead².

Introduction

This publication gives an overview of key trends and features of homelessness in Scotland. It provides information on homelessness applications, assessments and outcomes to 31 March 2017. Data on households in temporary accommodation as at 31 March 2017 are also presented, together with data on households placed in unsuitable accommodation³.

All tables and charts in this publication can be found at <http://www.gov.scot/homelessstats>.

Statistics on Housing Options based on the PREVENT1 return can also be found at the above webpage.

¹ The Code of Practice is found online at: <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

² The forthcoming publication timetable is available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2005/03/18798>

³ In accordance with the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014.

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A Quick Guide to Homelessness Applications

There are **three stages**:

1. The Application stage where the household first presents to the council.
2. The Assessment stage where the Local Authority assesses:
 - a. whether the applicant is homeless;
 - b. if so, whether the applicant made themselves homeless intentionally; and
 - c. if they were unintentionally homeless, and if they have no local connection with the Local Authority to which they made the application, it may test whether they have a local connection with another Local Authority area and refer the household to the other authority.
3. The Outcome stage. The type of accommodation the applicant is entitled to depends on the Local Authority's assessment decision.

Applicants are entitled to **temporary accommodation**:

- whilst they are awaiting an assessment decision;
- whilst waiting for settled accommodation to be found; or
- if they are intentionally homeless, then they are provided with temporary accommodation and advice and assistance to help them secure alternative accommodation.

More information on the duty to provide temporary accommodation can be found in the [Code of Guidance on Homelessness](#).

Main Points

For the twelve month period of 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017:

Applications

- There were 34,100 applications. This was 826 (2%) lower than the number of applications received in the same period in 2015-16.
- The number of applications has fallen in 16 out of Scotland's 32 local authorities.
- The continuing fall in applications overall is mainly due to the impact of housing options/ homelessness prevention strategies adopted by most Local Authorities over the past few years rather than to changes in the underlying drivers of homelessness. However, the rate of reduction in homelessness applications has slowed. This suggests that, in its current form, the impact of housing options work is unlikely to lead to further large reductions in applications beyond those already seen.
- 58% of homeless applicants had made a Housing Options approach prior to (or on the same day) – a decrease of four percentage points compared to 2015/16. This varied widely amongst LAs, from no previous housing options approaches in Eilean Siar during 2016/17, to almost 100% of applications doing so in Glasgow City.
- The main reasons for applying as homeless remained largely unchanged. Dispute within the household/ relationship breakdown is one of the main causes of homelessness applications (30% of all applications) or being asked to leave (25%).

Assessments

- 82% of applicants (28,247 assessments out of a total of 34,267) were assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. This proportion has increased steadily from 72% in 2004/5, but has since levelled off and remains unchanged since 2015/16.
- 25,123 cases were assessed as unintentionally homeless, and therefore entitled to settled accommodation (a decrease of 135 cases, -1% on 2015/16).
- Relatively few assessments are found to be intentionally homeless or intentionally threatened with homelessness. These comprise 4% (or 1,484) of all homelessness assessments. This proportion has been relatively stable for the past four years, after rising from 2.5% in 2009/10.
- Repeat homelessness has remained at a similar level to 2015/16 and was 6.7% for 2016/17. The proportion of homeless assessments where the applicant had at least one support need has increased from 34% in 2012-13 to 44% in 2016-17. This trend suggests that a larger proportion of applicant households have more complex needs than was previously the case.

Outcomes

- For those households assessed as unintentionally homeless (with a right to settled accommodation), just over two-thirds (17,892 or 68%) secured a social rented tenancy or a private rented sector tenancy. This proportion has varied between 65% and 68% since 2008/9.
- An outcome of lost contact or unknown outcome was reported for 17% of cases closed which had been assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. The overall proportion of lost contacts has remained roughly the same since 2009/10, varying between 17% and 20%.

Temporary accommodation

At 31 March 2017:-

- There were 10,873 households in temporary accommodation, an increase of 330 households (+ 3%) since last year.
- Of these households in temporary accommodation, 3,250 had children – an increase of 367 households (+13%) compared with one year earlier.
- The number of children in temporary accommodation increased by 818 children (+16%), compared with the same date one year ago.
- There were three breaches of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014, two of these were in East Dunbartonshire and one in East Lothian.

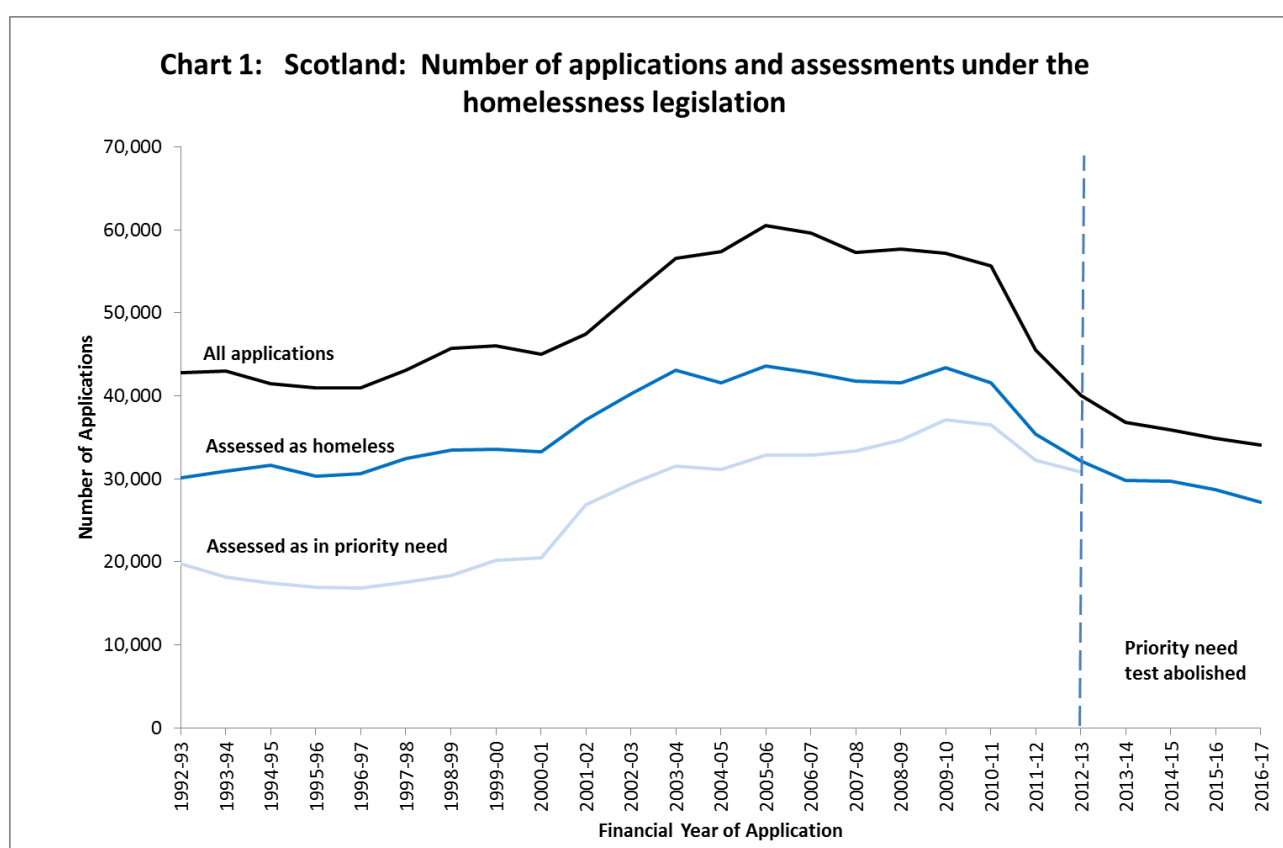
Applications

(Tables 1 to 10)

Changes over time

Changes in applications and assessments are in large part driven by changes in legislation, policy and practice.

The increase in homelessness between 2000/1 and 2006/7 was, in part, a consequence of Scottish homelessness legislation⁴ which extended councils' duties to non-priority homeless households. The priority need test was abolished on 31st December 2012⁵. Meanwhile, the number of homelessness applications decreased in recent years, mainly due to the impact of the introduction of Housing Options services in Scottish local authorities with a focus on prevention⁶.



Recent reductions

⁴ The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 extended councils' duties to non-priority homeless and the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 set the longer term objective of phasing out the distinction between priority and non-priority homeless. See [Summary of Homelessness Legislation](#) for more details.

⁵ In November 2012, the Scottish Parliament approved the Homelessness (Abolition of Priority Need Test) (Scotland) Order 2012.

⁶ Housing Options (PREVENT1) Statistics in Scotland: 2016/17 is published alongside this publication and are available at the same location online.

Between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017, Local Authorities received a total of 34,100 homelessness applications. This is a reduction of 826 (-2%) applications over the previous year. The number of applications has fallen in 16 out of 32 Local Authorities (Table 1).

Housing Options work

The underlying drivers of homelessness have remained largely the same over the past few years. However, the introduction of **Housing Options** work has resulted in a decrease in the number of homelessness applications.

Homelessness applications may increase again due to the implementation of recent Housing Options Guidance by the Scottish Government⁷. The guidance re-iterates that if section 28(1) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 applies (this is the Local Authority's duty to inquire into cases of possible homelessness or threatened homelessness), the LA **must** complete a homelessness application and record this on an HL1 return.

Impact on Applications and Assessments

There is no evidence to indicate that any one group is being impacted more by housing options work than any other. However, what is evident is that there is marked variation among Local Authorities in the frequency and delivery of this work. Scottish Government policy has been for Local Authorities to define for themselves what Housing Options is. Further statistics on Housing Options are collected through the PREVENT1 return and are available at <http://www.gov.scot/homelessstats>.

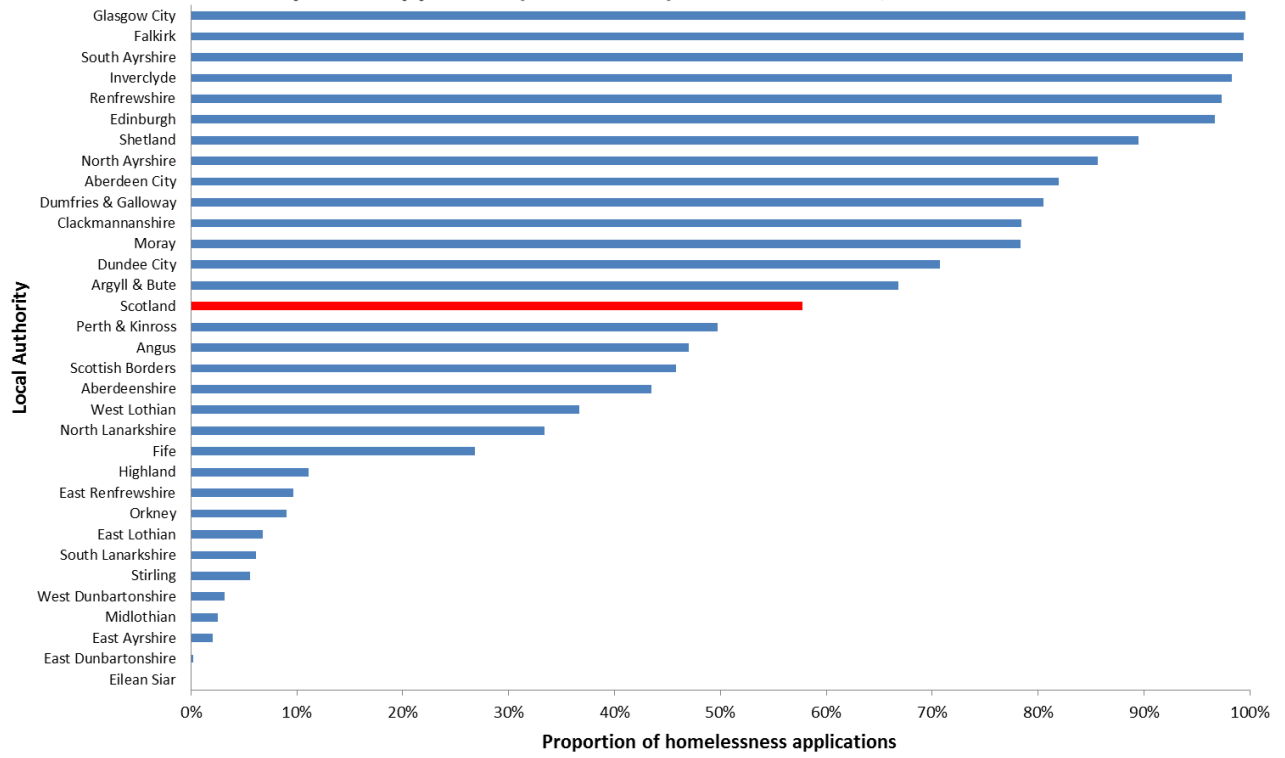
The proportion of homelessness applications that have been through the Housing Options route first in 2016-17 varies considerably. This reflects the locally defined nature of Housing Options.

At the Scotland level, 19,678 out of the 34,100 homeless applications (58%) received during 2016-17 had made a Housing Options approach prior to (or on the same day as) making a homelessness application. This varied widely amongst LAs, from none in Eilean Siar, to 99.6%% in Glasgow City (Chart 2). For comparison in 2015/16, 62% of homelessness applications had made a Housing Options approach prior to (or on the same day as) making a homelessness application.

⁷ The Scottish Government's Housing Options Guidance, was published in March 2016 and is found online at: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/03/6556>

This guidance responded to a set of recommendations from the Scottish Housing Regulator's Housing Options in Scotland - A thematic inquiry, published in May 2014, and found online at: <https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/publications/housing-options-scotland-thematic-inquiry>

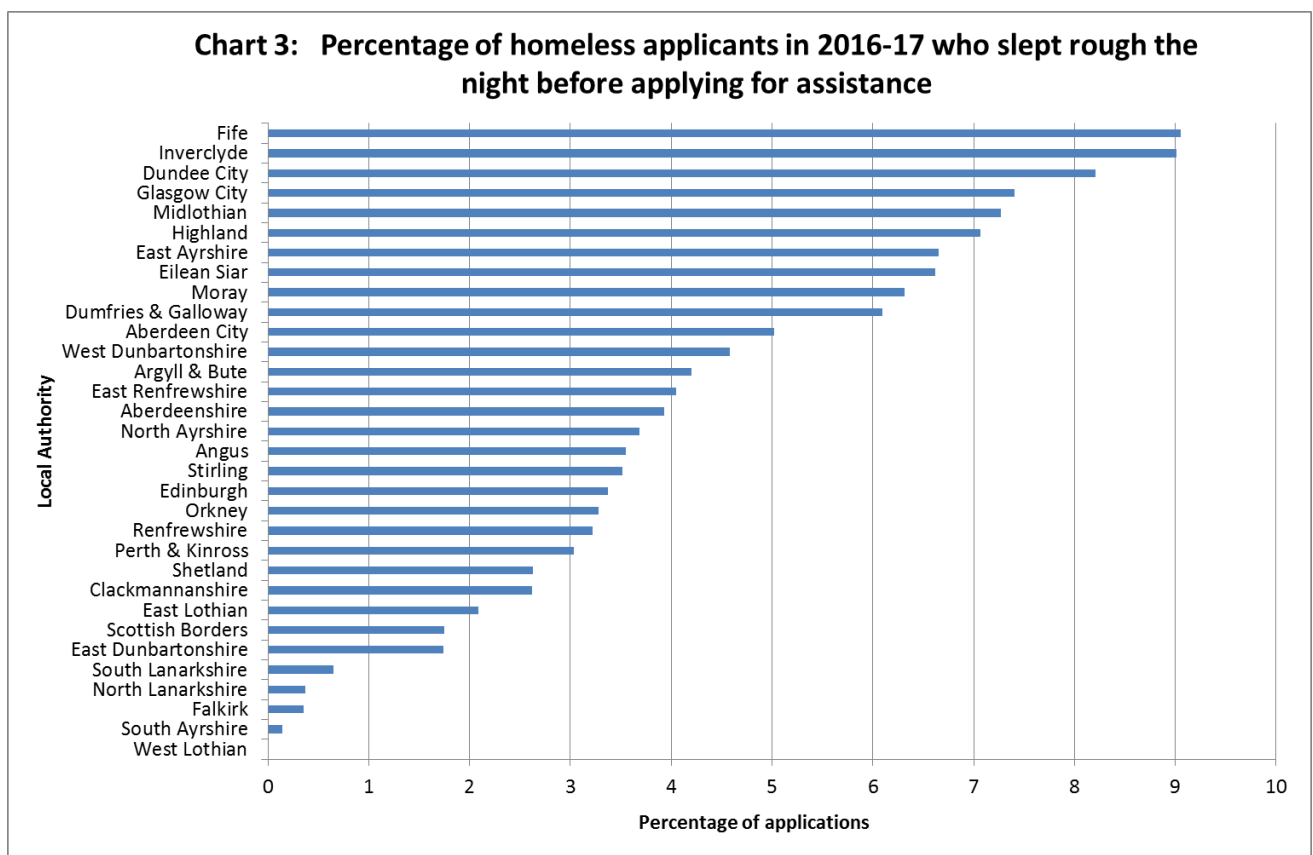
Chart 2: Proportion of homelessness (HL1) applications where a Housing Options Approach (PREVENT1) was made first , 2016-17



Rough sleeping (Tables 2a and 2b)

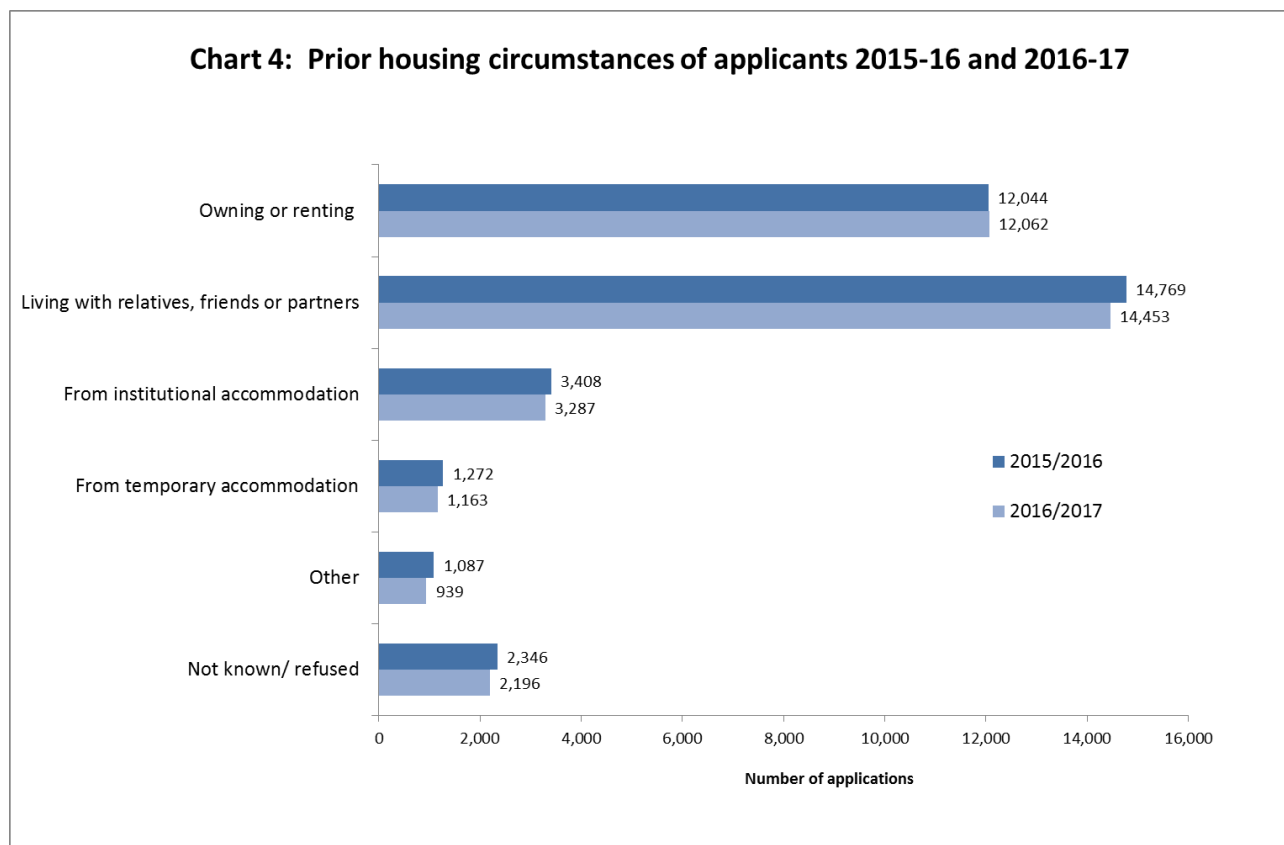
Applications where a household member reported sleeping rough at least once during the last 3 months prior to application has reduced since 2002/03, from 13% of all applications in 2002/3, to 8% in 2016-17.

In 2016/17, 4% of applicants (1,500 in total or 125 per month on average) slept rough the night before applying for assistance (Chart 3). Fife and Inverclyde had the highest proportions (9% in both Local Authorities). Dundee City had the next highest proportion at 8% (or 105 cases). West Lothian, South Ayrshire and Falkirk had the smallest proportions of homeless applicants sleeping rough the night before although this probably reflects that this question is not being routinely and consistently completed.



Prior circumstances of applicants

Of the 34,100 homelessness applications in 2016-17, 14,453 (42%) had been living with friends and relatives, while 12,062 (35%) had been living in their own accommodation (i.e. which they either rented or owned).



There were 6,354 applications from households living in the private rented sector, an increase of 55 applications (1%) compared to 2015-16 (Table 3). Whilst the proportion of applications from the private rented sector in Scotland has increased from 13% in 2007/8 to 19% in 2016-17, the number of applications decreased in every year between 2010/11 and 2015/16 but increased in 2016/17.

In contrast, the situation in England is very different. Households assessed as homeless who were living in the private rented sector account for 31% of all English homelessness assessments. The ending of an assured shorthold tenancy in England has been the most frequently occurring reason for the loss of last settled home for the last nineteen consecutive quarters⁸.

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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/602387/Statutory_Homelessness_and_Prevention_and_Relief_Statistical_Release_October_to_December_2016.pdf

Characteristics of applicants

Over the past decade or so, the characteristics of applicants have not changed much, fluctuating at most by a few percentage points only. The majority of applicants tend to be single, younger males, of White Scottish ethnicity.

Of the 34,100 applications for assistance in 2016-17:

Age and gender (Table 6)

Almost a third of applications were from those aged 25 to 34 years (32% for both male and female). The proportion of total applicants for those aged 34 and under for males was 56%, and 63% for females. This has slightly decreased over time by a few percentage points (from 63% males and 69% for females in 2002-03 for example).

Household type (Table 7)

Two-thirds of applications (66%) were from single person households, of whom 46% were men and 21% were women. Around 28% of applications were from households with children. There were 21% of applications from single parent households, most of which were from females (80% of single parent applications)

The proportion of single parents has remained in the range 21% to 24% since 2002-03.

Ethnicity (Table 8)

89% of applicants were of White ethnicity (78% were of White Scottish ethnicity). This is consistent with the ethnicity distribution of Scotland as shown in Scotland's Census 2011. The proportion of those identifying themselves as in Other ethnic group has increased over time, from about 1% in 2002-03 to about 4% in 2016-17.

Other

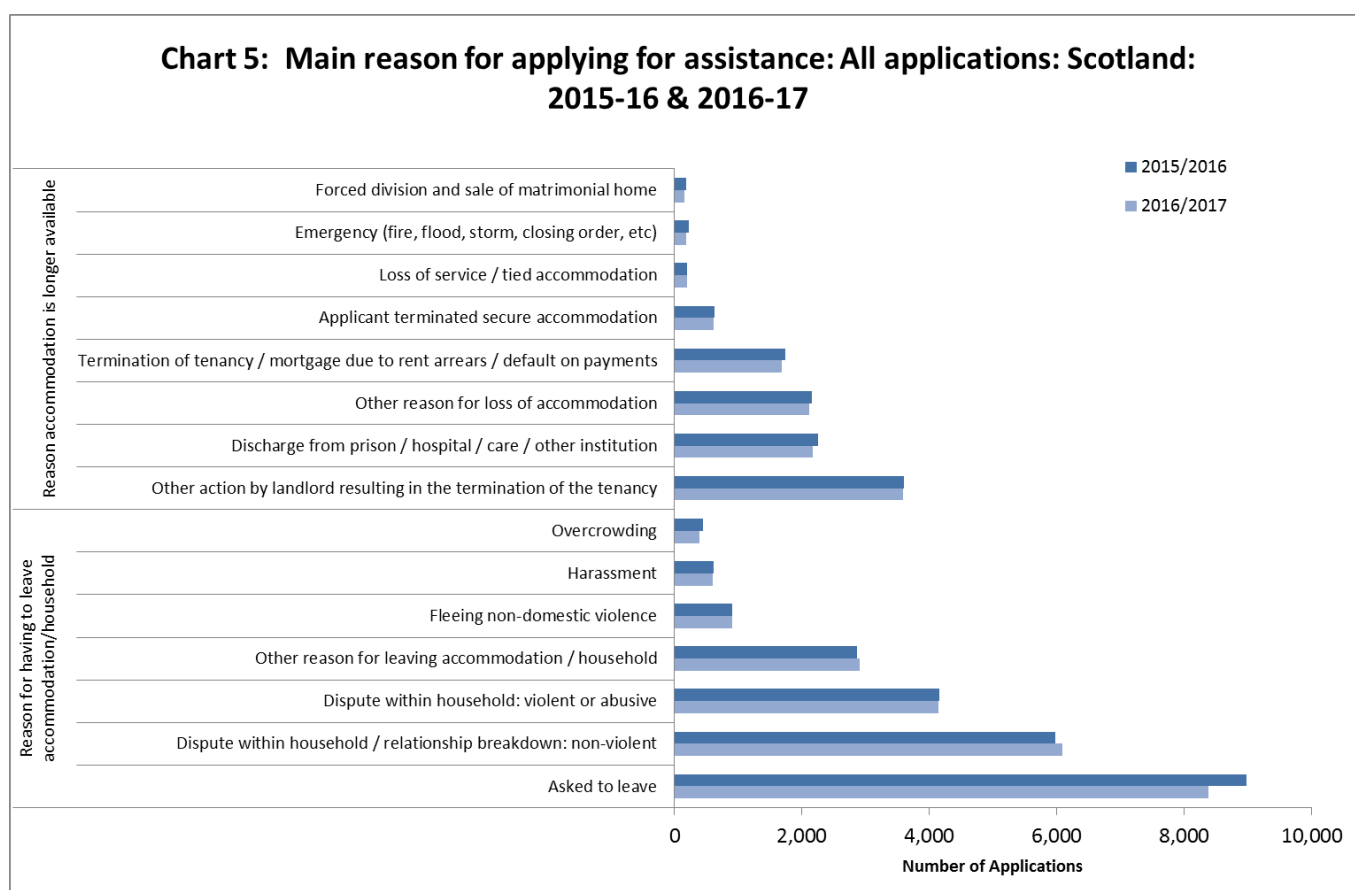
About 2% were previously a member of the Armed Services (Table 4). Around 6% were formerly looked after by a Local Authority in Scotland (Table 5). Proportions of applications from these groups have largely remained the same in the past decade or so, although the actual numbers have reduced in line with overall reductions in applications.

Reasons for homelessness

(Table 9a and 9b)

The main reasons cited for having to leave prior accommodation have remained largely unchanged since 2007/08. Being asked to leave is one of the main causes of homelessness applications (25%). Dispute within the household (and relationship breakdown) is another key driver of homelessness. In 2016/17, 12% and 18% of homelessness applications come from those who have been through a violent or non-violent domestic household dispute respectively.

Some applicants (4% of all homelessness applications in 2016/17) reported that their accommodation was no longer available due to such things as rent arrears or mortgage defaults. Meanwhile, 6% of applications are from those leaving prison/ hospital/ care or some other institution.

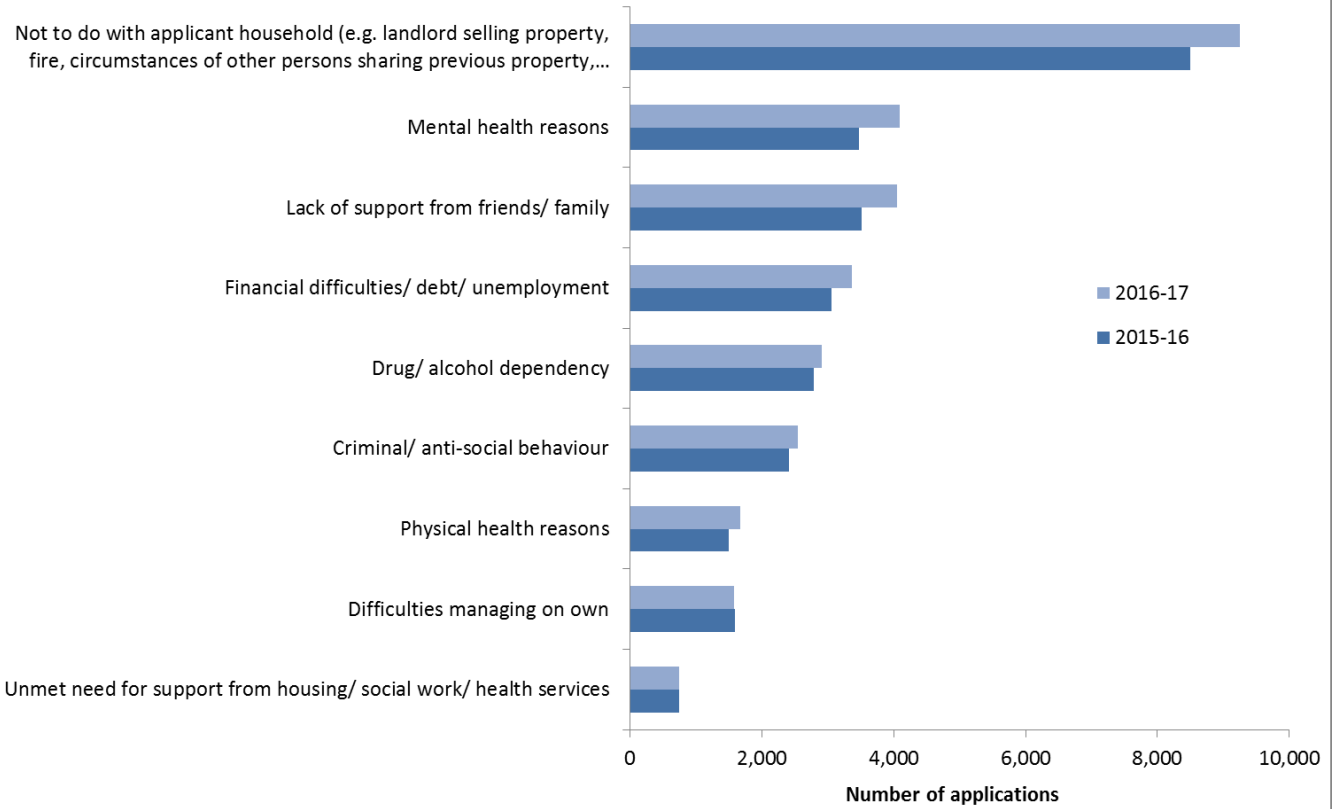


As the causes of homelessness can be complex and not the result of a single incident or event, 60% of applications cited additional reasons (20,552 out of 34,100 applications during 2016/17) (See Chart 6 and Table 10):

45% cited that their reason for homelessness was ‘not to do with the applicant household’. This includes reasons such as the landlord selling the property, fire, circumstances of other persons sharing the property or harassment by others.

Other cited factors to note include ‘**mental health reasons**’ (20%), ‘financial difficulties, debt or unemployment’ (16%), and ‘**Drug/ alcohol dependency**’ (14%).

Chart 6: Reason(s) for failing to maintain accommodation: Scotland



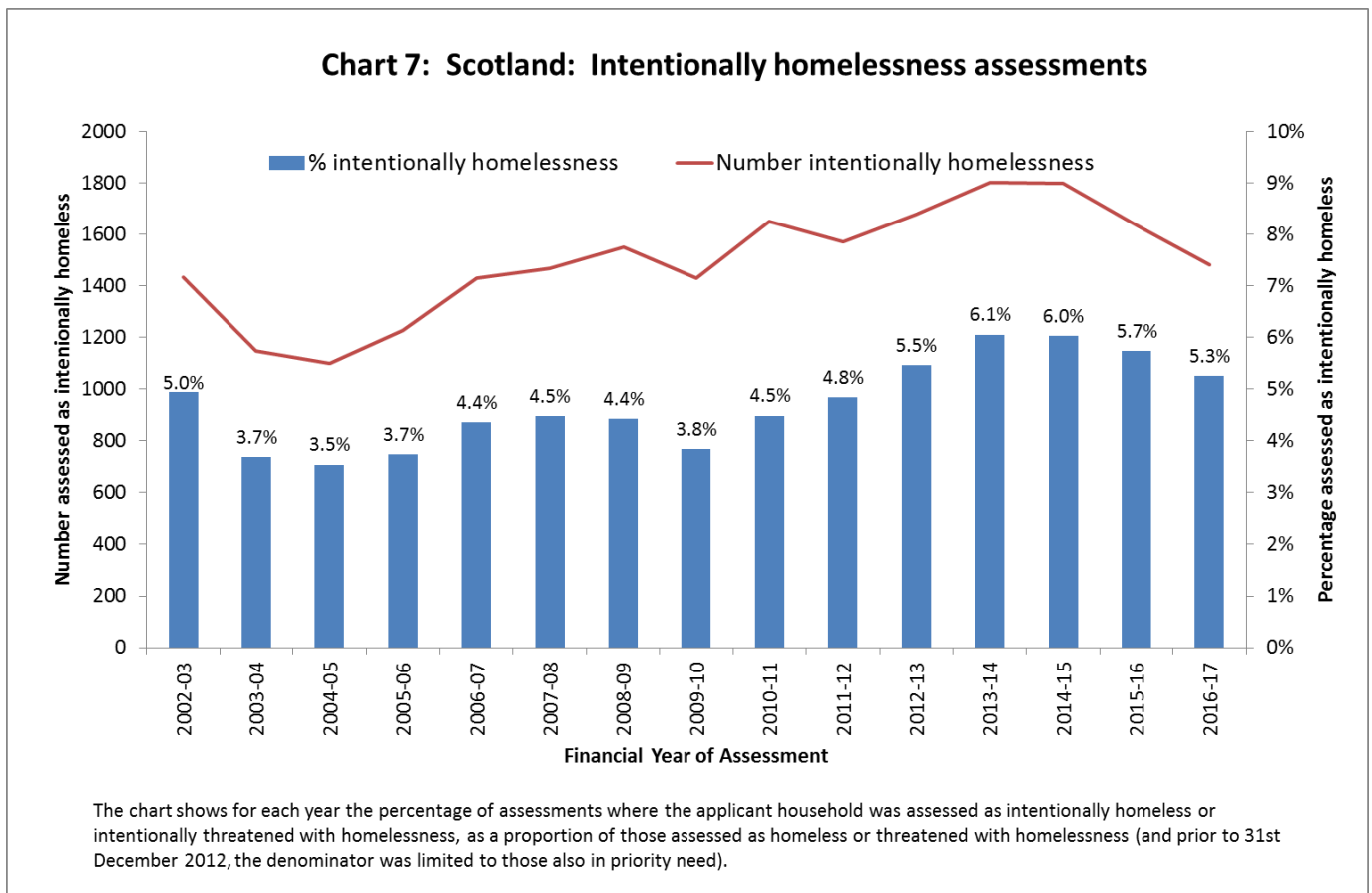
Assessments

(Tables 11 to 16)

During the 2016-17 year, 82% of applicants (28,247 assessments out of a total of 34,267) were assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness (Table 12). The proportion of applicants assessed as homeless/threatened with homelessness has gradually increased from 72% in 2004/05 and has remained above 80% since 2012/13.

There were 26,763 unintentionally homeless assessments during 2016/17, a reduction of 122 assessments on 2016/17 (a 0.5% reduction). These households are entitled to settled accommodation.⁹ (Table 11c).

Chart 7 below shows that relatively few assessments are found to be intentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness, comprising 5.3% (or 1,484) of all assessments. However, this proportion has risen (from a low point of 3.5% in 2004/05).



Prior to the abolition of the priority need test, only those assessed as homeless (or threatened with homelessness) *and* in priority need would have proceeded to the intentionality test. However, following abolition, all those assessed as homeless (or

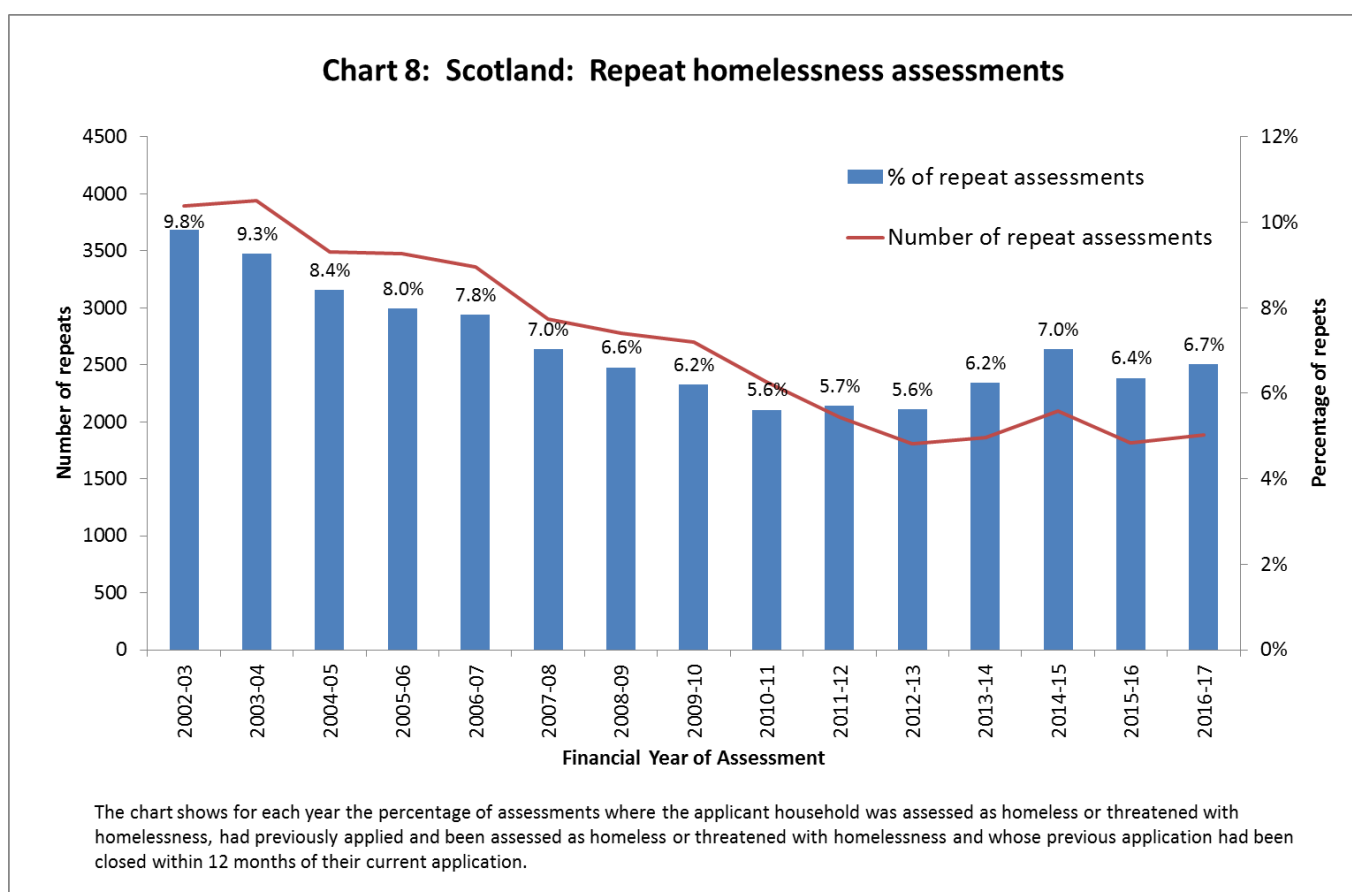
⁹ From 31st December 2012, the priority need test for homeless households was abolished. As a result, all unintentionally homeless households are entitled to settled accommodation. This includes RSL, LA or assured tenancies in the private rented sector.

threatened with homelessness) are tested for intentionality. As a result, more homeless applicants may be found to be intentionally homeless.

Repeat homelessness

The percentage of homeless assessments identified as repeat cases (i.e. where a previous application from the household had been closed less than 12 months before the current assessment¹⁰) fell from 9.8% in 2002-03 (3,892 assessments) to a low of 5.6% in 2010-11. It has since risen to 6.7% (1,885 assessments) in 2016-17 (See Chart 8 and Table 14).

The rate of repeat homelessness varies by Local Authority area, from around 12% in Dumfries and Galloway to around 1% in Eilean Siar (Table 14).



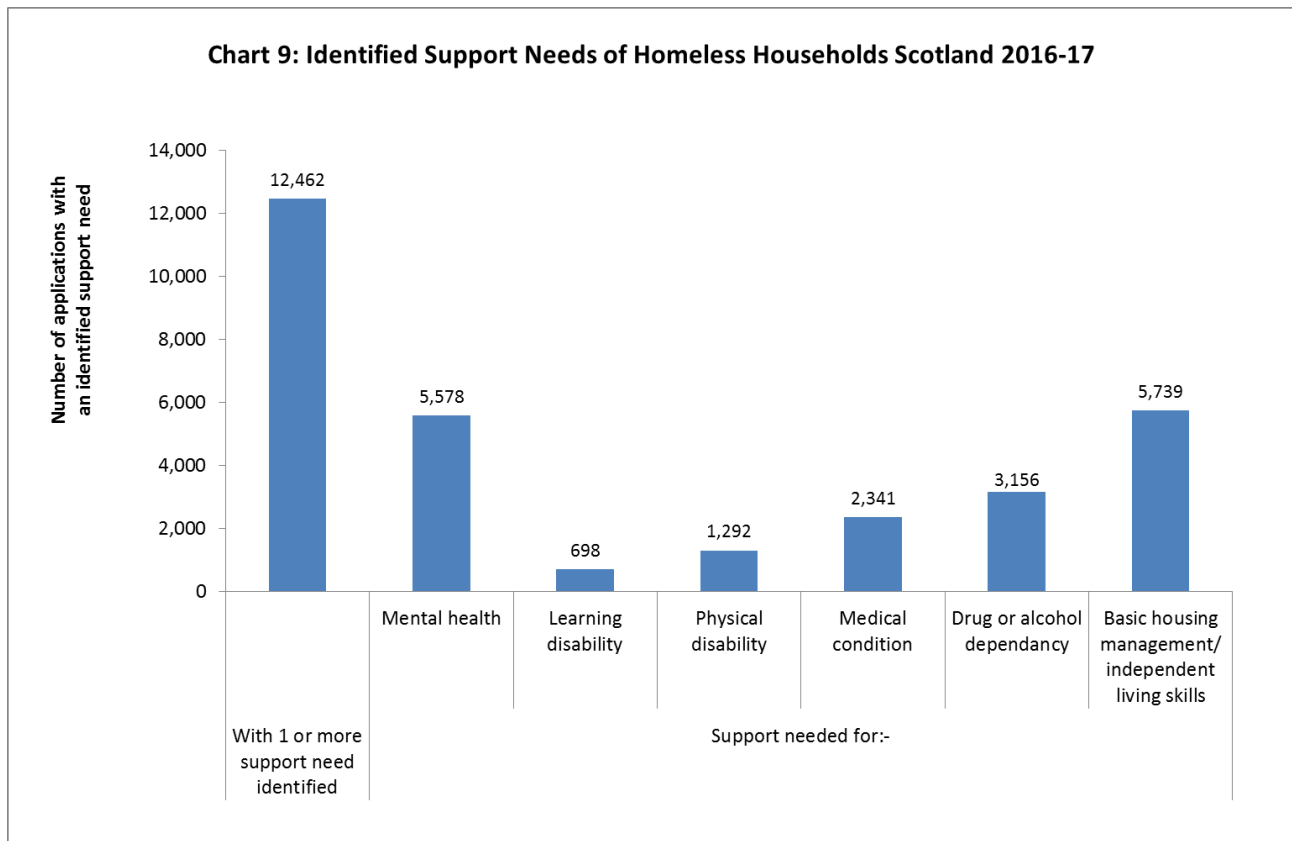
¹⁰ To be classed as a repeat homelessness assessment the applicant household must (1) be assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness in both applications; (2) the previous case must have been closed within 12 months of the current assessment and; (3) the adults and family circumstances also need to be the same in both applications.

Support needs of homeless households

Of the 28,247 households assessed as homeless in 2016/17, 12,462 (44%) cited having one or more support needs. This proportion has increased by ten percentage points since 2012/13 (when this was 34%) (Table 15).

During 2016/17, around a half of applicants with support needs cited support needs for basic housing management/ independent living reasons (46% of those with support needs or 5,739 times indicated). 45% specified a mental health problem as a support need (indicated 5,578 times) and 25% cited drug or alcohol dependency (See Chart 9).

When considering that repeat homelessness applications have risen since 2012/13, the increase in support needs identified in applications may indicate a more complex situation. That is, whilst Housing Options may be tackling more straightforward cases, a minority of households may have more complex needs than was previously the case.



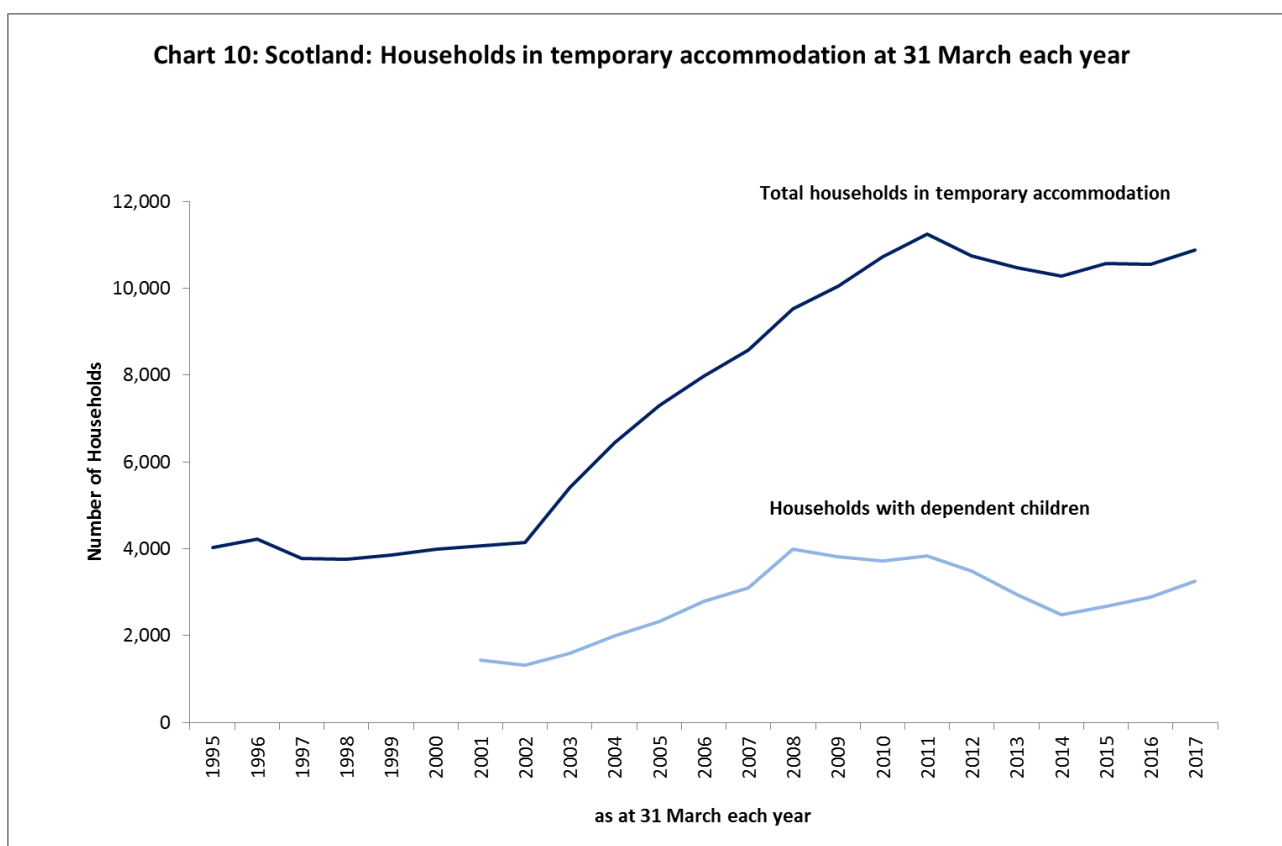
Temporary Accommodation

(Tables 17 to 23)

Background

Homeless applicants may be placed in temporary accommodation while the Local Authority assesses their application or while awaiting the offer of a permanent let.

There has been an overall rise of numbers in temporary accommodation since 2002 (See Table 17 and Chart 10). In 2002 (on 31st March), there were 4,153 households in temporary accommodation. This number gradually increased between 2002 and 2010 – 10,729 households were in temporary accommodation on 31st March 2010. Since 2010, this figure has remained relatively stable.



The increase in the overall number of households in temporary accommodation from 2002 was initially driven by homelessness legislation, which placed new duties on councils to provide temporary accommodation, advice and assistance for **priority and non-priority** homeless households. In 2002 the majority of priority homeless were households with children. Following this new duty there was a notable increase in the number of single people applying for homelessness assistance. These single people were also eligible for temporary accommodation.

From 2010 the number of homelessness applications has been falling mainly as a consequence of the development of homelessness prevention activities by councils through adopting a 'housing options' approach to meeting housing need. This

change in practice looks to have contributed to the overall drop in numbers in temporary accommodation between 2011 and 2014.

On 31 March 2017, the latest snapshot figures date reveal that:

- There were 10,873 households in temporary accommodation, an increase of 330 households since last year. This figure has been slightly decreasing since 2011 (when there were 11,254 households) (Table 17).
- Of these households in temporary accommodation, 3,250 had children – an increase of 367 households (+13%) compared with one year earlier (Table 18 and Chart 10).
- The number of children in temporary accommodation increased by 818 children (+16%), with the same date one year ago (Table 19).

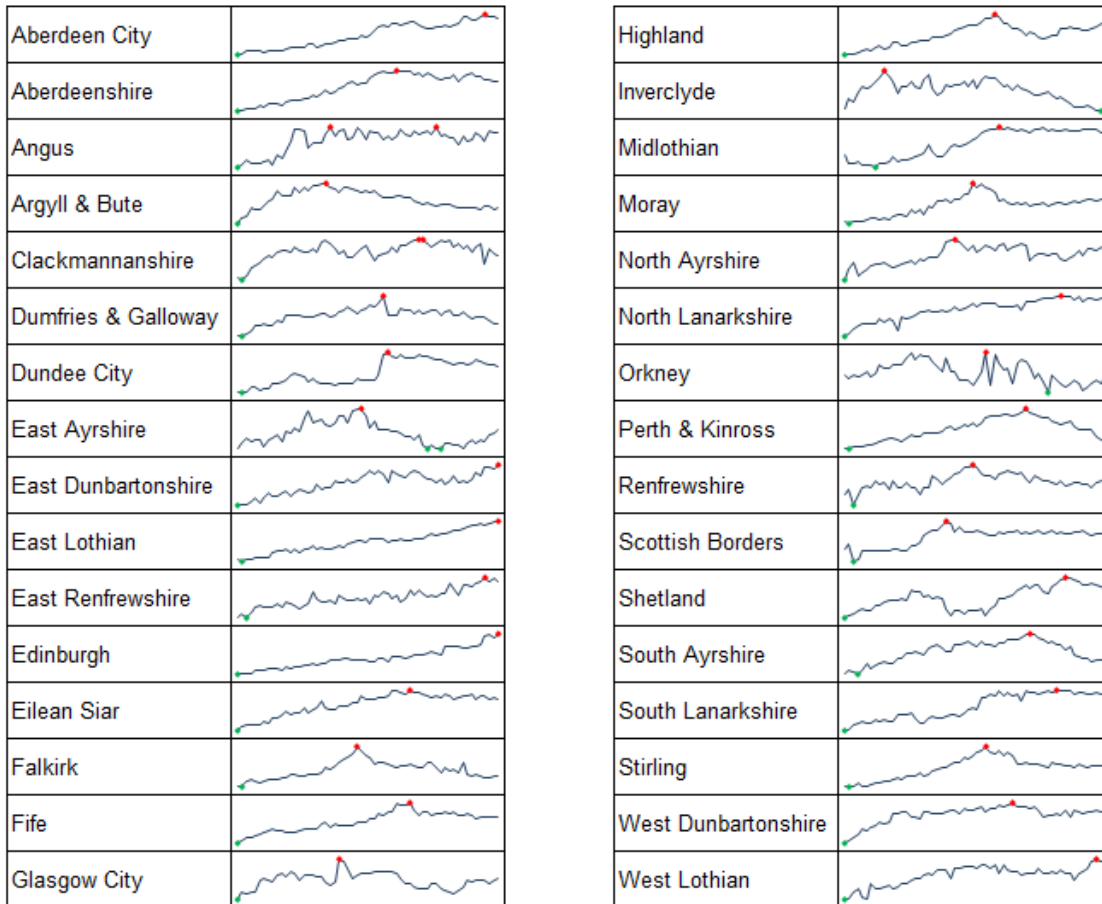
Local Authority variation of households in temporary accommodation

Chart 11 below shows the general shape of the variation amongst households in temporary accommodation in Local Authorities from June 2002 to March 2017. The overall rise in the Scotland level figure over the years reflects this rise amongst many LAs.

However, although the majority of LAs have seen an increase between 2002 and 2017, it should be noted that some LAs have seen a decrease in numbers in temporary accommodation in recent years. Argyll & Bute, Dumfries & Galloway and Inverclyde for example, have seen numbers decline since part way through this time period.

Comparing 31st March 2017 with 31st March 2016, more local authorities (20) saw a percentage increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation, than those which saw a percentage decrease (11 local authorities) and those whose temporary accommodation remained the same (1 local authority) (see Table 17).

Chart 11: Temporary Accommodation by Local Authority, from 30th June 2002 to 31st March 2017



Types of temporary accommodation used

The majority of households in temporary accommodation were in Local Authority or Housing Association accommodation (61%), with a further 16% in hostels and 10% in bed and breakfast (Table 20).

Households with children or pregnant women are mainly provided with Local Authority or housing association accommodation (82%), with a small proportion (1%) being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. (Table 21). On 31 March 2017, there were 33 households with children or pregnant women in bed and breakfast accommodation (Table 21). This figure has increased (from 29 on 31st March 2016) since the same date one year ago.

On the 31st March 2017, there were 3 breaches (2 in East Dunbartonshire and 1 in East Lothian) of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014 (Table 23).

Future Monitoring of Temporary Accommodation

In addition to the data collected for this publication via the HL1 and HL2 data returns, from 1 April 2016, Local Authorities will begin submitting data on temporary accommodation via the HL3 return.

This gives placement level information on temporary accommodation and will also enable analysis of the time spent in each placement. Once the data quality has been assured, the successful implementation of the HL3 will result in the reduction of reporting requirements elsewhere - the HL2 return will cease and question 24 in the HL1 return will no longer be required. Further information on the HL3 Return and a stand-alone data collection system is available at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/15257/1529/HL3>

Outcomes

(Tables 24 to 27)

Households assessed as unintentionally homeless have a right to settled accommodation - this is usually a Scottish Secure Tenancy with a local authority landlord or Housing Association, or an assured tenancy in the private rented sector. In 2016/17, just over two-thirds of unintentionally homeless households secured settled accommodation (17,892 or 68% of unintentionally homeless households which had an outcome in 2016/17). This proportion has remained stable since 2008/9, varying between 65% and 68% over the period (Table 24).

For those households assessed as unintentionally homeless, Orkney had the highest proportion of outcomes securing settled accommodation (88% of outcomes). While Glasgow City and Midlothian had the lowest (52% of outcomes) (Table 25).

Contact Lost / Unknown Outcomes

In 2016-17, Local Authorities closed 27,860 cases. Of these, following an assessment of homeless or threatened with homelessness, contact was maintained until case closure for 23,184 applications (83% of cases). An outcome of lost contact or unknown outcome was reported for 17% of cases. The overall proportion of lost contacts has remained roughly the same for the past 8 years, varying between 17% and 20% (Table 27).

Homeless share of social lets

In previous years, estimates have been made of the number of non-transfer lets within each Local Authority area – these are lets available to households who are not existing tenants of a Local Authority landlord or Housing Association. These estimates were compared with the number of lets secured by homeless households. This gave a measure of relative pressure for social housing by homeless households.

Previously, the Annual Performance and Statistical Return (APSR) collected by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) contained sufficient information to make estimates of social lets in each Local Authority area. However, with the introduction of the Annual Return on the Charter in 2013/14, the SHR made the decision to only collect lettings information by individual landlord and not by Local Authority area. As some large landlords operate across multiple Local Authority areas, it is not clear how these lets should be distributed. Pro-rating total lets by the stock in each area may not take into account different turnover rates across the landlord's portfolio in different Local Authority areas. Additionally, new build can have a marked localised impact on the number of available lets in a Local Authority area. Whilst these factors may not have a big impact on larger Local Authorities, some of these issues may be key in smaller authorities such as East Dunbartonshire and East Lothian.

Data from the SCORE dataset ceased in March 2015¹¹. This data was collected voluntarily from Housing Associations and gave a partial picture of cases level lettings across some Housing Associations. Coverage was estimated to be 68% in 2014/15¹².

With the most recent complete lettings data coming from the APSR for 2011/12, continuing to make estimates based on data over three years old is no longer seen as robust. As a consequence, statistics on the homeless share of social lets has been paused until alternative data becomes available.

¹¹ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/SCORE/SCOREcessation>

¹² <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/06/5064/1>

Notes on Tables

Please note:

All of the tables and charts in this publication are available in electronic format at:

<http://www.gov.scot/homelessstats>

We are grateful to all 32 Scottish Local Authorities who submitted their HL1 and HL2 returns on time.

Given the continuous nature of the recording system, figures are updated on an on-going basis and may differ from those previously published. There may be delays in some cases being reported to the Scottish Government due to IT issues, quality assurance processes and delayed entry of data – particularly at the end of the financial year. As a result, we estimate that the headline number of applications may change by as much as 1% (typically by around 200 cases for the current financial year) between first and subsequent publications.

Reporting of the Number of Applications													
Publication Date	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
27-Jun-17	57,339	60,560	59,590	57,327	57,676	57,213	55,642	45,545	40,036	36,819	35,946	34,926	34,100
28-Jun-16	57,389	60,568	59,596	57,337	57,682	57,217	55,646	45,551	40,040	36,824	35,949	34,662	
30-Jun-15	57,393	60,662	59,554	57,253	57,682	57,220	55,646	45,552	40,051	37,234	35,764		
24-Jun-14	57,394	60,662	59,555	57,255	57,688	57,228	55,651	45,550	40,050	36,457			
16-Jul-13	57,396	60,684	59,609	57,208	57,676	57,211	55,644	45,547	39,827				
26-Jun-12	57,395	60,698	59,608	57,211	57,681	57,214	55,663	45,322					
30-Aug-11	57,444	60,820	59,654	57,239	57,668	57,122	55,227						
31-Aug-10	57,437	60,742	59,544	57,260	57,595	56,428							
Difference in applications between publication shown and most recent publication													
27-Jun-17													
28-Jun-16	50	8	6	10	6	4	4	6	4	5	3	-264	
30-Jun-15	54	102	-36	-74	6	7	4	7	15	415	-182		
24-Jun-14	55	102	-35	-72	12	15	9	5	14	-362			
16-Jul-13	57	124	19	-119	0	-2	2	2	-209				
26-Jun-12	56	138	18	-116	5	1	21	-223					
30-Aug-11	105	260	64	-88	-8	-91	-415						
31-Aug-10	98	182	-46	-67	-81	-785							
Percentage difference in applications between publication shown and most recent publication													
27-Jun-17													
28-Jun-16	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-1%
30-Jun-15	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	-1%		
24-Jun-14	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-1%			
16-Jul-13	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-1%				
26-Jun-12	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%					
30-Aug-11	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-1%						
31-Aug-10	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-1%							

The data over time

In 2001, the Scottish Parliament passed legislation which placed additional duties on Local Authorities to provide a minimum of temporary accommodation, advice and assistance to all applicants assessed as homeless. From September 2002, this took effect and councils have been required to provide temporary accommodation, advice and assistance to non-priority applicants who in the past would have received advice and assistance only. This has had a noticeable impact on applications, which has been reflected in changing assessments and outcomes for homeless people. Some tables in this release therefore present time series data so that this impact can be tracked.

In December 2001, the Scottish Government changed the data collection system for the case-based HL1 return to provide more detailed information on applications by individual households and to allow more timely reporting. This entailed changing to an electronic data capture system which allows cases to be registered and

updated on a continuous basis, as well as enabling applications made by the same household to be linked.

The data collection system introduced in December 2001 allows analysis by individual households and the identification of repeat applications. However, this is not the case for earlier data and so analyses comparing data over longer time periods will tend to refer to applications rather than individual households. This is also the case for analyses of flow through the assessment process where repeat applications by the same individual household might be assessed differently and have different outcomes. For other analyses, it is useful to distinguish individual households and so the unit of analysis (applications or individual households) is specified in the footnotes for each table.

The data collection was further revised in April 2007 in the light of the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003, with some additional information included to reflect current best practice. Further information on the HL1 can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/15257/HL1revisions>.

Interpretation of statistics on temporary accommodation

The figures on households in temporary accommodation relate to households which have been placed in temporary accommodation by a Local Authority under the Homeless Persons legislation. This will include households for whom the Local Authority's decision and final action is still pending, as well as households which were secured such accommodation as a final action by the authority under the legislation. The data provide a snapshot picture of the numbers in temporary accommodation as at the last day of each quarter and are collected in the summary HL2 return.

Hostels, as temporary accommodation under the homeless persons legislation, were used mainly by Glasgow. In fact, almost all households in hostels in Glasgow were placed there by the authority under the Homeless Persons legislation. In other authorities, particularly in the cities, there may be households in hostels that have not been placed there by the Local Authority under the Homeless Persons legislation. Consequently, they are not recorded in the statistics.

In June 2005, the HL2 return was revised in order to monitor the implementation of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004. The revised return records the number of households with children or pregnant women in temporary accommodation as at the end of the quarter, the number of those in unsuitable accommodation as defined by the Order, and the number of those in accommodation which breaches the Order. Not all use of unsuitable accommodation is in breach of the Order as such use may be allowed under

exceptional circumstances as defined in the Order (see summary of legislation below).

How we maintain quality

The quality of this publication depends critically on the quality and consistency of the information supplied to us by Local Authorities on the HL1 and HL2 returns. The quality statement on the Scottish homelessness statistics website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/15257/quality> sets out the ways in which we do this. The main focus of our systems is to ensure consistency between the HL1 and HL2 returns and consistency of the case level information within each HL1 return. For this publication, a small number of HL1 cases were not able to be reported by Fife Council. This is as a result of delayed data submission.

How we deal with revisions and corrections

Our approach to revisions and corrections is set out in detail on the Scottish homelessness statistics website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/15257/revisionpolicy>. In summary, published statistics and supporting reference tables are generally revised when the figures next appear in any publication. However, if a revision is significant resulting in a major change to the published figures a note showing the revisions will be published as soon as possible on the homelessness statistics website. It will also be distributed to all known recipients of the originally published data via email and the ScotStat mailing list.

How we consult with users and providers of statistics

Local Authorities in Scotland provide homelessness statistics as a by-product of their administration of Scottish homelessness legislation. The main users of homelessness statistics are Local Authorities, housing associations, The Scottish Government and voluntary bodies such as Shelter, Homeless Action Scotland and Crisis. In November 2011, we re-established the Scottish homelessness statistics user provider group with representatives of providers and users of the statistics. We aim for the group to meet once a year. The minutes and papers from meetings of the group can be found on the Scottish homelessness statistics website at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/15257/22540>.

Summary of current legislation

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977, now consolidated into Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, introduced statutory duties on Local Authorities to assist those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness (potentially homeless), including providing accommodation in certain circumstances.

The legislation currently requires Local Authorities to make inquiries into the circumstances of applicants to satisfy themselves whether the applicant is homeless or potentially homeless. Once the authority is satisfied this is the case, prior to 31st December 2012, it also determined whether the applicant had a priority need. However, from 31st December 2012, the priority need test has now been abolished (see Paragraph 24). The Local Authority then tests whether the applicant became homeless intentionally and, in some cases, whether the applicant has a local connection with another authority in Scotland, England or Wales. A local connection with an authority means that the applicant normally resided in that area from choice, either because he/she was employed in or had family associations with it, or for other special reasons.

Section 24 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended, defines homelessness for the purposes of the Act as follows. A person is homeless if he/ she has no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere. A person is also homeless if he/ she has accommodation but cannot reasonably occupy it, for example because of a threat of violence. A person is potentially homeless (threatened with homelessness) if it is likely that he/ she will become homeless within two months. A person is intentionally homeless if he/ she deliberately did or failed to do anything which led to the loss of accommodation which it was reasonable for him/ her to continue to occupy.

Section 25 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended, defined the categories of household regarded as having a priority need for accommodation. Further details can be found in the Code of Guidance on Homelessness. This is available on-line at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/05/31133334/33366>.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 amends the 1987 Act and requires councils to provide a minimum of temporary accommodation, advice and assistance to all applicants assessed as homeless, regardless of whether they have been assessed as being in priority need. The Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 is more long-term in scope, notably introducing a phasing out of the distinction between priority and non-priority applications, and enabling the suspension of the test of local connection. The ultimate aim of the Act was to ensure that everyone assessed as being unintentionally homeless was entitled to settled accommodation from 31st December 2012.

In November 2012, the Scottish Parliament approved the Homelessness (Abolition of Priority Need Test) (Scotland) Order 2012 which gave effect to this commitment.

From 31st December 2012 the priority need test for homeless households was abolished. As a result, from this date, all unintentionally homeless households are entitled to settled accommodation.

Summary of Local Authority duty to homeless households:

1. Unintentionally homeless [and in priority need]¹³

- Provide temporary accommodation until permanent accommodation has been secured.
- Permanent accommodation is defined as:
 - A Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST)
 - An Assured Tenancy (not a Short Assured Tenancy)
 - If the applicants have previously been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the last 3 years, or if they are subject to an anti-social behaviour order - a short Scottish Secure Tenancy can be offered.

In some circumstances, the Local Authority can provide non-permanent accommodation. These circumstances are laid out in the Homeless Persons (Provision of Non-permanent Accommodation) (Scotland) Regulations 2010

Under certain circumstances, a Local Authority may apply a local connection test and refer the applicant to another Local Authority. However, the receiving Local Authority must then secure settled accommodation for the applicant.

2. Intentionally Homeless [and in Priority Need / Homeless and not in Priority Need]:

- Provide temporary accommodation for a reasonable period of time, advice and assistance.

3. Potentially homeless, unintentionally so [and in Priority Need]¹⁴:

- Take reasonable steps to ensure that accommodation does not cease to be available.

4. Potentially homeless, intentionally so [and in Priority Need / Potentially Homeless and not in Priority Need]:

- Provide advice and assistance to help retain accommodation.

The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004 came into force on 6 December 2004, and is intended to prevent the routine use of unsuitable temporary accommodation for households with family commitments. Under this Order, Local Authorities cannot put households with children and pregnant women into temporary accommodation which is not suitable, unless exceptional circumstances apply. Unsuitable accommodation is defined in the

¹³ If before 31st December 2012.

Order as accommodation which does not meet standards relating to the physical properties of the accommodation (the physical standard), its proximity to health and education services (the proximity standard) and its suitability for use by children (the safety standard).

The 2004 order was revoked by [The Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Order 2014](#), which came into force on the 21st November 2014. The 2014 order adds the additional requirement that the accommodation must be wind and watertight.

While the Order provides for exceptional circumstances, in which accommodation which does not meet the physical and/or proximity standards may be used, the safety standard must always be met. Further details can be found in the Code of Guidance available on-line at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/05/31133334/33366>

The Housing Support Services (Homelessness)(Scotland) Regulations 2012 came into force on 1st June 2013. These Regulations make provision in relation to the duty of Local Authorities to assess whether some persons found to be homeless or threatened with homelessness (“an applicant”) need housing support services. Regulation 2 prescribes four types of housing support services which apply for the purposes of that duty. If a Local Authority has reason to believe that an applicant may be in need of one or more of these services, it must assess whether the applicant, or any person residing with the applicant, is in need of such support. If so, the Local Authority must ensure that the service is provided to the person who needs it. For further information on these regulations can be found at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/3279/2>.

Comparability with other UK homelessness statistics

England

In England, Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002 place statutory duties on local housing authorities to provide assistance to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Authorities must consider all applications from people seeking accommodation or assistance in obtaining accommodation. A main homelessness duty is owed where the authority is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a priority need group, which are specified in the legislation (e.g. households with dependent children or a pregnant woman).

Where a main duty is owed, the authority must ensure that suitable accommodation is available for the applicant and his or her household until a settled home becomes available for them. Where households are found to be intentionally homeless or not in priority need, the authority must make an assessment of their housing needs and provide advice and assistance to help them find accommodation for themselves. Where the applicant is found to be intentionally homeless but falls in a priority need category the authority must also ensure that accommodation is available for long enough to give the applicant a reasonable opportunity to find a home.

Data on Local Authorities' activities in carrying out their statutory homelessness duties are collected on the quarterly P1E return.

The most recent statutory homelessness statistics for England are available at : <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>

Wales

In Wales, Local Authorities are bound by similar statutory duties as those in England. The data is collected on a quarterly Local Authority level WHO12 return, similar to the P1E form in England.

The most recent statutory homelessness statistics for Wales are available at: <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/homelessness/?lang=en>

The National Assembly for Wales has enacted new homelessness provisions which can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/7/contents/enacted> In particular, section 66 details a new prevention duty.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland statistics on homelessness are sourced from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). Under the Housing (NI) Order 1988, NIHE has a similar statutory responsibility to secure permanent accommodation for households who are unintentionally homeless and in priority need; to secure temporary accommodation in a variety of circumstances and to provide advice and assistance to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The most recent statutory homelessness statistics for Northern Ireland are available at: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/housing-statistics>

Scotland

Scottish homelessness statistics are available at: <http://www.gov.scot/homelessstats>

Key similarities and differences

Because of the differences in collection methods, and in the legislative duties to homeless households in Scotland following the 2001 homelessness legislation, care needs to be taken in comparing homelessness statistics across the 4 countries.

Under the Scottish legislation, Local Authorities have wider duties to assist non-priority homeless households. In addition, a key part of the Scottish legislation, often referred to as the 2012 homelessness commitment, led to increasing proportions of homeless households being assessed as priority and from 31 December 2012 this test has been abolished. As a result, the definition of priority need was therefore broader in Scotland than in other parts of the UK. As a direct consequence of these changes, significantly higher proportions of all homeless and priority homeless households in Scotland are single person households. In addition, the time scale for threatened with homelessness is two months in Scotland compared to 28 days in England.

In England and Wales, analyses for 'households accepted by Local Authorities as owed a main homelessness duty' are roughly equivalent to Scottish analyses for unintentionally homeless households [and in priority need for those assessed prior to 31st December 2012].

A National Statistics publication for Scotland

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

Correspondence and enquiries

For specific enquiries about this publication:

Josie Knowles or Susan Carsley
Social Security and Housing Access Statistics
Telephone: 0131 244 7232
e-mail: homelessnessstatisticsinbox@gov.scot

For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics:

Office of the Chief Statistician, Telephone: 0131 244 0442
e-mail: statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

- are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- are available via an alternative route <http://www.gov.scot/homelessstats>
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

Complaints and suggestions

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, 3WR, St Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

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