



PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

Homelessness in Scotland: Equalities Breakdown 2019-20

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Introduction

This statistics release extends the analysis previously published in the [Homelessness in Scotland: 2019-20](#) publication, specifically to provide further breakdowns of data surrounding homelessness applications, use of temporary accommodation and outcomes by age, gender and ethnicity.

A review of the current homelessness collections is being undertaken, and as part of this, consideration will be given to the feasibility of collecting more equalities characteristics information in future.

This publication highlights key findings. A complete set of data with breakdowns are available as Excel workbooks containing the tables and can be downloaded at: <https://www.gov.scot/collections/homelessness-statistics/>

A note on interpreting the figures

It is not possible to make direct links within a reporting year for the different stages of the homelessness process as different households will be at a different stage at different times.

That is, not all applications made in 2019/20 will have an assessment or temporary accommodation placement that year. Similarly, some assessments made in 2019/20 will relate to applications received prior to this; and some temporary placements in 2019/20 will relate to household applications and assessments prior to this also.

To note that it is possible for households to make an application and/or be assessed more than once in the same year, and not all households assessed as homeless enter temporary accommodation.

The term 'homeless households' is used throughout to denote households who have been assessed as (unintentionally or intentionally) homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Although data is captured for the main applicant and a second applicant where applicable, for ease of reporting, findings are based on the equalities characteristics of the main applicant only in this publication. Given the majority of homeless households only contain one adult, this only affects 12% of all households where there are two or more adults.

The characteristics of a household are initially collected by the local authority at the application stage. While it is possible for these characteristics to change between application and case closure, it may not be practical for the data collection to be updated to reflect these changes. Therefore, for a small number of households, the characteristics information reported may be out of date. This is most likely to affect household composition.

Care should be taken when interpreting findings based on small numbers. This is particularly the case for the ethnicity breakdowns where there are a small total number within particular categories e.g less than 100 of mixed/multiple ethnicity.

Impact of coronavirus

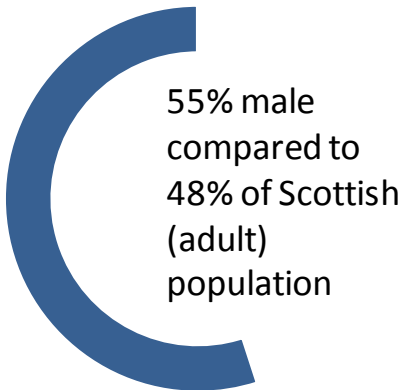
Given the figures in this publication report data up until 31st March 2020 this only crosses over with around a week of coronavirus restrictions and changes in homelessness practices being in place. Therefore, changes in trends in homeless data as result of coronavirus will be minimal over this reporting period, particularly for annual figures.

Comparisons with the Scottish Population

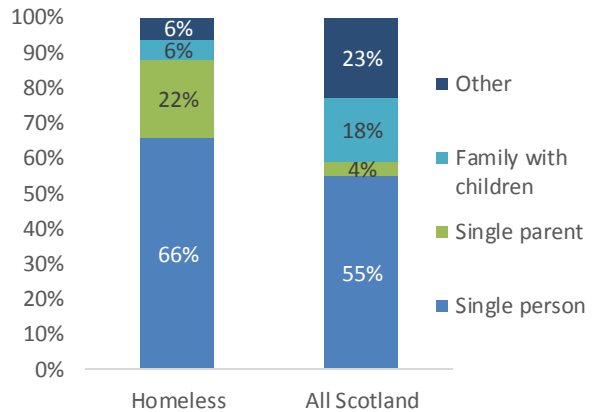
The annual [Homelessness in Scotland: 2019-20](#) publication provided a breakdown of the characteristics of those assessed as homeless. It is useful to understand how these compare to the general Scottish population.¹

Those assessed as homeless are more likely to be:

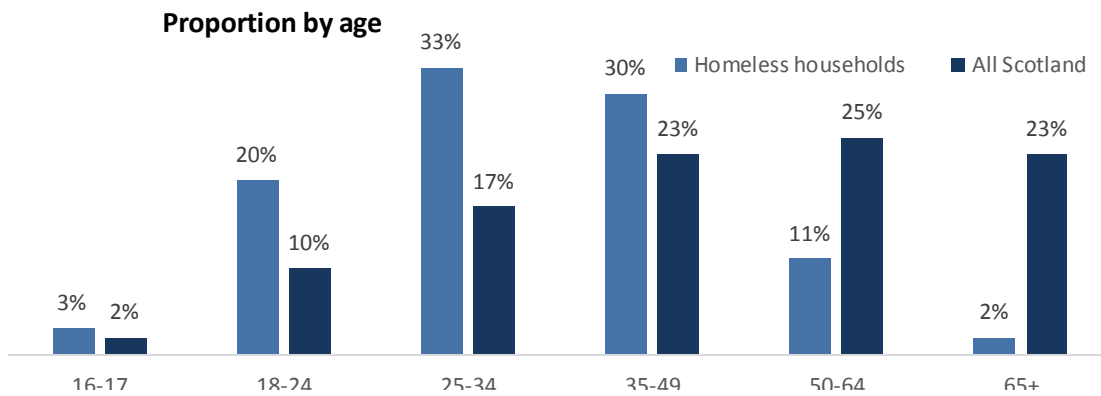
Male



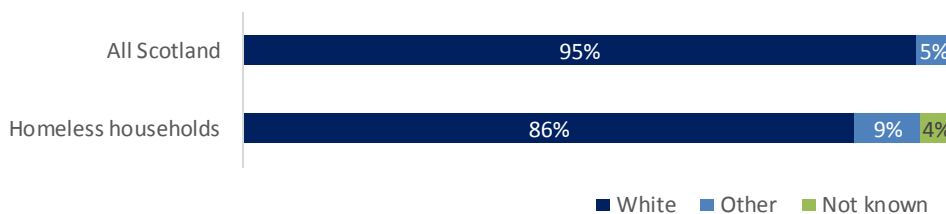
Single adult & single parent households



Younger



Non-White



Note the relatively high proportion (4%) of 'Not known/Refused' in the homelessness returns.

¹ Sources for comparative data for the Scottish population are detailed in the Notes section at the end of this report.

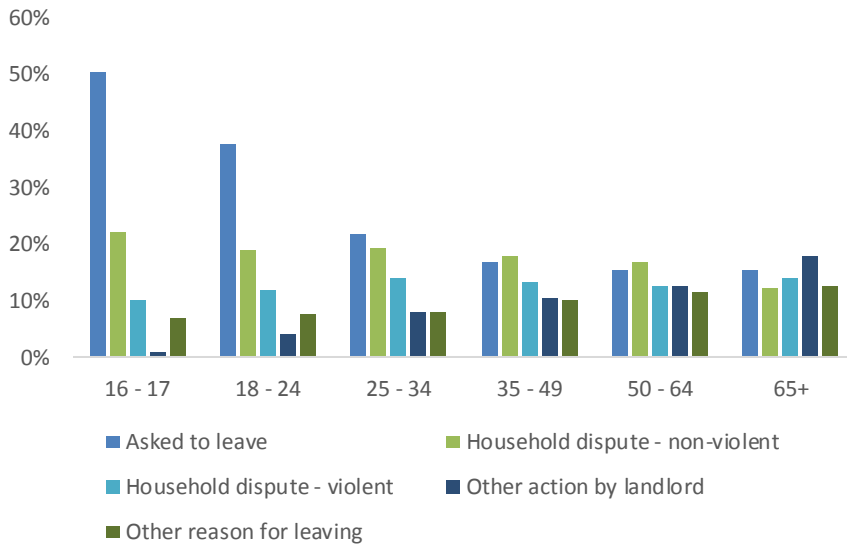
Age

The following provides key findings for aspects of homelessness where there are differences based on the age of the main applicant.

Reasons for homelessness and prior circumstances

Reasons for homelessness vary by age

Reasons for homelessness by age, percentages (2019/20)



The higher proportions of **younger** applicants giving a reason for homelessness as 'asked to leave' ties in with the higher proportion in these age groups citing 'lack of support from family' as additional reasons.

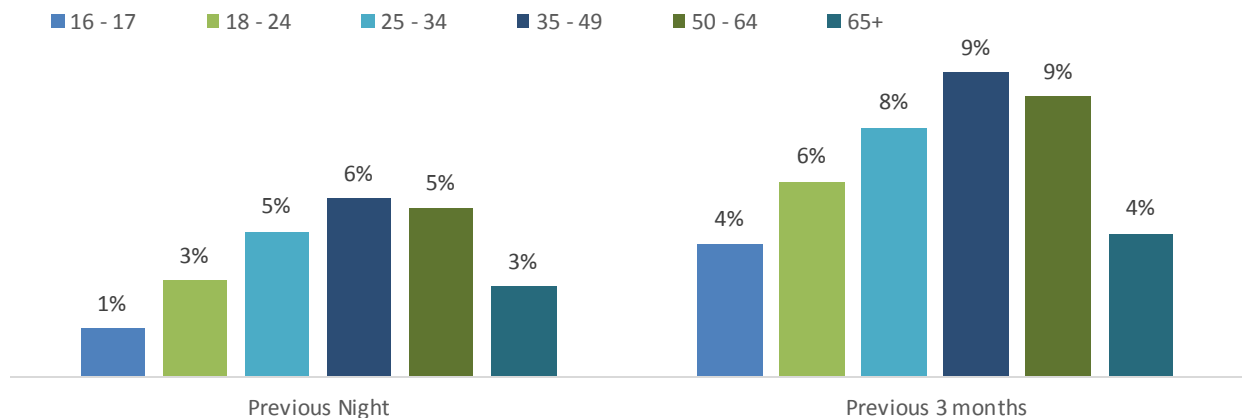
Also related, is that younger applicants are much more likely to report becoming homeless from 'parental / family home'.

Older applicants had a higher proportion stating 'not to do with applicant household' and 'physical health reason' as further reasons for failing to maintain accommodation, which are likely to be linked with the 'other' categories in the chart.

Older applicants are also more likely than other age groups to become homeless from a private rented property - 21% of those aged 50-64 and 25% age 65+ compared to 16% overall.

Rough sleeping is most common amongst 25-64 year olds

Those reporting rough sleeping by age, percentage (2019/20)

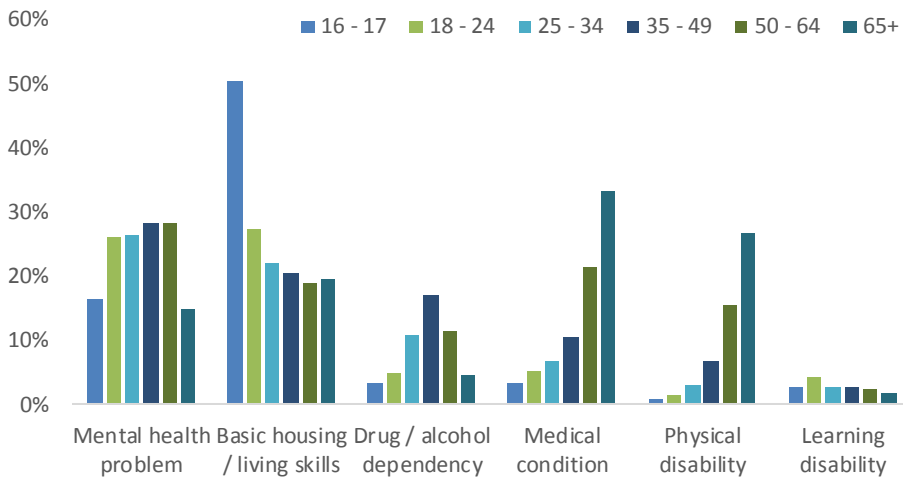


Older applicants were less likely to have **previously been assessed** as homeless in the previous 12 months - 3% of those aged 65 or over compared to 7% of 35-49 year olds, who were the most likely age group to be reassessed as homeless.²

Support needs

Younger applicants much more likely to require basic housing management support

Support needs by age, percentage (2019/20)



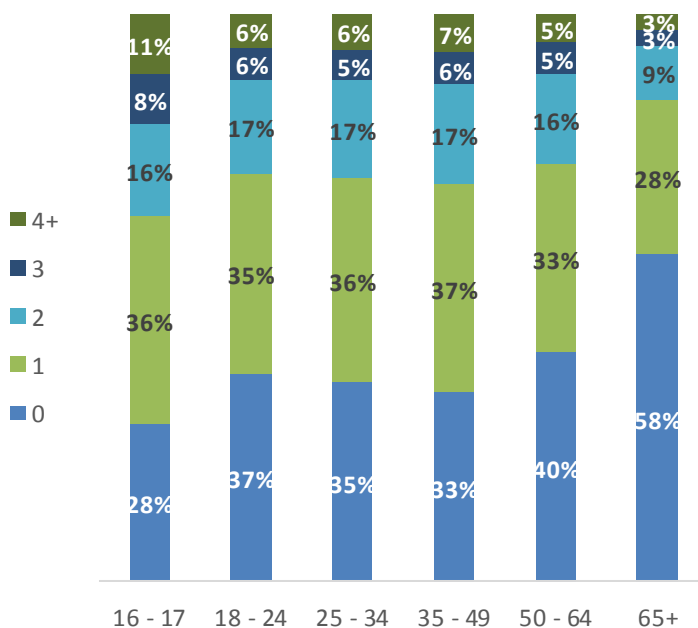
Older applicants are more likely to require a support need due to a physical disability or a medical condition.

Drug/alcohol dependency is most common amongst those aged 35-49.

Temporary accommodation

Older applicants less likely to use temporary accommodation

Number of temporary accommodation placements by age, percentage (2019/20)



16-17 year olds had the highest number of placements and a greater proportion of placements in hostel accommodation than other age groups.

However, the average number of days spent in temporary accommodation for 16-17 year olds was lower than the overall average - 175 days vs 184.

Those aged 35-49 spent the longest time on average (200 days) in temporary accommodation.

Those aged 65+ spent the shortest on time average (133 days) in temporary accommodation.

² An application is defined as reassessed as homeless if the household composition is the same as that for an application previously assessed as homeless in the previous 12 months.

25-49 year olds were most likely to **not be offered** temporary accommodation, accounting for 77% of the 4,595 instances recorded in 2019/20. **Breaches** of the unsuitable accommodation order were most common for this age group with 395 instances out of a total of 495.³

Outcomes

For most age categories, 82-84% secured settled accommodation upon case closure. The proportion of 16-17 year olds securing settled accommodation is lower at 68%, however, a larger proportion of applicants in this age group had an outcome of returning to previous accommodation or moved in with friends/relatives, which are not included within the definition of 'settled accommodation' used for these purposes.

It took longer for cases to complete for 16-17 year olds than any other age group – 269 days on average vs 224 days overall. In contrast, it took an average of 149 days for applicants aged 65+. These findings may be explained by the fact that 16-17 year olds have a higher take up of temporary accommodation than 65+ (72% vs 42%) and that for those aged 65+ who took it up spent, on average, less time in temporary accommodation compared to other age groups.

³ The [Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Order 2017](#), which regulates the standard of temporary accommodation used by local authorities, is breached when a household with a pregnant member and/or child is in unsuitable temporary accommodation for more than 7 days. Unsuitable accommodation was defined by the [The Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Order 2014](#).

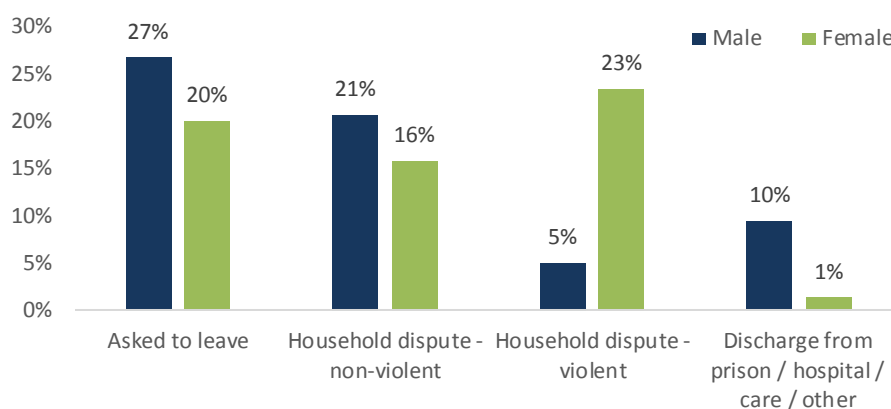
Gender

The following provides key findings for aspects of homelessness where there are differences based on the gender of the main applicant. As this analysis does not capture additional adults in households with multiple adults, it is also useful to consider results broken down by household type.

Reasons for homelessness and prior circumstances

Women more likely to be homeless as a result of a violent household dispute, although a higher percentage of men state a non-violent dispute

Reasons for homelessness by gender, percentages (2019/20)



Single female applicants are most likely to report ‘mental health reasons’ as an additional reason for failing to maintain accommodation (31% vs 26% for single males). ‘Lack of support from family/friends’, ‘drug/alcohol dependency’ and ‘difficulties managing on own’ were more likely to be cited as reasons for single households than other household types. Single male households had the highest proportion with a drug/alcohol dependency (19% vs 12% for single female households).

The property type which a household became homeless from was relatively similar for women and men with the exception of private rented tenancy. 22% of women became homeless from this property type compared to only 11% of men.

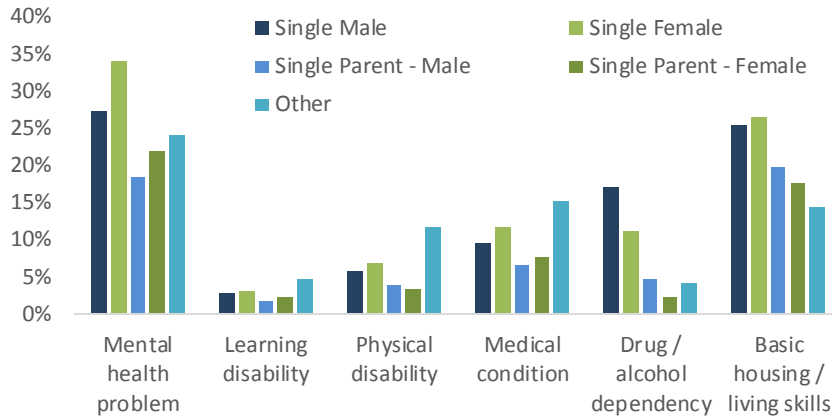
Men were much more likely to experience **rough sleeping** – 76% of those reporting rough sleeping in the previous 3 months were single male households compared to 13% for single female households.

Single male households are more likely to have been **previously assessed as homeless** in the previous 12 months, with 8% of applications reassessed as homeless compared to 5% of single females. 66% of households previously assessed as homeless were single males.

Support needs

Mental health needs more prominent in women, drug and alcohol dependency more prominent in men

Support needs by household type, percentage (2019/20)



'Other' households are more likely than all other household types to have a physical or learning disability or a medical condition.

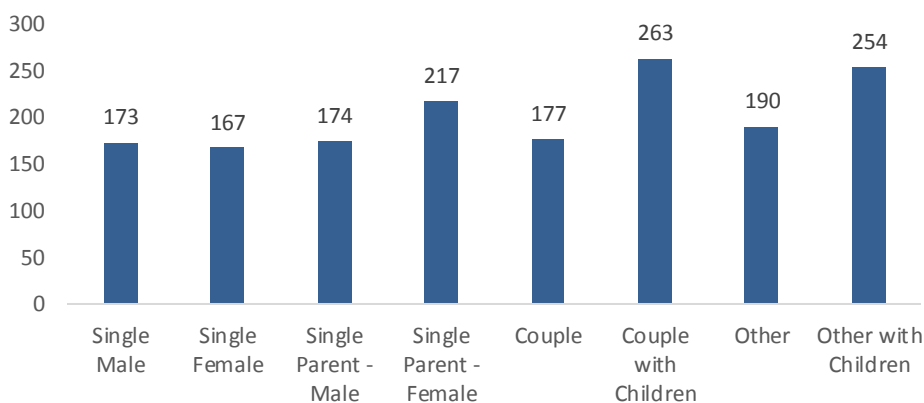
('Other' households include households with 2 adults that are not a couple or households with more than 2 adults.)

Temporary accommodation

Single male households are most likely to use temporary accommodation. 70% of single male households took up temporary accommodation compared to 59% of single female households and 64% overall.

Households with children tend to spend longer in temporary accommodation on average

Average total time (days) spent in temporary accommodation by household type (2019/20)



There is an exception for single male parent households, with an average time more in line with single male households.

81% of instances where households requiring temporary accommodation were not offered temporary accommodation in 2019/20 were single males and 11% single females.⁴

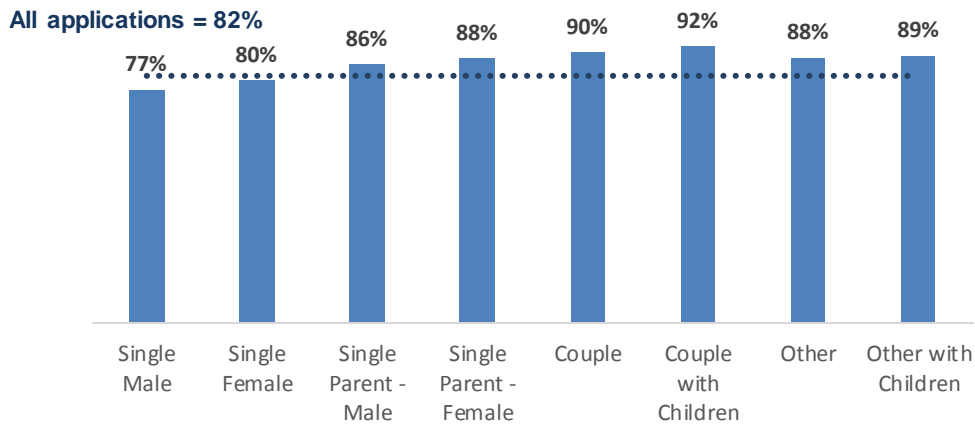
⁴ A local authority has a statutory duty to offer temporary accommodation to any household assessed as homeless. Temporary accommodation must also be offered to households awaiting assessment. The local authority is required to indicate when they do not offer any temporary accommodation to a household and are therefore acting unlawfully.

Outcomes

Female main applicants were more likely to secure settled accommodation than male main applicants – 85% vs 79%. (To note: in household with two or more adults, 61% of main applicants are female. These types of households account for 12% of the total.)

Single adult households are least likely to secure a settled outcome

Proportion securing settled accommodation by household type, percentage (2019/20)



Tying in with time spent in temporary accommodation, it generally took longer for households with children to complete the homelessness process with the exception of single male parents. (Single male 231 days vs single male parent 189 days; single female 216 days vs single female parent 228 days; couple 183 days vs couple with children 253 days; other 200 days vs other with children 246 days.)

Ethnicity

The following provides key findings for aspects of homelessness where there are differences based on the ethnicity of the main applicant.

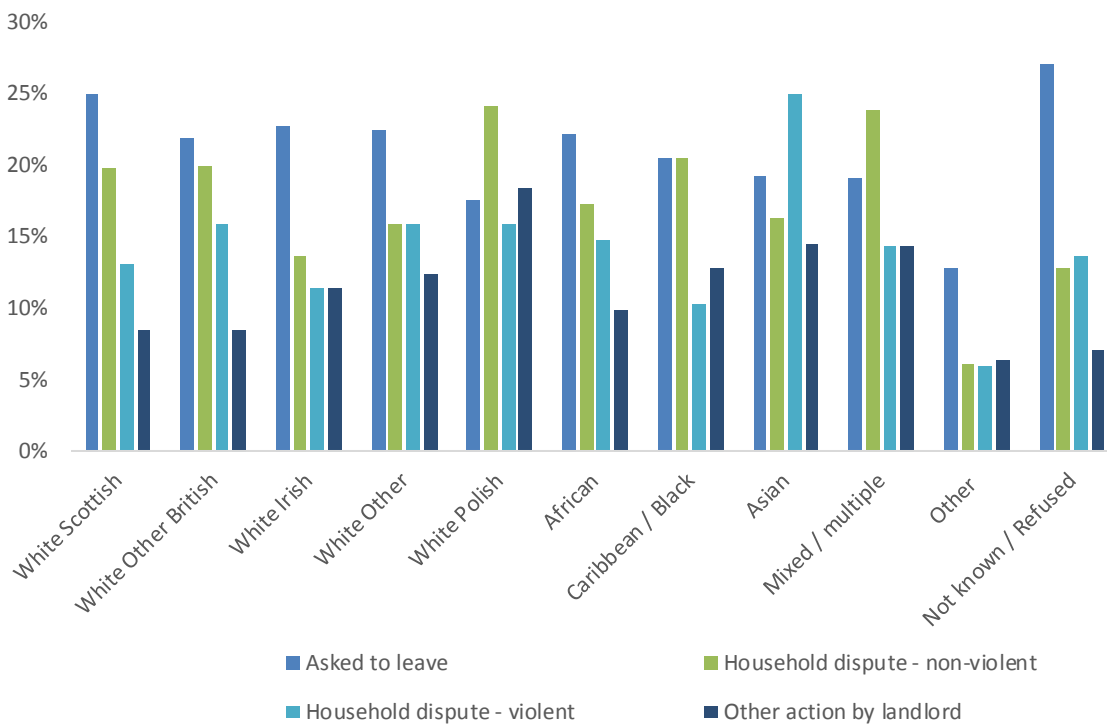
However, differences for aspects of homelessness were not always as clear for ethnicity as other characteristics. This indicated that a housing situation or need may be more closely linked with age, gender or household composition than ethnicity.

Care should be taken when interpreting the findings as some of these are based on small numbers.

Reasons for homelessness and prior circumstances

Asian applicants most likely to experience homelessness as a result of a violent household dispute

Reasons for homelessness by ethnicity, percentage (2019/20)



'Other' ethnic group applicants are much more likely to become homeless from supported accommodation. This is likely due to this group including a large number of applications from households granted refugee or leave to remain in the UK status.

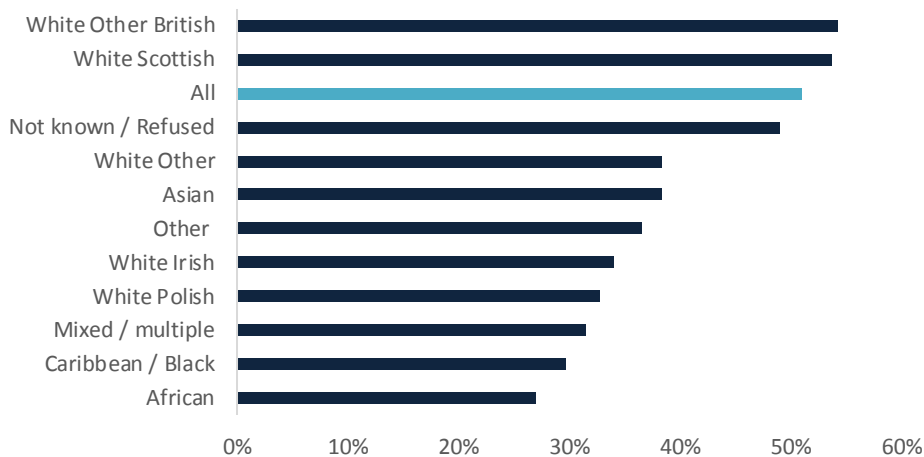
White British (12% of applications from this group), White Irish (11%) and White Polish (11%) applicants were proportionally more likely to report **rough sleeping** compared to 8% for all applications.

White Scottish applicants are proportionally more likely to have been **previously assessed as homeless**, with 6% previously assessed in the last 12 months. This compares to 2-4% for other ethnic groups. 6% of Caribbean or Black applicants and 5% of mixed/multiple ethnicity were reassessed as homeless, though these figures are based on relatively small numbers of applications.

Support needs

White Scottish and White British main applicants more likely to have at least one support need compared to other ethnicities

Proportion with one or more support need(s) by ethnicity, percentage (2019/20)



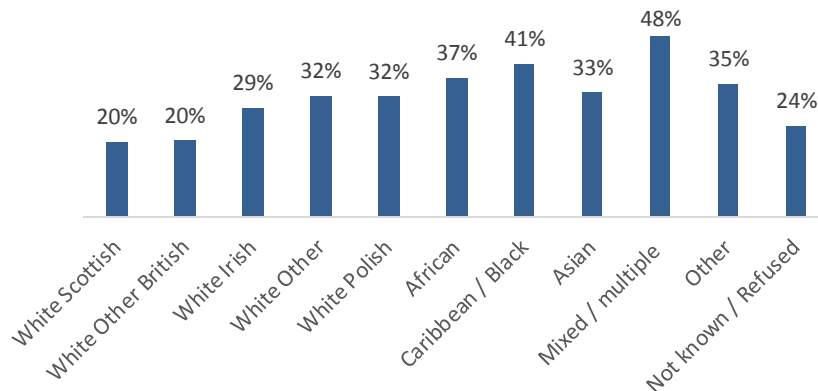
The most common support need amongst White Scottish and White British was mental health problem (29%). This compares to 21% for White Irish and Mixed/multiple ethnicity, the groups with the next highest proportion having this support need.

Temporary accommodation

Applicants with 'other' ethnicity are most likely to have at least one temporary accommodation placement (81%); this may be related to this group containing a larger proportion of applicants granted refugee or leave to remain in the UK status. Those of White Irish ethnicity were least likely to have a temporary accommodation placement (57%).

Use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation was less common amongst White Scottish and White British main applicants

Proportion of temporary accommodation placements taken up that were bed and breakfast accommodation, percentage (2019/20)

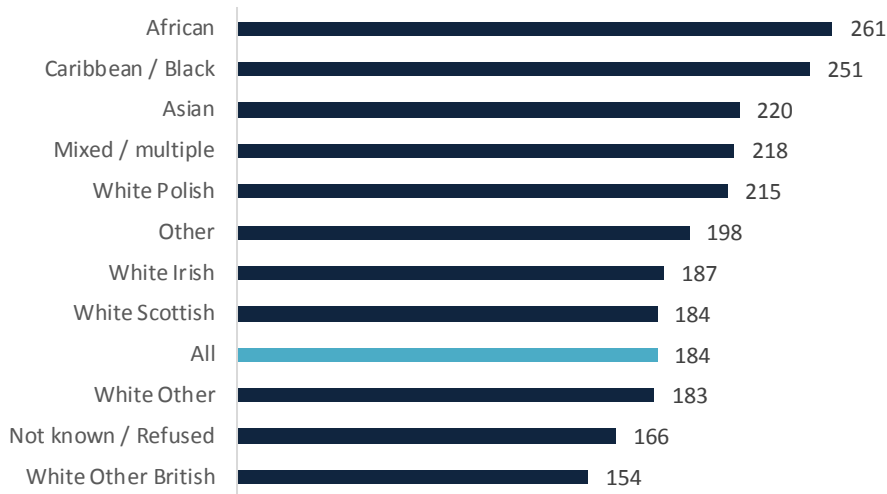


This ties in with the disproportionately low number of breaches seen for these ethnicities (less than 40% of all breaches).

Conversely, there are a disproportionately high numbers of breaches for all other ethnicities, with the exception of White Irish and unknown.

White applicants spent less time in temporary accommodation on average than other ethnic groups

Average total time (days) spent in temporary accommodation, (2019/20)

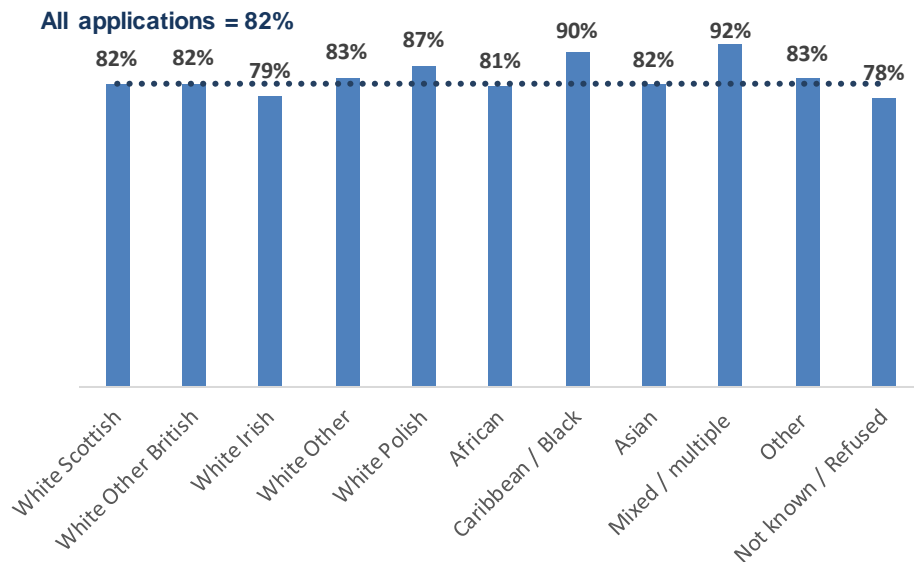


Those with other or unknown ethnicity had disproportionately high levels of not being offered temporary accommodation (13% and 11% respectively).

Outcomes

There was little difference in the proportion of households securing settled accommodation

Proportion securing settled accommodation by ethnicity, percentage (2019/20)



It took 300 days on average from application to case closure for African applicants and 277 days for Caribbean or Black applicants, compared to 224 days overall. This ties in with the higher average time in temporary accommodation for these groups.

Notes

A complete set of tables with breakdowns are available as Excel workbooks and can be downloaded at:

<https://www.gov.scot/collections/homelessness-statistics/>

The statistics included in this publication are based on administrative data collected by local authorities in the course of carrying out their homelessness activities. This data is collected from local authorities and quality assured by the Scottish Government on a quarterly basis. Details about the data we collect, our quality assurance process, and how we engage with users to improve our statistics are outlined in our quality assurance statement.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/data-protection-impact-assessment-and-quality-assurance-statement-for-hl1-hl2-hl3-and-prevent1-data-collections/>

Characteristic information

Information on the characteristics of the main applicant / household are gathered and recorded as part of the application stage of a homelessness case. This information is linked to the temporary accommodation placements associated with that household to enable reporting by characteristic for temporary accommodation. To note, it is not possible to do the same for the aggregate snapshot temporary accommodation data.

Population comparison data

Comparative data for the the proportion of male adults in the Scottish population was taken from [2019 mid-year population estimates](#) produced by National Records of Scotland.

Data for household types was taken from the [Scottish Household Survey 2019](#).

Data for ethnicity was taken from the [Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2018](#).

Known data quality issues

Not all temporary accommodation placements have an associated homelessness application, however, this accounts for a very small proportion only (1%).

There are a small number temporary accommodation cases on the Scottish Government temporary accommodation placement database that are recorded as open but are linked to homelessness applications that we know to be closed. This occurs when a local authority fails to provide an update for these cases after the placement is closed. In these cases we have taken the approach of using the close date of the homeless application as the exit date of the temporary accommodation placement. This may have the impact of inflating the length of time these households are recorded as using temporary accommodation.

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:

Lee Bunce or Sara White
Homelessness Statistics
Telephone: 0131 244 3861
E-mail: homelessness_statistics_inbox@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.

If you would like to be consulted about statistical collections or receive notification of publications, please register your interest at www.gov.scot/scotstat
Details of forthcoming publications can be found at www.gov.scot/statistics

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