The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

Housing Options (PREVENT1) Statistics in Scotland: 2016/17

Help us improve this publication and its statistics:

These are designated as **experimental statistics**, defined in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics as *"new official statistics undergoing evaluation"*.[1]

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All tables and charts from this publication are available online at: http://www.gov.scot/homelessstats

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[1] For more information on experimental statistics please see:
http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/assessment-and-designation-of-experimental-statistics.html

Contents

Introduction

When households seek assistance for housing-related issues from their Local Authority, they may be presented with advice on a range of Housing Options, including the opportunity to make a homelessness application. This approach, which is known as Housing Options, began to be implemented from around 2009, and more so after the abolition of the priority need test[2] for homelessness.

Local Authorities can use Housing Options as a means of delivering their duty under section 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. It must be stressed however that housing options is only one way of delivering the duty and that housing options as an approach is not a statutory function. This legislation places a duty on Local Authorities to secure that advice and information about:

(a) homelessness and the prevention of homelessness, and

(b) any services which may assist a homeless person or assist in the prevention of homelessness,

are available free of charge to any person in the Authority's area.

The aim of this approach is that households are better informed of their options for accommodation, and can make a more informed choice.

In May 2014, the Scottish Housing Regulator published a national thematic inquiry into Housing Options and homelessness prevention, "Housing Options in Scotland: a thematic inquiry" [3]. This inquiry assessed the performance of Local Authorities in developing and delivering Housing Options services for their customers. In it, it recommended that Local Authorities and the Scottish Government should work together to provide improved guidance on best practice for Housing Options as it regarded that there was still room for development. A summary of the Regulator's recommendations is found in the Background Section. Housing Options Guidance was published in March 2016. [4]

Each Local Authority is likely to have its own version of Housing Options as each will have decided how to best deliver their section 2 duty. The Housing Options Guidance published by the Scottish Government in March 2016 is not statutory guidance, but is to be used as a tool-kit for local authorities when developing their approach to Housing Options.

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[2] In November 2012, the Scottish Parliament approved the Homelessness (Abolition of Priority Need Test) (Scotland) Order 2012, found online at:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2012/330/contents/made

[3] This report is available online at:
http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/publications/housing-options-scotland-thematic-inquiry

[4] Housing Options Guidance (March 2016) is available here:
http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/03/6556

Defining Success

Success criteria are difficult to define and measure. Whilst Local Authorities have a general prevention duty under section 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Housing Options itself is not specifically defined within a legislative framework.

Because of the differing approaches to deliver their duty, the local authority figures reported in this publication are not directly comparable and cannot be used as indicators of good or bad performance.

In direct contrast, the homelessness legislation provides an assessment framework and each assessment decision gives a statutory entitlement to some form of assistance. The operation of the homelessness legislation can therefore be evaluated by measuring compliance with this framework. For example, the proportion of unintentionally homeless households who secure settled accommodation can be tracked over time.

Scottish Government policy has been for Housing Options to be developed locally. As such, there is no single definition of Housing Options operating across all Local Authorities. The Scottish Government funded Housing Options hubs are working to develop a training toolkit which will introduce a degree of consistency across the country but there will be local developments taking account of housing markets and available options.

The purpose of this publication is to provide a statistical update on the operation of Housing Options between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017, providing further reporting of the statistics available since the scheme began in April 2014.

Main Points

Number of Approaches

- In the last year (1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017), there were around 50,120 approaches made.

- Compared with the same period one year ago, there has been a reduction of almost 6,000 approaches across Scotland (-11%). 23 Local Authorities have seen a reduction in approaches.

- Local Authorities decide for themselves what constitutes an approach and this leads to large differences in the volumes of approaches they receive. Across Scotland, the national average for period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 is just under 200 approaches per 10,000 households – around 2% of households.

Open Approaches

- At 31 March 2017, there were 17,650 approaches still remaining open. This is 10% of all approaches received since 1 April 2014.

- During the first two years of the PREVENT1 statistics, some Local Authorities have built up a large number of open cases. However this is a reflection of local practices and is not, of itself, a measure of success or failure. For example, North Lanarkshire has 24% of its cases still open. Next, Aberdeen City and Shetland have 23% and 22% of cases still open respectively. Where Local Authorities have a high proportion of open cases, it is difficult to assess the efficacy of the Housing Options approach as approaches have no recorded outcome.

Reasons for Approaches

- The volume of approaches made for homelessness type reasons has reduced from around 11,000 approaches per quarter initially (April to June, 2014), to between 6,700 and 8,200 approaches per quarter during 2016/17. The number of approaches citing prevention type reasons has remained roughly stable, between 4,000 and 6,000 approaches per quarter since the monitoring of Housing Options began.

Activities

- There is wide variation in the mix of activities offered by local authorities. During 2016/17, 54% of all approaches had activities not exceeding Type I advice - active information, sign-posting and explanation. Type II advice (casework) was carried out in a further 45% of approaches.

- The most common type of activity was to provide general housing advice and tenancy rights advice - this accounted for 39% of all activities during 2016/17. Informing clients of their rights under the homelessness legislation accounted for 27% of all activities.

Outcomes

- For approaches closed during the 2016/17 financial year:
  - 44% of approaches made a homelessness application.
  - 22% remained in their current accommodation
  - 18% had an unknown outcome or contact was lost.
  - 16% found alternative accommodation, including a social rented tenancy (5%), a private rented tenancy (4%) and moving in with family and friends (2%). Other known outcomes accounted for a further 6%.

- The outcomes achieved by Housing Options vary considerably by Local Authority. For example, during this period:
  - In Clackmannanshire, 92% of all approaches resulted in a homelessness application being made, whilst this figure is 13% in Midlothian and 19% in East Ayrshire.
  - 48% of approaches in Argyll & Bute remained in their current accommodation, compared to 3% of approaches with this outcome in Clackmannanshire.
  - For East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire, 44% and 46% of approaches found alternative accommodation. This figure was 1% in Clackmannanshire.
  - For Orkney and Aberdeenshire, around a third of approaches (33% and 31%) have an outcome of lost contact or not known. In Local Authorities where there are high proportions of lost contacts and unknown outcomes, it is difficult to evaluate the efficacy of their Housing Options policy.

Repeat Approaches

- During 2016/17, the rate of repeat approaches for Scotland is 9% of all households. Falkirk and Argyll and Bute have the highest rates of repeat approaches at 16% and 14% of households respectively however this may be a reflection of recording practice. The rate of repeat approaches is lowest in West Dunbartonshire (at less than 1%).
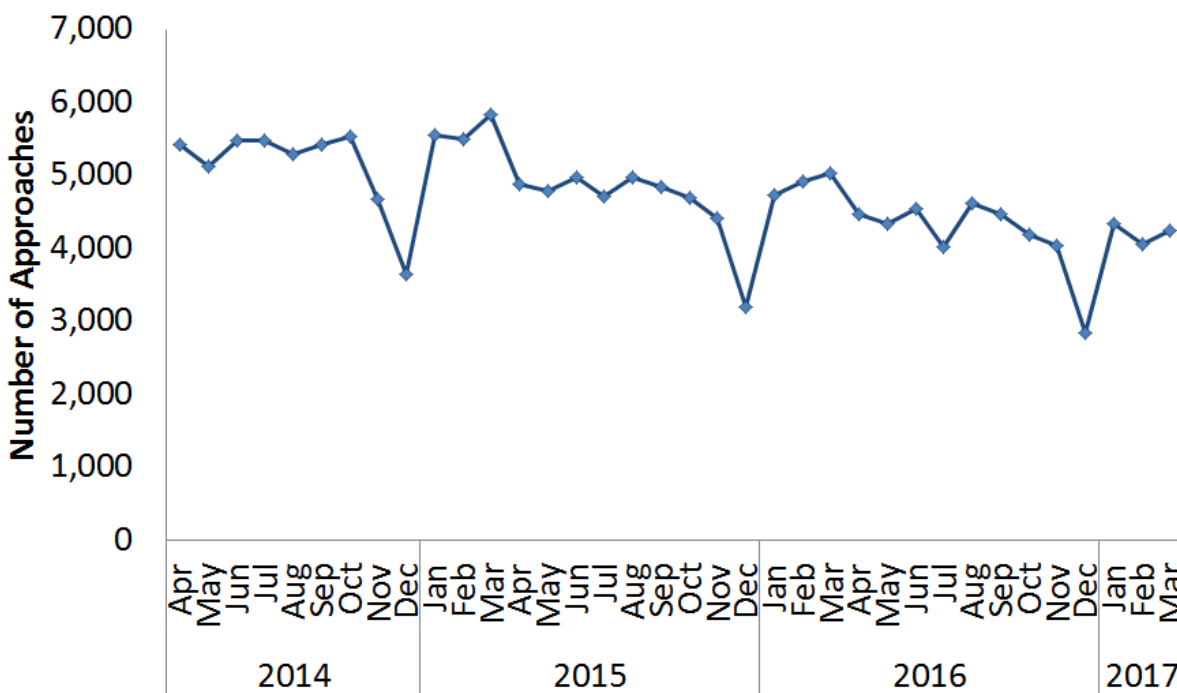
Number of Approaches to Local Authorities

Since the PREVENT1 data collection began in April 2014, there has been 169,140 approaches (see Table 1). During the financial year (2016/17) there were 50,120 approaches made, a reduction of around 6,000 compared to the previous year.

Chart 1 shows the number of new approaches per quarter. It is not known why there are sharp reductions in the number of approaches made during November and December of each consecutive year, but this trend suggests a seasonal fluctuation in demand for Housing Options.

Over the last financial year, the number of approaches per month has reduced, from around 4,500 (during April 2016) to around 2,800 during December 2016. During the most recent quarter (January to March 2017), there has been an increase in approaches, with an average of around 4,200 approaches per month.

Chart 1: Number of **New Approaches to Housing Options**, 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2017

Local Authorities decide for themselves what constitutes an approach. This leads to large differences in the volumes of approaches they record. For example, Chart 2 shows the number of approaches as a percentage of all households in each Local Authority for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. This varies greatly amongst Local Authorities. For example, in Aberdeen City, almost 4% of households within the local authority made a unique household approach to the Housing Options service. This is over double the national average of 2% (**Table 2**).

Chart 2: Rates of Housing Options approaches per 10,000 households, 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017
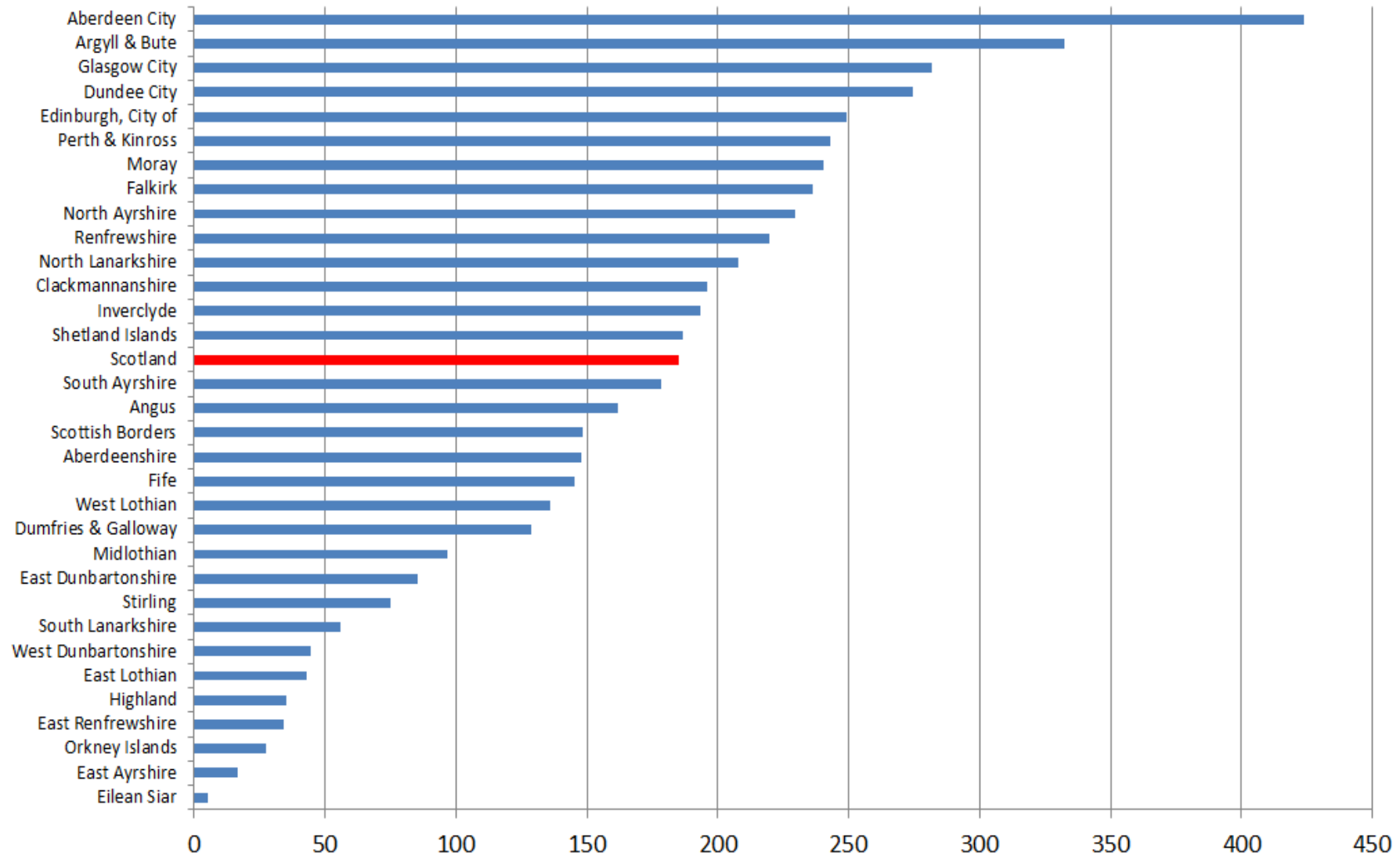
Housing Options has been developing in Local Authorities from around 2009 onwards, although the pace of implementation has varied by Local Authority. **Figure 1** shows that the number of *unique households* making a homelessness application has fallen from a peak of around 58,000 households in 2005/6 to around 33,000 households in 2016/17.[5]

Not all households making a homelessness application are found to be homeless though. In 2016/17, of the 33,307 unique households making an application, 27,811 (83%) were found to be homeless – an increase of six percentage points since 2009/10. It is therefore likely that, in addition to reducing the number of homelessness applications overall, the introduction of Housing Options has led to a greater proportion of homelessness applications being assessed as homeless and a reduction in lost contacts for those households going on to make a homelessness application[6].

Comparing 2016/17 and 2015/16 PREVENT1 statistics, the number of households who made an approach and **did not** go on to make a homelessness application has decreased. Around 29,800 households made an approach and did not make a homelessness application during 2016/17 compared to around 31,600 in 2015/16.
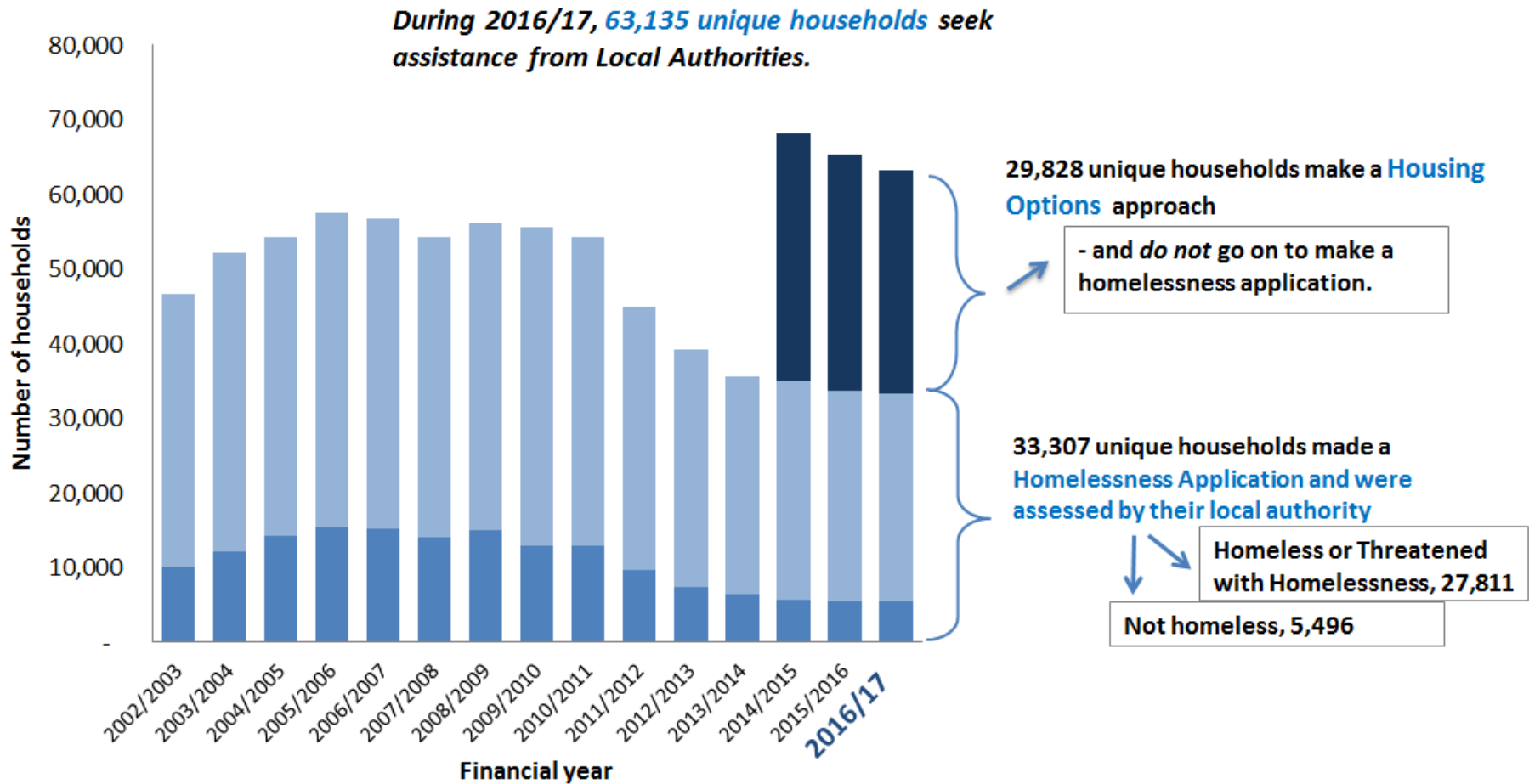
In total, around 63,000 households made either a homelessness application or housing options approach during 2016/17, a decrease from around 65,000 during 2015/16.

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[5] The Annual (2016/17) Homelessness publication (published on 27th June 2017) reports the total number of homelessness applications and assessments (not the total number of unique households with an application or assessment); therefore, figures reported here differ.
[6] Lost contacts prior to a homelessness assessment have reduced by two percentage points between 2009/10 and 2016/17. Where a homelessness duty is owed, lost contacts have also reduced by three percentage points. (See Tables 11 and 27 in the 2016/17 Annual Homelessness Statistics).

Figure 1: Number of unique households making a local authority approach for housing or homelessness assistance, 2002/03 to 2016/17

During 2016/17, 63,135 unique households seek assistance from Local Authorities.

29,828 unique households make a Housing Options approach

- and *do not* go on to make a homelessness application.

33,307 unique households made a Homelessness Application and were assessed by their local authority

Homeless or Threatened with Homelessness, 27,811

Not homeless, 5,496

Flow Diagram

Figure 2 shows a summary of the outcomes for households approaching Local Authorities since the Housing Options Advice service began. Between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2017, there have been around 169,135 approaches (where the approach was **opened** between these dates). Of these, 64% were made for homelessness type reasons and 36% were for prevention type reasons.

Outcomes were recorded for 151,490 approaches (these approaches were **closed** between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2017). The most common outcome was for a homelessness application to be made (48% of all outcomes), followed by remaining in current accommodation (21%) and moving to alternative accommodation (15%). Contact was lost or the outcome was unknown in 16% of closed approaches.

Figure 2: Flow diagram of all approaches to Housing Options services in Scotland, 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2017
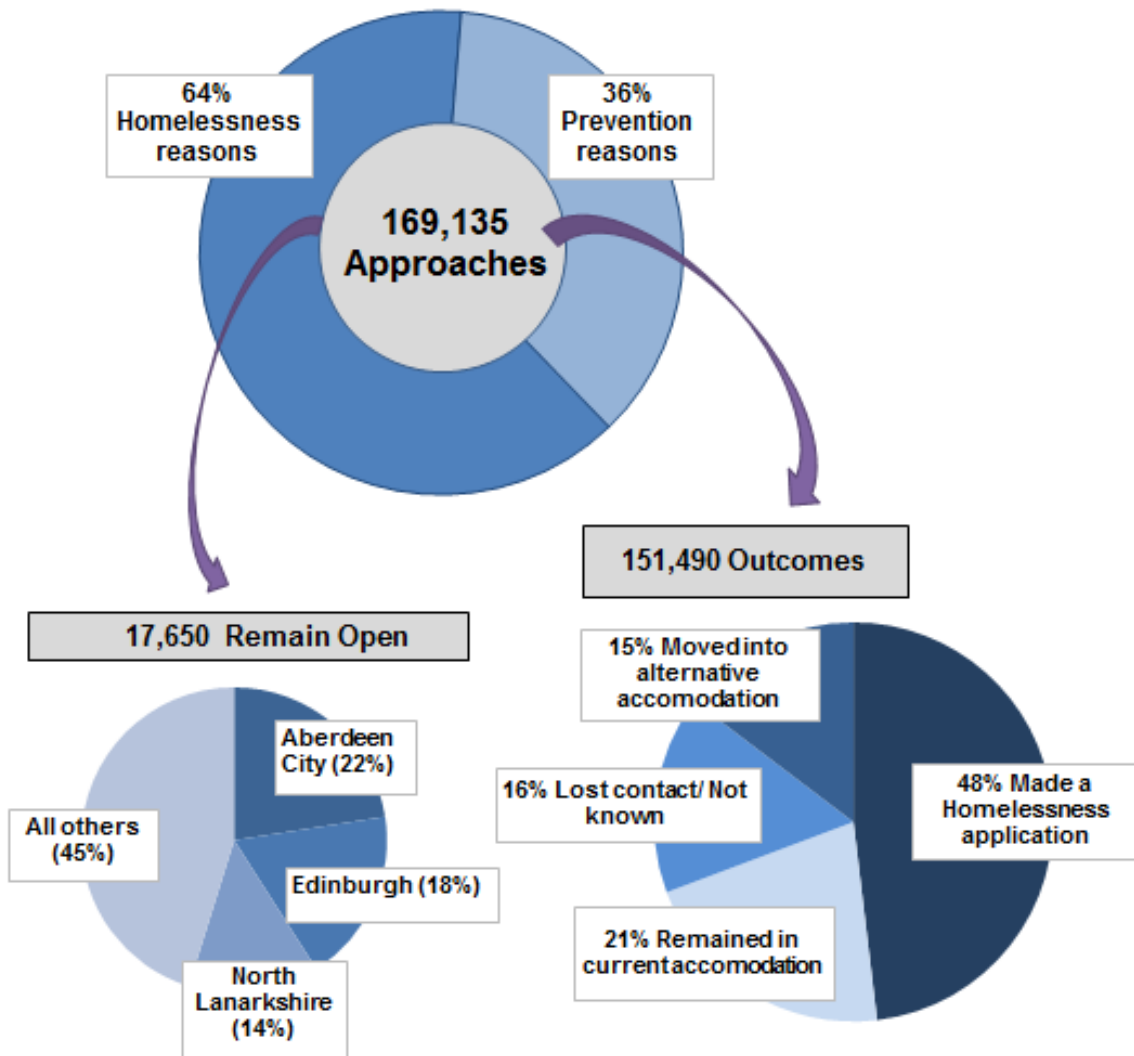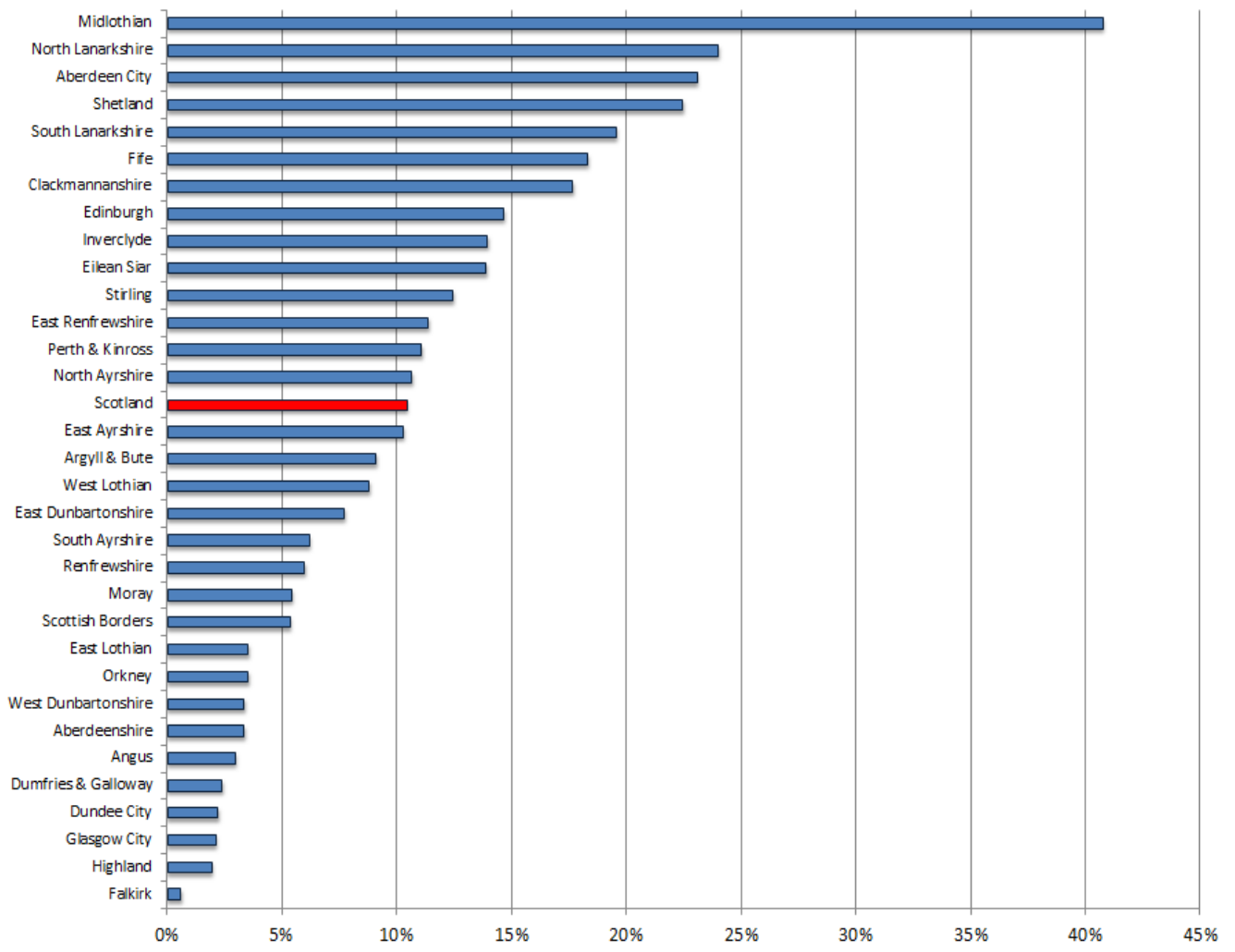
Open Approaches

There were 17,650 approaches that were still open as at 31 March 2017. These are approaches which have not yet reached the outcome stage. **Table 3** and **Chart 3a** show that this figure has more than doubled since the first quarter of data collection, 1 April to 30 June 2014 (from 7,440 approaches). It appears that the number of open approaches reached a peak during 2016 (19,540 open approaches were recorded on 30th September 2016), but there has recently been a reduction (to 17,650 at the end of the most recent quarter) (see Chart 13). For Scotland, 10% of all approaches received between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2017 remain open (17,650 of 169,140 approaches).

Chart 3a: Open Approaches at the end of each quarter - Scotland
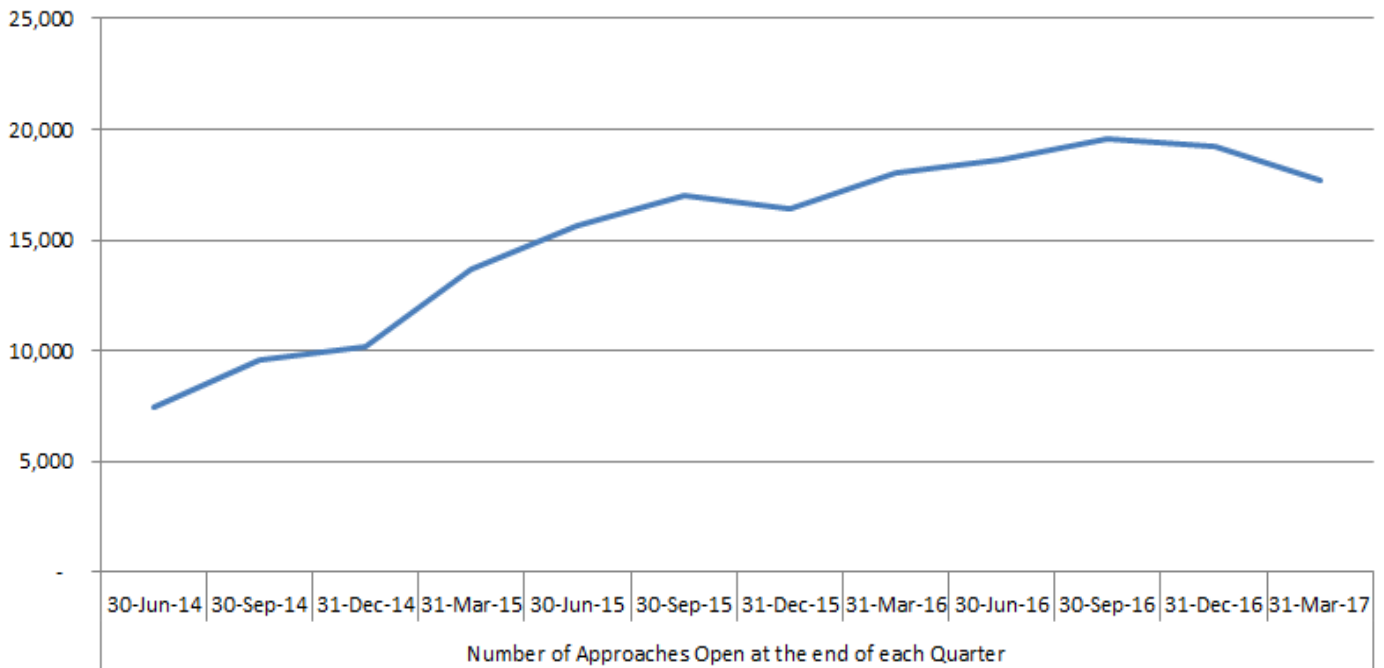
Since the monitoring of PREVENT1 statistics began, some Local Authorities have built up a large number of open cases. For example compared to the Scottish average of 10%, Midlothian has a high proportion of approaches still open (41%) (**Chart 3b**).

Chart 3b: Percentage of Housing Options approach cases still open by Local Authority, of all approaches made between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2017

Where Local Authorities have a high proportion of open cases, it is difficult to assess the efficacy of the Housing Options approach as approaches have no recorded outcome.

Across Scotland, half of open approaches have been open for more than 207 days (over six months). A quarter of such approaches have been open for more than 445 days (over a year and two months). The diagram below demonstrates how to interpret this through a box-plot.

Distribution of the number of days Housing Options approach cases have been open, between approach date and 31 March 2017 - Scotland
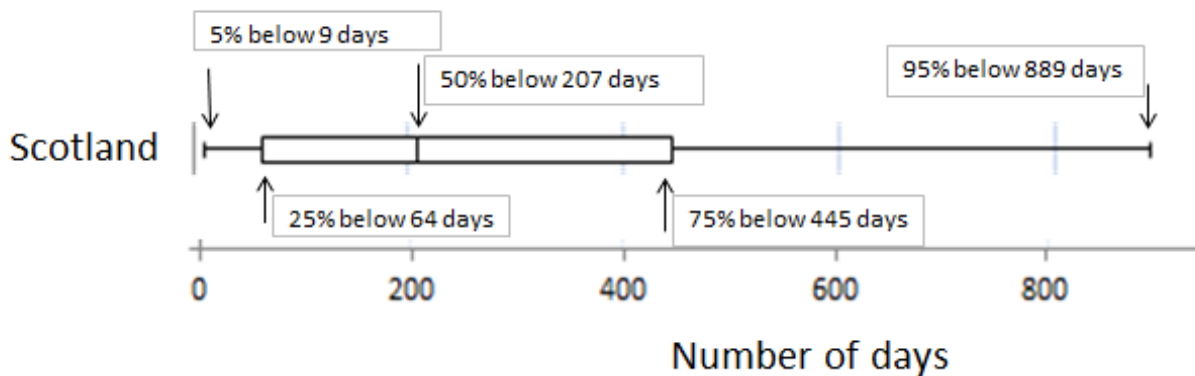
There is a large degree of variation between local authorities in terms of the number of days that Housing Options cases have been open (**Chart 3c**).

For example, in Aberdeen City (where a large proportion of approaches remain open), 50% of open cases have been open for 499 days and 25% have been open for more than 679 days. The average length of time for open cases is much shorter in other local authorities. For example, in Dundee City, the average time for an open case is 28 days.

Chart 3c: Distribution of the number of days Housing Options approach cases have been open, between approach date and 31 March 2017
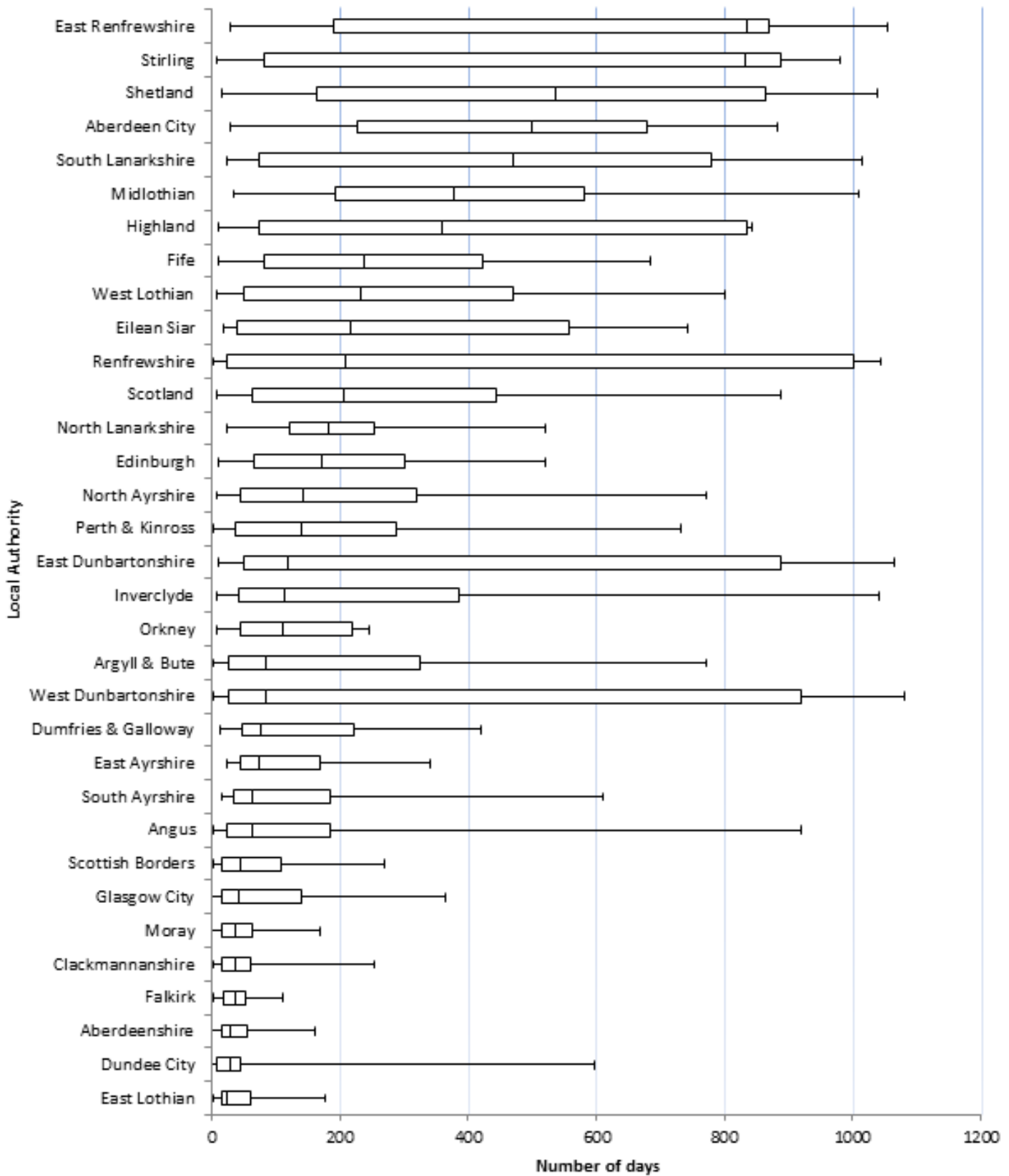
Reasons for Approaches

Although the number of homelessness applications has decreased since 2009/10, the underlying reasons for homelessness have remained very stable over time in Scotland, since 2007[7].

However, whilst the majority of Housing Options approaches cite homelessness type reasons, the volume of approaches made for such reasons has reduced from around 11,000 approaches per quarter initially (April to June 2014), to around 6,800 during October to December 2016. During the most recent quarter, there has been an increase to around 8,180 applications with homelessness type reasons. The number of approaches citing prevention type reasons has remained relatively stable since the monitoring of Housing Options began – between 4,000 and 6,000 approaches per quarter (**Table 4, Chart 4**).

**Chart 4: Reasons for Housing Options approaches by quarter**

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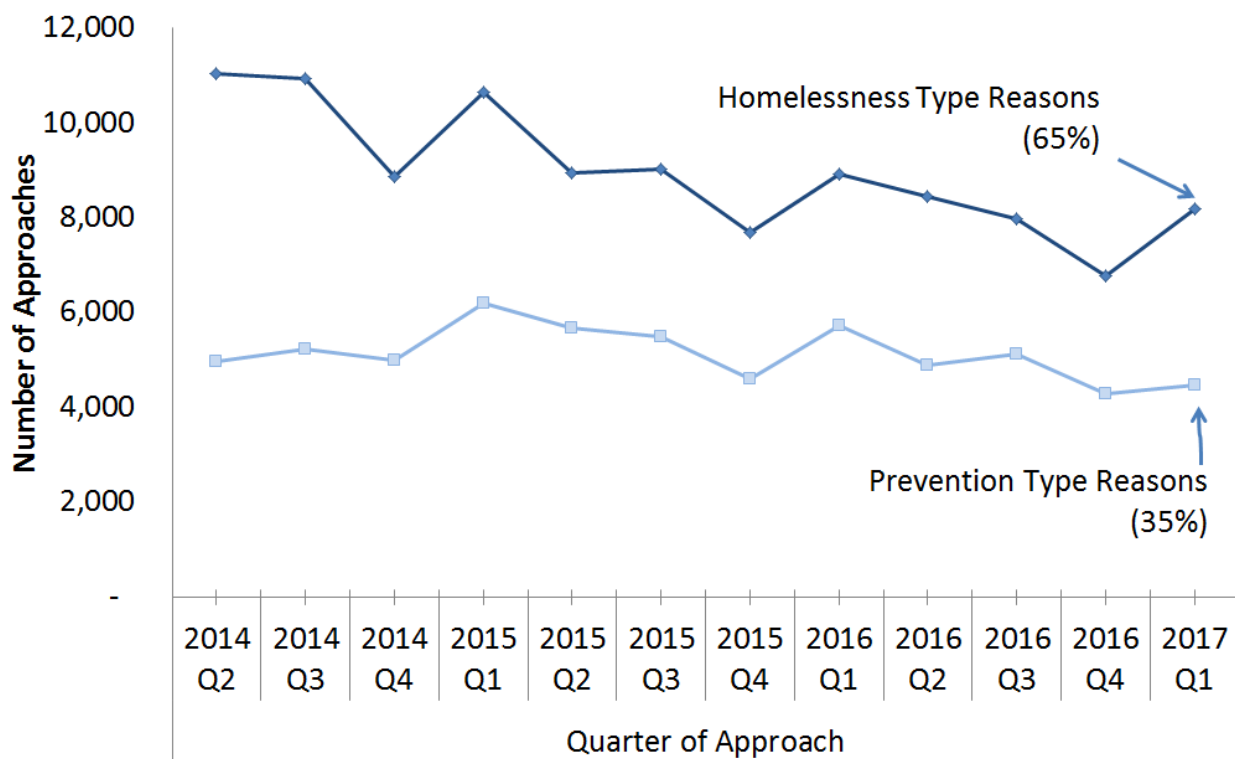
[7] Further information on reasons for homelessness is found in the recent publication, Homelessness in Scotland: Annual Update: 2016/17, found online at: 2016/17 Annual Homelessness Statistics

Activities Undertaken

Chart 5 shows the three types[8] of Housing Options activities undertaken by Local Authorities since the scheme began. During the 2016/17 financial year (April 2016 to March 2017) the majority of approaches (27,110 approaches and on average, 54% of all approaches) provided with activities which did not exceed Type I advice - active information, sign-posting and explanation. Type II advice (casework) was carried out in a further 22,741 approaches (45%). Only in the remaining 274 approaches was the top level Type III advice (advocacy, representation and mediation at tribunal or court action level) carried out (also see **Table 5**).

Chart 5: Intensity of activity types completed for Housing Options approaches by quarter

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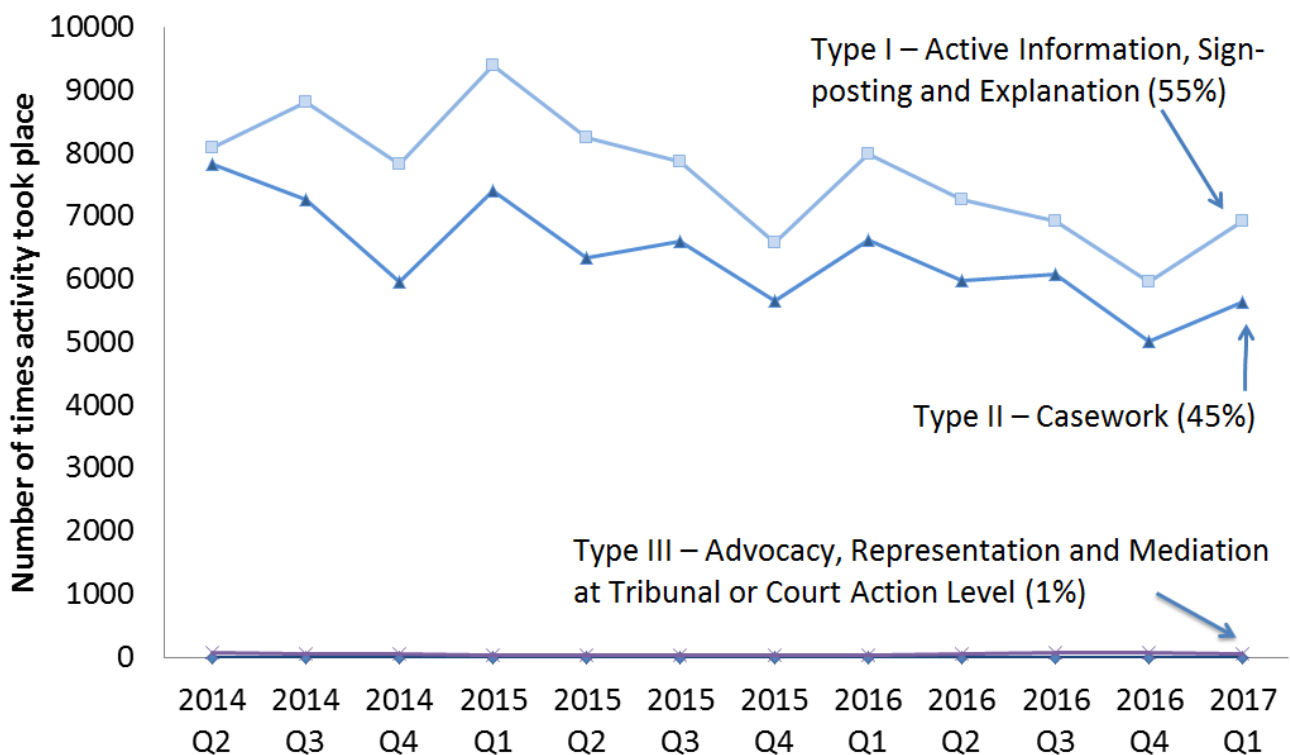
[8] Further information on definitions of types of information and advice can be found in: Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers: A Quality Assurance Framework 2009 http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/10/08154126/0
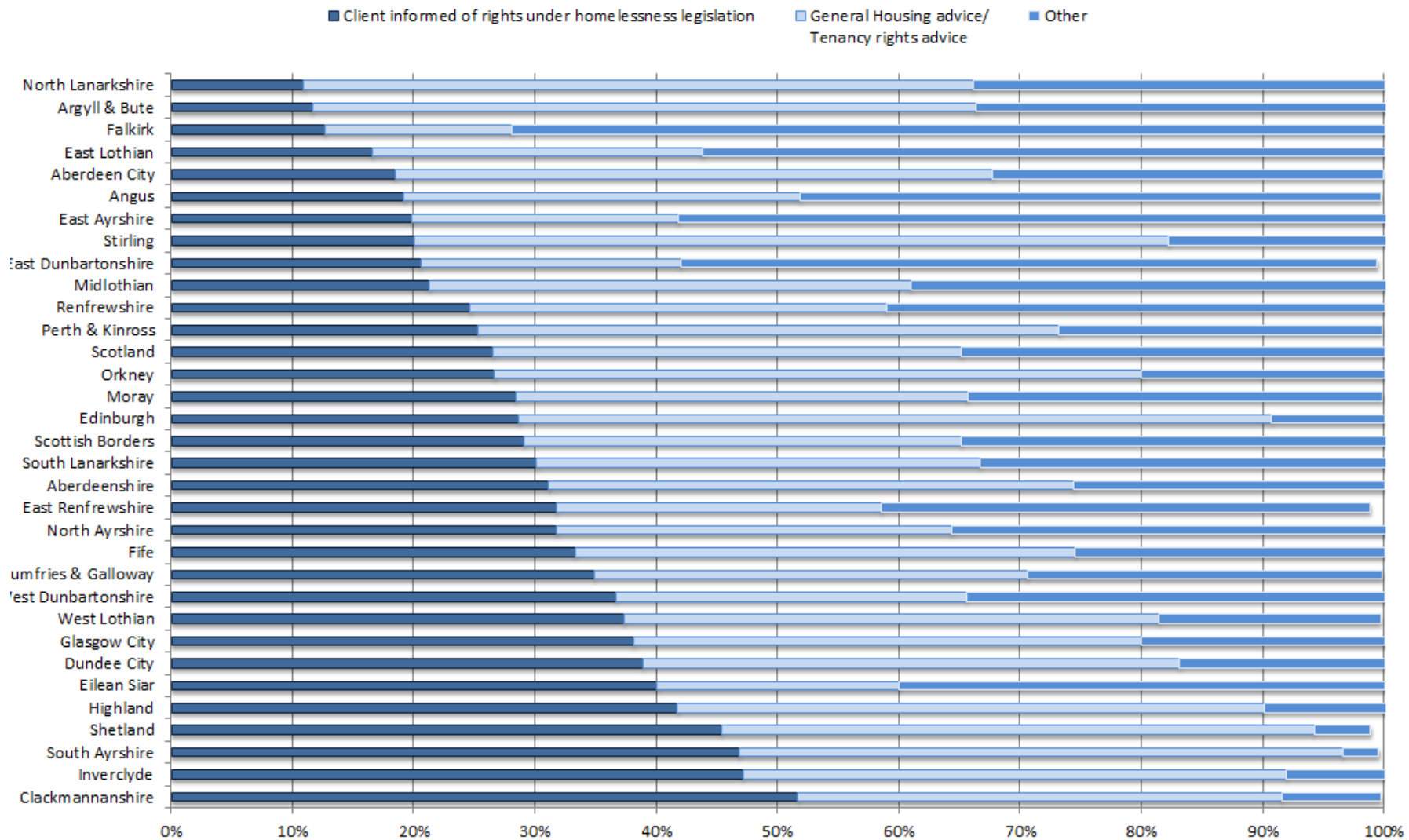
Since monitoring began, the most common type of activity has been to provide general housing advice and tenancy rights advice. Since April 2014, this activity type has fluctuated between 37% and 41% and remains at 39% over the most recent quarter (January to March 2017). Other activity (this includes activities such as financial advice and assistance moving out of a property) has fluctuated between 34% and 38% over the same time period, but dropped to 33% over the most recent quarter. The proportion of cases informing clients of their rights under the homelessness legislation has fluctuated between 24% and 27%, and increased to 28% during the most recent quarter. The mix of activities at the national level has remained fairly static since monitoring began, with no activity changing its share by more than five percentage point (**Table 6** and **Chart 6**).

Chart 6: Types of activities completed for Housing Options approaches by quarter
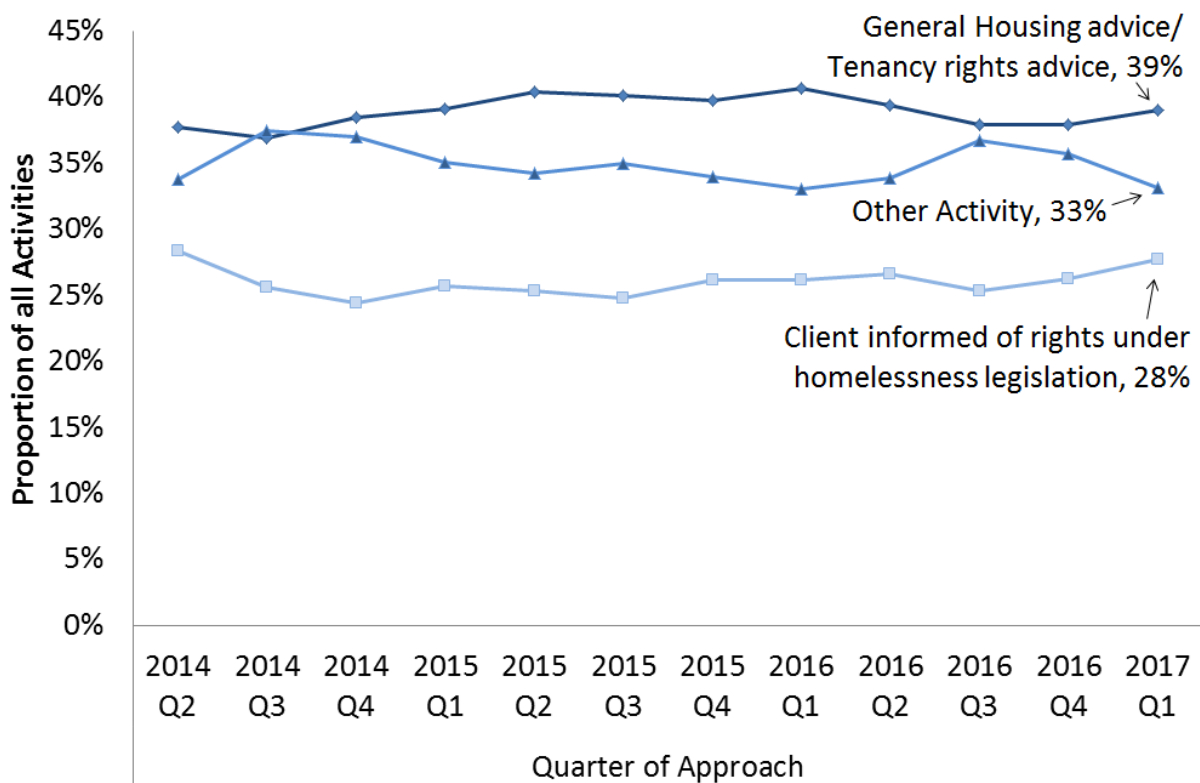
Again there is wide variation in the mix of activities offered by Local Authorities and some of this may be due to differences in how activities are recorded (**Table 7** and **Chart 7**). During 2016/17, over half of Clackmannanshire's activities are to inform clients of their homelessness rights. Over the same time period, almost two-thirds of Edinburgh and Stirling's activities (62% in both local authorities) relate to providing general housing and tenancy rights. In Falkirk, 72% of activities are taken up with other activities such as providing financial advice.

Chart 7: Housing Options activities by Local Authority, 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017

Legend: Client informed of rights under homelessness legislation | General Housing advice/ Tenancy rights advice | Other

Local Authorities (top to bottom): North Lanarkshire, Argyll & Bute, Falkirk, East Lothian, Aberdeen City, Angus, East Ayrshire, Stirling, East Dunbartonshire, Midlothian, Renfrewshire, Perth & Kinross, Scotland, Orkney, Moray, Edinburgh, Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire, Aberdeenshire, East Renfrewshire, North Ayrshire, Fife, Dumfries & Galloway, West Dunbartonshire, West Lothian, Glasgow City, Dundee City, Eilean Siar, Highland, Shetland, South Ayrshire, Inverclyde, Clackmannanshire

X-axis: 0%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, 100%

NB: The primary activity type per application is shown here. The PREVENT 1 data specification requires only one activity type per application. Thus, while some applicants may have recorded that they received general housing advice primarily, they may also have received information of their rights under the homelessness legislation – this is not recorded in the chart.

Outcomes

Chart 8 shows the outcomes of Housing Options approaches by quarter (also see **Table 8a and 8b**). Since the beginning of Housing Options in April 2014, the percentage of outcomes in each category has remained stable. Over the last year, 44% of approaches had the outcome, 'made homelessness application to local authority', 22% remained in their current accommodation, 18% had an unknown outcome or contact was lost and 16% found alternative accommodation (this includes a social rented tenancy (5%), a private rented tenancy (4%), moving in with family and friends (2%) and Other (known) (6%)).

In the last quarter (January to March 2017), there has been a reduction in the percentage of outcomes which made a homelessness application (from 46% during September to December 2016 to 40% during January to March 2017). Even though there has been a numerical increase (as shown on Chart 8), the proportion has reduced. Meanwhile, there has been an increase in the number and percentage of outcomes recorded as lost contact/not known (from 16% during September to December 2016 to 22% during January to March 2017).

Chart 8: Outcomes of Housing Options approaches by quarter
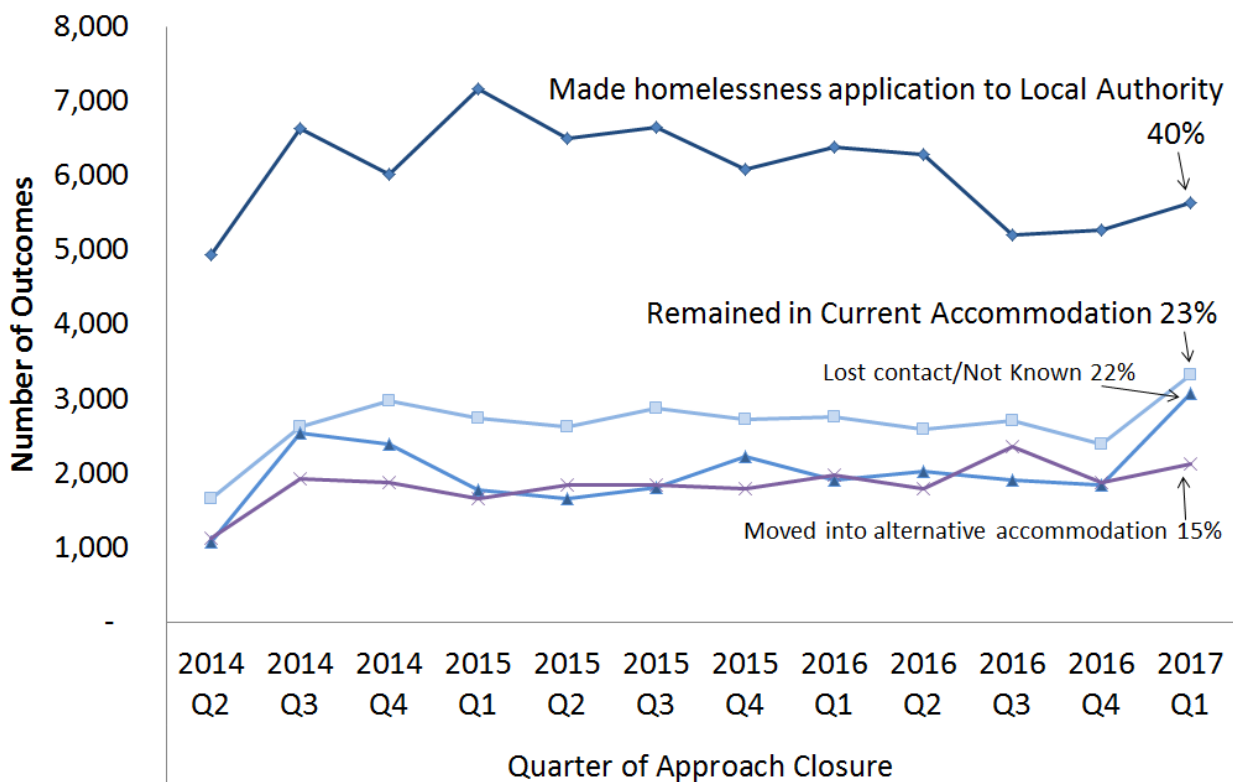
Different outcomes take different lengths of time to achieve – **Chart 9** shows the time it has taken to reach different outcomes since the recording of Housing Options began (April 2014).

Chart 9: Distribution of Housing Options approach case durations by outcome, cases closed between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2017
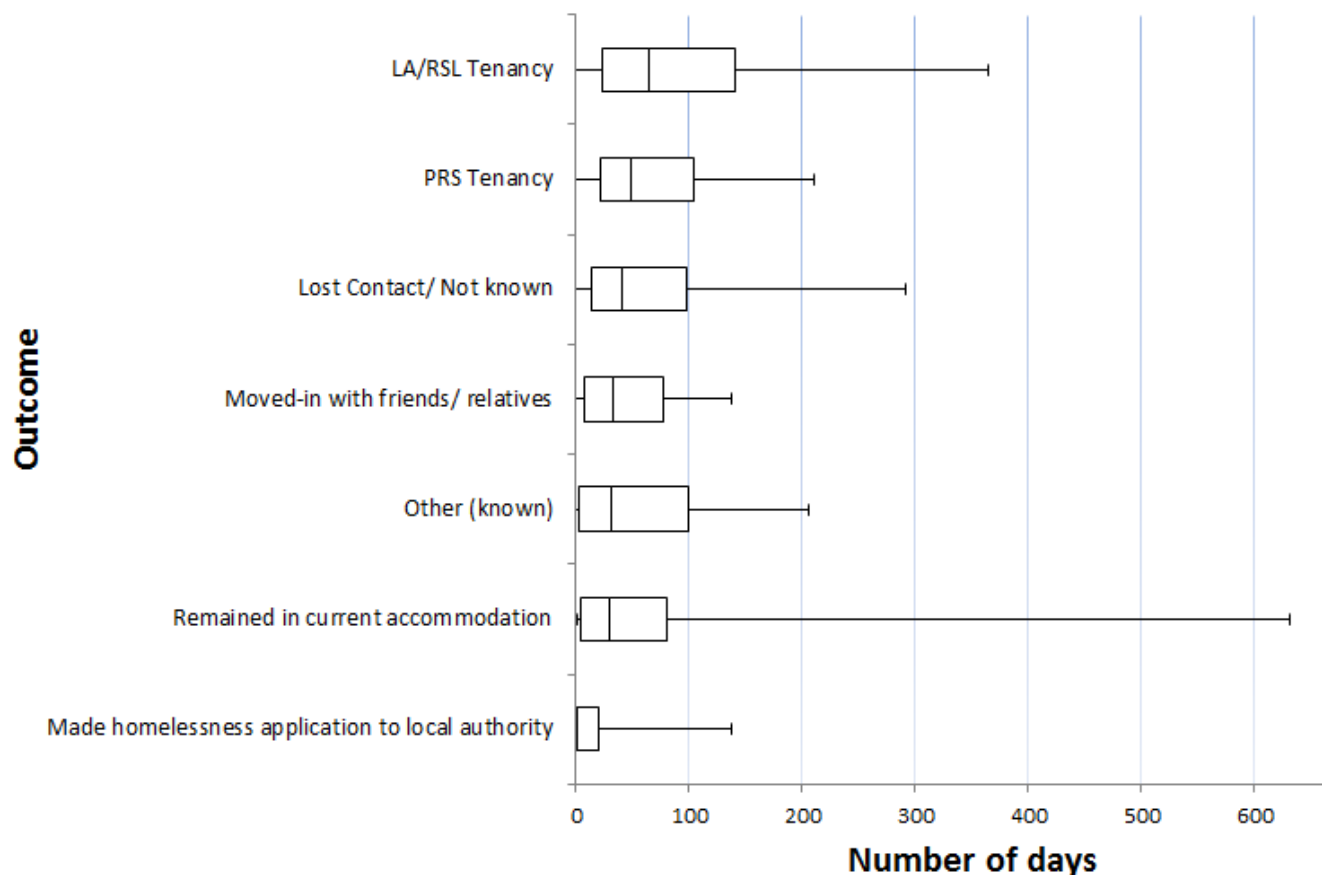
Closing an approach by making a **homelessness application** is relatively quick. Half of these outcomes are done in less than one day and only in a quarter of such cases does it take more than 20 days to make a homelessness application.

The next quickest outcomes are **Remaining in current accommodation** and **Other (known)** – half of these outcomes are achieved in around 30 days and only a quarter take more than 80 days for the former outcome and 99 days for the latter.

Moving in with **family and friends** takes slightly longer – half of these outcomes are achieved in 32 days, although again around a quarter of these outcomes take over 77 days to achieve.

Achieving an outcome of a **private or social rented tenancy** takes the longest to time to achieve. Half of private rented tenancies are achieved in 49 days, with a quarter taking more than 104 days. Half of local authority tenancies are achieved in 64 days, with a quarter taking more than 140 days.

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Half of **lost contacts or not known** outcomes occur within around 41 days – a quarter of these outcomes take more than 98 days.

Thus if a household needs to make a homelessness application, this is typically done in one day or less. If advice or assistance can be provided to enable the household to remain in their current accommodation, this may take around 30 days to achieve. Moving in with friends and family takes a similar length of time – on average 32 days. At this point, if a private rented tenancy or social rented tenancy is not available quickly, contact may be lost or the outcome is unknown, and this may occur in around 49 days.

Local Authority variation

Over the last year (1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017), Housing Option outcomes vary considerably by Local Authorities (see **Table 9** and **Chart 10**).

In Clackmannanshire and Dumfries and Galloway, the majority (over 90% for Clackmannanshire) of all approaches result in a homelessness application being made, whilst this figure is less than 20% in East Ayrshire and Midlothian. Almost 50% of approaches in Argyll and Bute remain in their current accommodation. For North Ayrshire and East Ayrshire, almost half of approaches have found alternative accommodation.

For Orkney and Aberdeenshire, around a third of approaches **have an outcome of lost contact or not known**. In Local Authorities where there are high proportions of lost contacts and unknown outcomes, it is difficult to assess what the Housing Options policy is achieving.

For approaches with an outcome of **lost contact or not known** (during April 2016 to March 2017), **Chart 11** shows that although the Scottish average to close approaches with this outcome is around 55 days, some Local Authorities use this outcome much more readily. Dumfries and Galloway and East Dunbartonshire closed half of their cases as lost contact/ not known outcomes on the same day as the approach was made.

Chart 10: Variation in Housing Options outcomes for each Local Authority, for cases closed between 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017
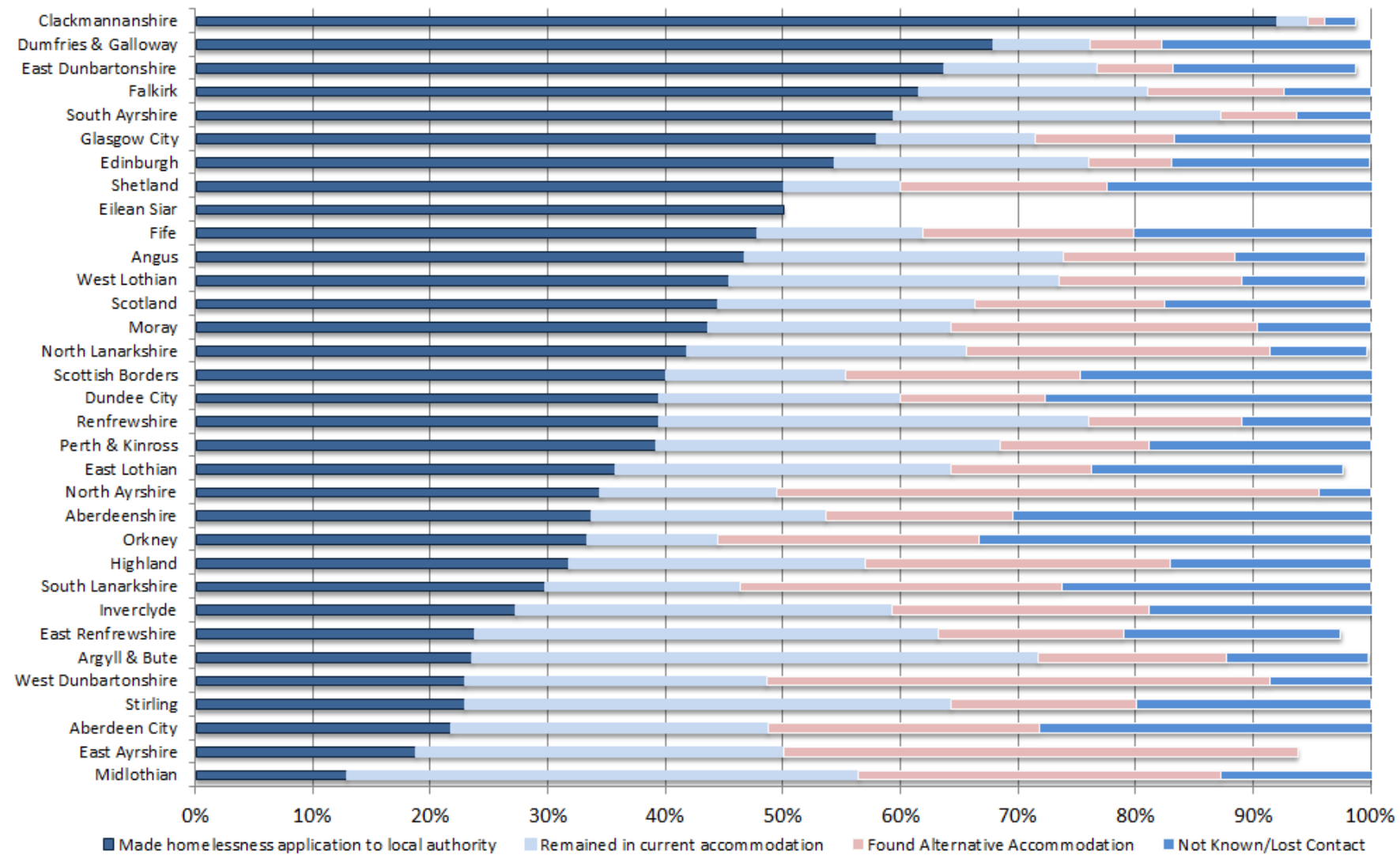
Note: Some local authority totals do not sum to 100% due to rounding for disclosure purposes

Chart 11: Distribution of the number of days from Housing Options approach to outcome as Lost Contact or Not Known by LA, for cases closed between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017

NB: East Ayrshire only has one approach with this outcome and it took 181 days.
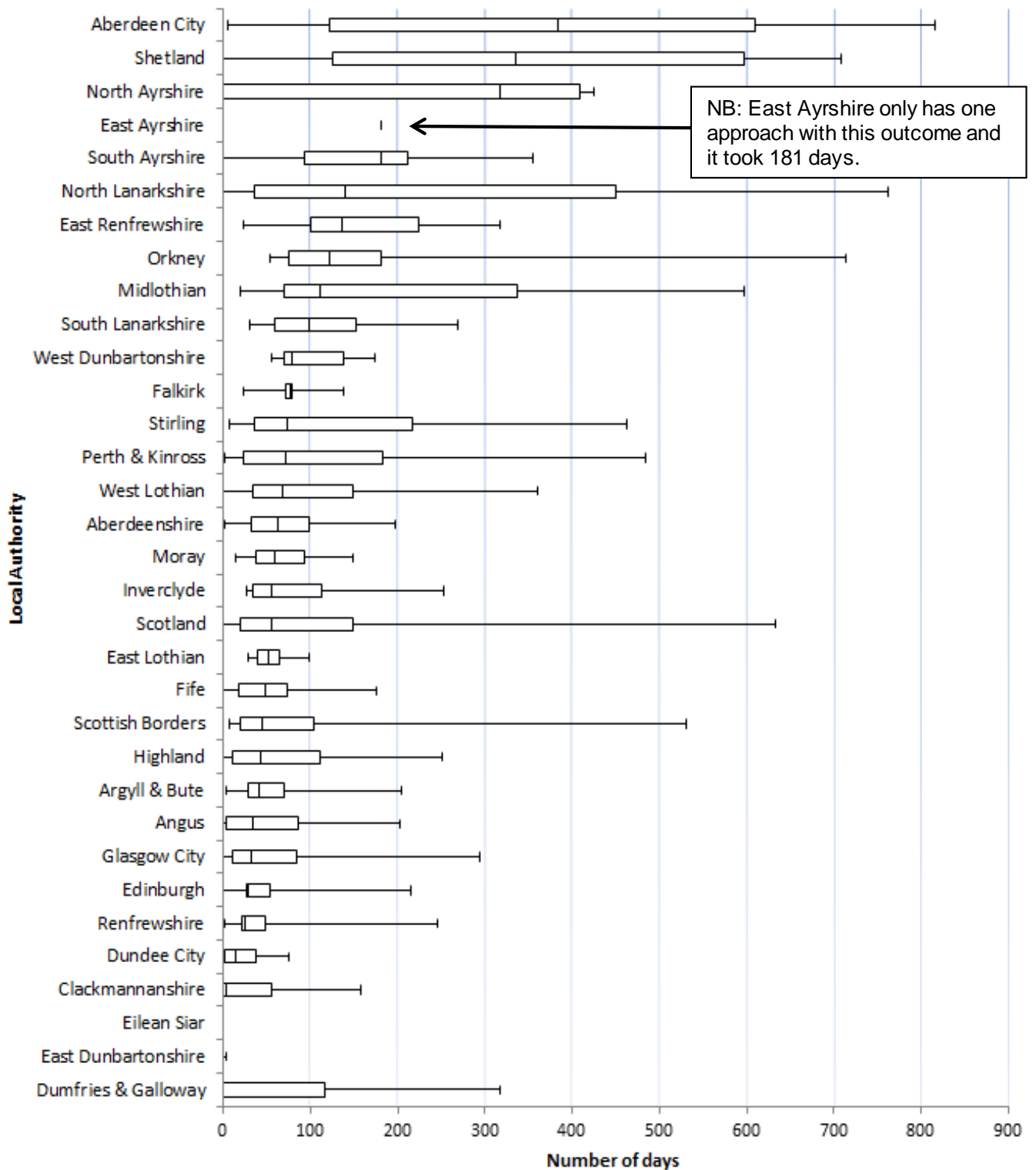
For the Housing Option approaches **which resulted in a homelessness application**, there is wide variation (across local authorities) in the number of days it takes to make the homelessness application.

Chart 12 shows that between April 2016 and March 2017, the average time (across all local authorities) to make a homelessness application occurred very quickly (50% of approaches with a homelessness application outcome occurred within 1 day; a quarter of approaches took over 16 days). See the diagram below for a close-up interpretation of the Scotland level box-plot in Chart 12.
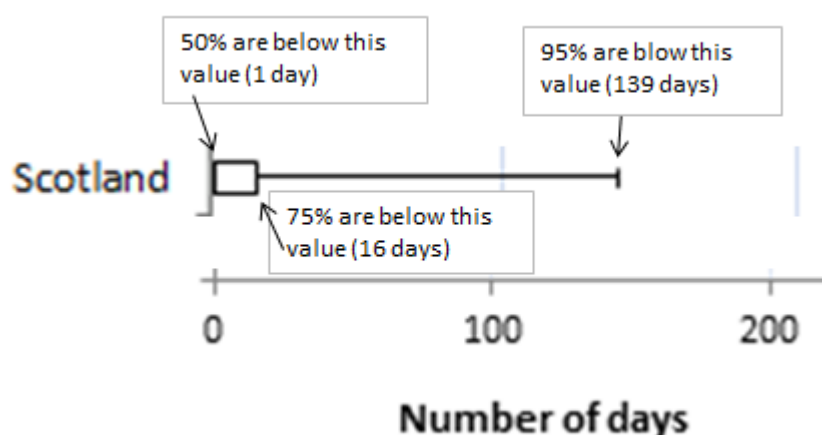
Some local authorities take much longer than others for homelessness applications to be made (see **Chart 12**). Where the average time to make a homelessness application occurs very quickly, for example, in Clackmannanshire and Dumfries and Galloway, a greater proportion of households may be approaching these Local Authorities in crisis and so the alternatives to a homelessness application may be limited. The average time it takes to reach this outcome (making a homelessness application) is much longer for some local authorities. For example, in East Renfrewshire and Orkney, 50% of these outcomes take over 48 days. Again, this variation highlights the differences in practice and how Housing Options are used by different Local Authorities.

Chart 12: Distribution of the number of days to make a homelessness application from initial Housing Options approach, for cases closed between 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017
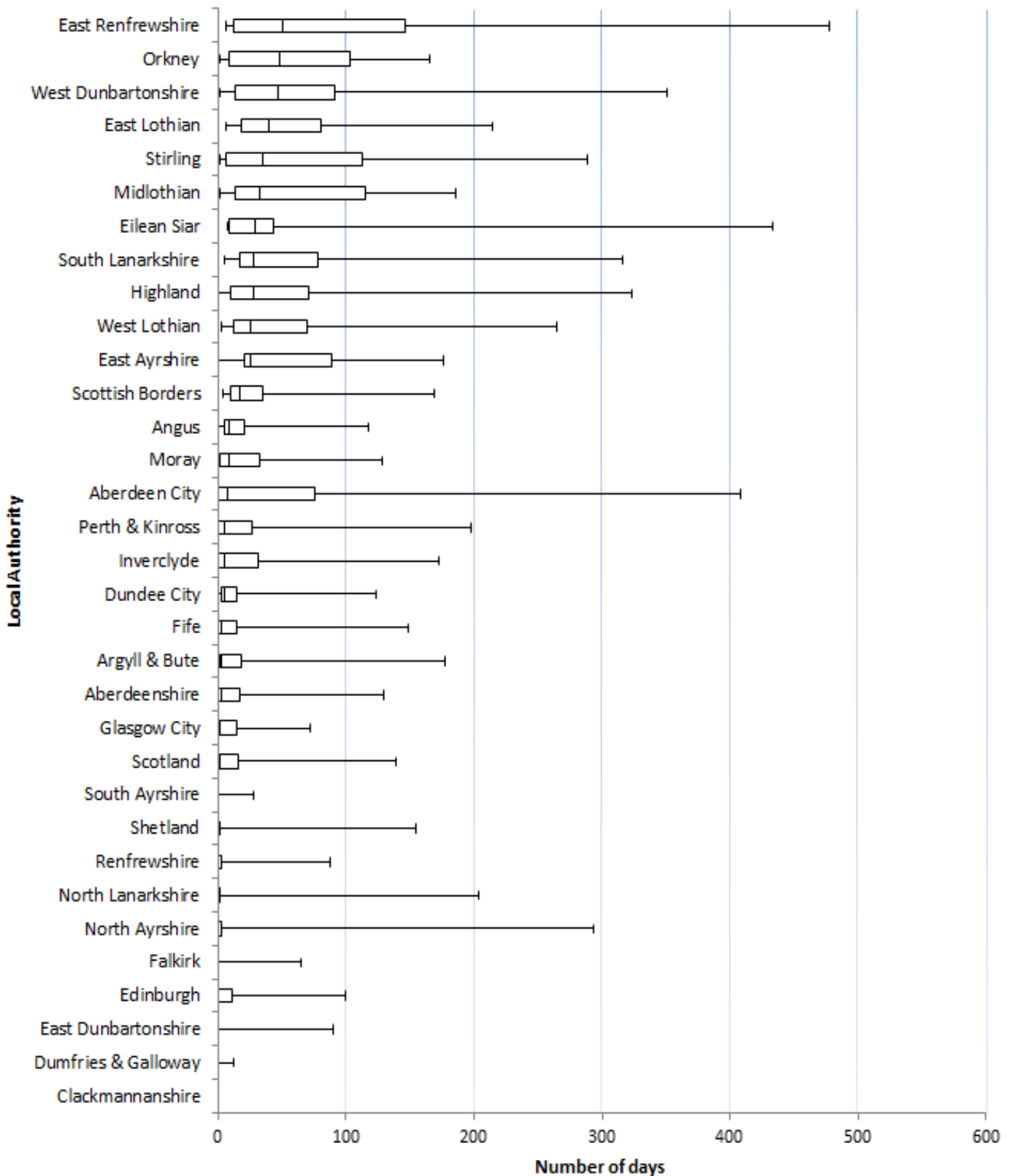
Repeat Approaches

Table 10 shows that, over the last year (1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017), around 45,060 unique households made a Housing Options approach. Of these around 40,945 made only a single approach to a Local Authority, around 3,600 made two approaches and around 520 made three or more approaches. Overall, the rate of repeat approaches for Scotland (for the 2016/17 financial year) is 9% of all households.

Chart 13 shows the variation by Local Authority. Notably, some local authorities had no repeat approaches during this time period and are therefore absent from the chart (including Eilean Siar, Orkney and West Dunbartonshire). Falkirk and Glasgow City have the highest rates of repeat approaches at around 15%.

Chart 13: Percentage of unique households in each Local Authority area making repeat approaches, between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017
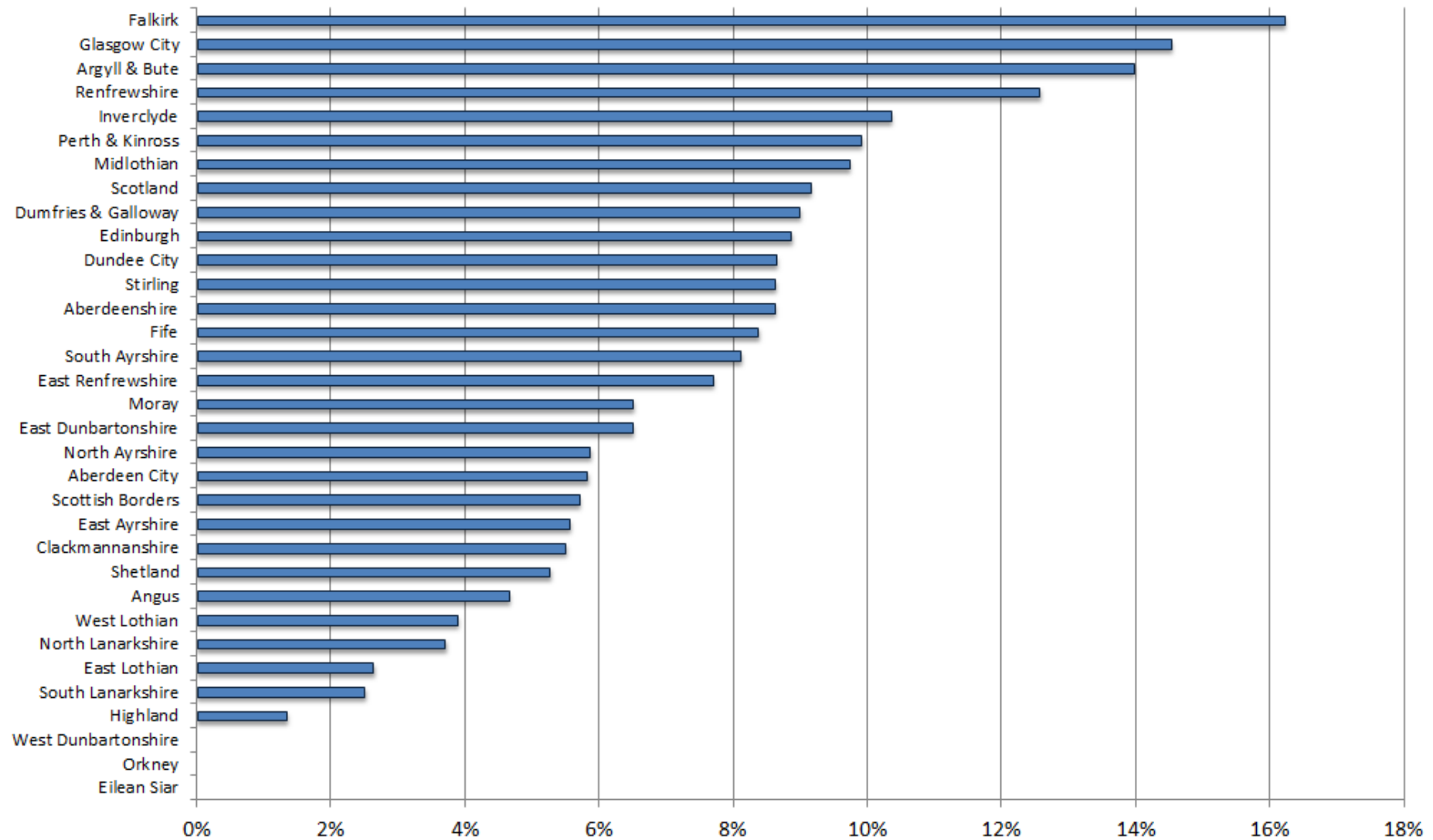
Background

Please see the section on data quality for a discussion of known factors which might affect the tables in this publication.

Where figures have been rounded, the total shown may not equal the sum of its constituent parts.

All tables in this publication are available at: http://www.gov.scot/homelessstats

Why collect this data?
In March 2012, in its report on the 2012 Homelessness Commitment, the Infrastructure and Capital Investment (ICI) Committee recommended that the Scottish Government should consider the development of a measurement tool for homelessness prevention work.

Consultation began with the Homelessness Statistics User Group (HSUG) on the development of the return (known as PREVENT1), and the final version was agreed by Local Authorities in April 2013. In October 2013, the Minister for Housing and Welfare and COSLA decided that the collection of Housing Options activity should be mandatory in order to achieve a comprehensive understanding across all Scottish local authorities. Data capture commenced in April 2014.

Main users of the data are Local Authorities and Scottish Government policy colleagues, academics and third sector parties. User needs are represented by the Homelessness Statistics Users Group, which also sets out to improve the quality of the data collected.

How the data is collected
One month after the end of each quarter, Local Authorities are asked to submit an XML file containing the information as set out in the data specification. This data is then uploaded to the Scottish Government's ProcXed website. Once the data has been validated by our software, the data is passed over to the Scottish Government's Communities Analytical Services.

Data Quality
The data submitted via the agreed specification includes a number of validations. These validations are provided through an XSD schema and have also been implemented into the ProcXed system. Once Local Authorities submit data to the ProcXed system, a number of validations are triggered and warning messages appear. Local Authorities may re-submit data to fix these errors or they can comment on them to explain why they believe the data is valid. On submission of the data to the Scottish Government, each Local Authority is sent a detailed automatic report showing the contents of the data and any remaining errors.

Data Specification

The data specification for the Housing Options (PREVENT1) statistics is available at: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/15257/1529/prevent1

Guidance to help Local Authority officers to record information is available at: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/15257/1529/introductionprevent1

Calculation of Households

We collect information on all people within each application. To group people into household units we filter the people table to contain only the main applicant and their partner. We ensure that there is no more than two people for each application. We generate a unique household reference based on the hashed National Insurance Number, gender and date of birth of the main applicant, and if applicable, their partner.

Housing Options

Local Authorities working on the Housing Options approach have looked at the broad description of providing a tailored service to households and have adopted it for their own uses. Housing Options opens up further areas to explore in attempting to achieve the most sustainable options available for them.

Housing Options Hubs

The hubs were awarded grants to undertake joint training, commissioning joint research, developing joint approaches to prevention, benchmarking and sharing practice. These are supported by quarterly seminars which brings the hubs together to discuss their own developments, receive a Scottish Government update, discuss topical issues of the day and enable other organisations access to the hubs to explain their work and the benefits they can offer. An annual conference with a wider invitation list is also held to promote prevention across all interested organisations.

Hub	Hub Members
Ayrshire and South Hub	North Ayrshire Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, East Ayrshire Council, Inverclyde Council, South Ayrshire Council.
East Hub	City of Edinburgh Council, East Lothian Council, Falkirk Council, Midlothian Council, Scottish Borders Council, West Lothian Council.
North and Islands Hub	Highland Council, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Eilean Siar, Moray Council, Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council.
Tayside, Fife and Central Hub	Perth and Kinross Council, Angus Council, Argyll and Bute Council, Clackmannanshire Council, Dundee City Council, Fife Council, Stirling Council.
West Hub	East Dunbartonshire Council, East Renfrewshire Council, Glasgow City Council, North Lanarkshire Council, Renfrewshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council, West Dunbartonshire Council, Glasgow Housing Association (GHA).

Recommendations from the Scottish Housing Regulator thematic inquiry
These recommendations have been taken from:

http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/publications/housing-options-scotland-thematic-inquiry

The Scottish Government should:
- provide enhanced guidance for Local Authorities on the delivery of Housing Options;
- ensure that guidance provides clarity on how Local Authorities operate Housing Options effectively within the context of homeless duties and obligations; and
- use the recently introduced mandatory data collection for Local Authorities to evaluate the success of policy on Housing Options.

The Scottish Government and Local Authorities should:
- build on the work of the Hubs to further develop clear and supportive practice tools to help practitioners deliver Housing Options effectively.

Local Authorities should:
- ensure all outcomes in Housing Options cases are recorded in accordance with the Scottish Government's recently introduced monitoring system;
- ensure that outcomes achieved through Housing Options are consistent, appropriate and meet people's needs;
- consider opportunities for early intervention and work to prevent homelessness;
- ensure that support assessments are given to people who need them;
- review any use of staff performance targets around reducing numbers of homeless applications to ensure these do not result in behaviours that act against the achievement of good outcomes for people in need;
- minimise the time people wait between initial contact and Housing Options interview;
- support front line officers with appropriate training and clear guidance and procedures;
- ensure they complete a homeless assessment, while progressing Housing Options efforts, where there is clear evidence of homelessness or potential homelessness.
- have a consistent structure for Housing Options interviews to ensure that relevant and important questions are always asked;
- ensure that advice and information is given in a balanced and appropriate way;

- improve the quality of record keeping to ensure accurate records of discussions and outcomes and provide a timely record of discussions and actions for the service user; and

- implement a systematic and consistent system of audit of Housing Options work with the aim of improving service delivery.

Comparisons with other UK Statistics

England

In December 2016, the Department for Communities and Local Government produced an official statistics release on homelessness prevention and relief in England which takes place outside the homelessness statutory framework[9]. The main points from the latest release, covering the period July to September 2016, are:

There were 52,920 successful cases of homelessness prevention or relief outside the statutory homelessness framework in England during, up 3% on 51,300 in the same quarter of 2015.

- 92% were preventions and 8% were cases of relief;

- 48% of cases of homelessness prevention and relief involved the household being assisted to obtain alternative accommodation; the remaining 52% involved the cases being assisted to remain in their existing home;

- Of those cases who were assisted to remain in their own homes, the two most common prevention actions were:

    o Other assistance to remain in the private or social sector (this covers a range of actions such as resolving anti-social behaviour, tackling disrepair and adaptations to property); and,

    o resolving housing benefit problems.

- Of those cases who were assisted to find alternative accommodation, the most common type of alternative accommodation was:

    o Social housing in the form of a Part 6 offer of the local authorities' own accommodation or nomination to a Private Registered Provider and,

    o Supported accommodation.

Scotland

Information is available on the Operation of the Homeless Persons Legislation in Scotland at: http://www.gov.scot/homelessstats

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[9] This is available online at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-and-homelessness-prevention-and-relief-england-april-to-june-2016

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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. Summary tables can be found at:
http://www.gov.scot/homelessstats

☒ may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact Susan.Carsley@gov.scot for further information.

☐ 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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