



A National Statistics publication for Scotland



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PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

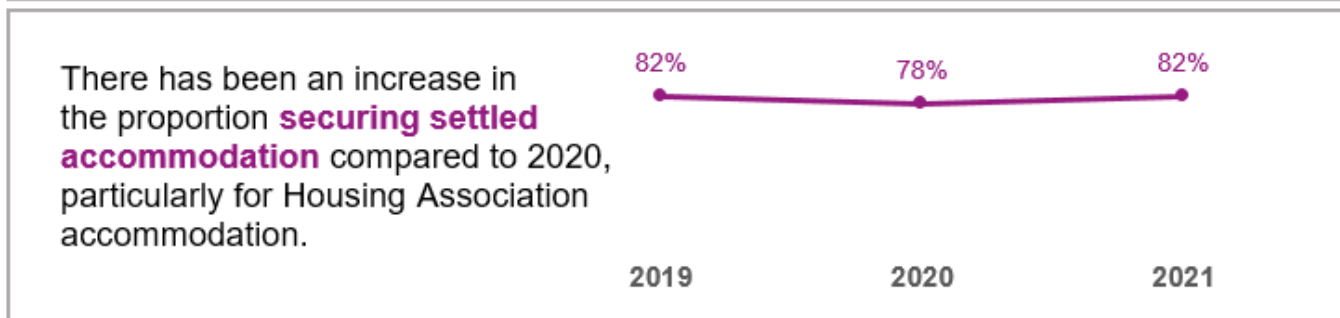
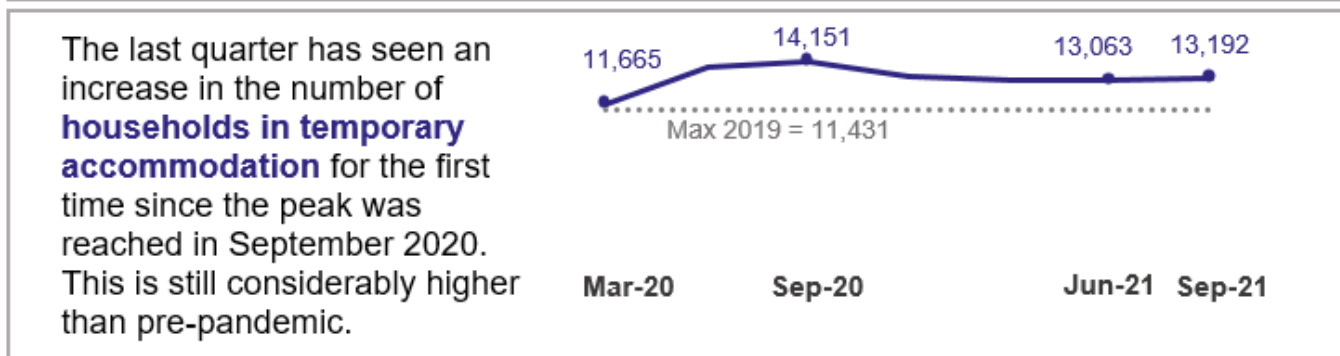
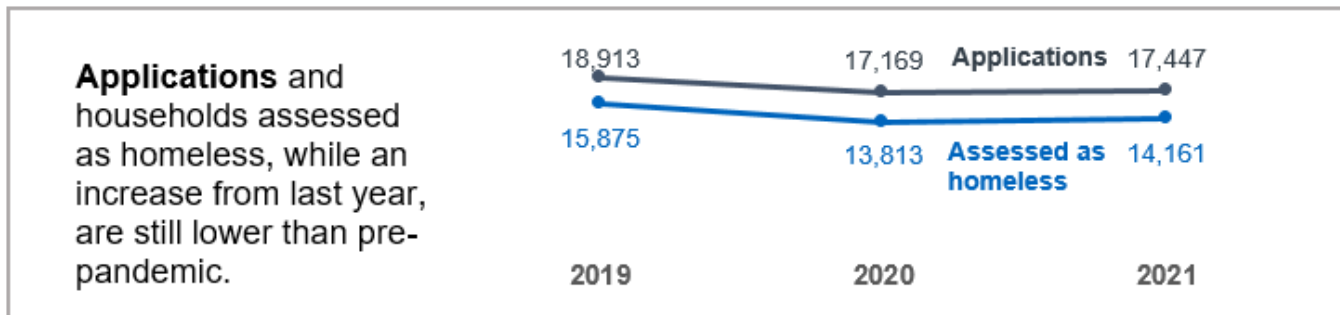
Homelessness in Scotland: Bi-annual update to 30 September 2021

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Main findings: April to September 2021

Comparisons are with the corresponding periods in previous years



Indications that proportions are returning to those similar to pre-pandemic for:

- ❖ Reasons for homelessness, with the exception of being asked to leave, which remains higher
- ❖ Property became homeless from, with an increase from last year in those becoming homeless from private rented tenancies and a decrease from last year in those becoming homeless from friends and family
- ❖ Age and gender profiles of main applicants

Introduction

This statistics bulletin provides information on homelessness in Scotland in the 6 month period from 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021, as well as providing data for previous quarters for context.

Its main purpose is to provide an indication of trends for key aspects of homelessness including applications, assessments, use of temporary accommodation and outcomes ahead of the annual publication, which includes a fuller set of information.

The statistics in this publication are based on administrative data collected by local authorities in the course of processing homelessness applications. A limitation of this approach is that data is not collected for any households that are homeless but do not engage with their local authority. For this reason the statistics in this publication do not necessarily cover the entire homeless population in Scotland. More detail on the data sources we use are included at the end of this publication.

Excel workbooks containing the tables and charts referenced in this publication are available to download at: <https://www.gov.scot/collections/homelessness-statistics/>

A Quick Guide to the Homelessness Process

A household is homeless if they have no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere, or have accommodation but cannot reasonably occupy it. A household is threatened with homelessness if it is likely they will become homeless within two months.

There are **three stages involved in a homeless application in Scotland**:

1. The Application stage where the household first presents to the local authority.
2. The Assessment stage which determines:
 - a. If the household is eligible for assistance. Households with no recourse to public funds are not eligible for homelessness assistance, though may be provided temporary accommodation while their status is assessed;
 - b. whether the household is homeless or threatened with homelessness;
 - c. if the household is homeless, whether this is 'unintentional' or 'intentional'; and
 - d. if unintentionally homeless, whether there is a connection to the local authority to which the application was made and/or to any other local authority.
3. The Outcome stage. A case can be closed only once the local authority has fulfilled its statutory duty or contact has been lost for 28 days.

What is the statutory duty of the local authority?

If a household is unintentionally homeless (or threatened with homelessness), the local authority must offer settled accommodation. Until this is available, the local authority must offer temporary accommodation.

If a household is intentionally homeless (or threatened with homelessness), the local authority has no statutory duty to provide settled accommodation (although they may choose to do so). There is a duty to provide temporary accommodation and advice and assistance to help the household secure alternative accommodation.

Temporary accommodation must be offered while the household is awaiting an assessment decision.

The statutory duty lies with the local authority the household applies to. If a household has no local connection to the one to which it applied, but to another local authority, they may be referred.

A household can accept or refuse offers of accommodation. A local authority's duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households would be fulfilled by an offer that is refused, provided that the offer is a reasonable one.

More information on the duties local authorities have to assist people who are threatened with or experiencing homelessness can be found in the [Code of Guidance on Homelessness](#).

A note on interpreting the figures

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

That is, not all applications made between 1 April and 30 September 2021 will have an assessment or temporary accommodation placement within that same 6 month period. Similarly, some assessments made between 1 April and 30 September 2021 will relate to applications received prior to this; and some temporary placements in this period will relate to household applications and assessments prior to this also. Furthermore, there will be households who entered and exited temporary accommodation within the same reporting period, and therefore will not appear in the end of period snapshot of households in temporary accommodation.

To also note:

- it is possible for households to make an application and/or be assessed more than once in the same period (although this would be extremely unlikely in a 6 month period)
- not all households assessed as homeless enter temporary accommodation

Where the publication refers to 'in the 6 month period' this relates to the period 1 April to 30 September 2021, unless another year has been specified in the text. Where the years 2019, 2020 and 2021 are referred to in the publication (including charts), this relates to the respective 6 month period 1 April to 30 September in each of the years.

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

Impact of COVID-19

In response to the pandemic, local authorities made a huge effort to house all of those in need (including those who would not otherwise be eligible for homelessness support). This included, but was not restricted to, the accommodating of rough sleepers. Where households housed in response to the pandemic have a formal

homelessness application to a local authority and/or have a temporary accommodation placement recorded on management information systems, they will be included in the statistics presented in this publication. If there is no corresponding homelessness application and/or temporary accommodation placement recorded, they will not be included.

Where findings are believed to have been impacted by COVID-19 these have been outlined within the relevant sections.

The period April-June 2020 was particularly unusual given it immediately followed the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the introduction of restrictions. As a result of changing restrictions and the on-going impact of the pandemic, quarterly 2020 figures are particularly variable. Caution should therefore be applied when making comparisons with 2020 figures, however, these comparisons are in themselves useful in observing any changes in trends since the onset of the pandemic.

The Extent of Homelessness in Scotland

Key Points

Compared to the same periods in 2020, there were:



Increases in homelessness applications and households assessed as homeless. These are still lower than pre-pandemic.

17,447 applications (+2%)

14,161 assessed as homeless (+3%)



Decreases in open homelessness cases and households in temporary accommodation

26,001 open cases (-4%)

13,192 in temporary accommodation (-7%)

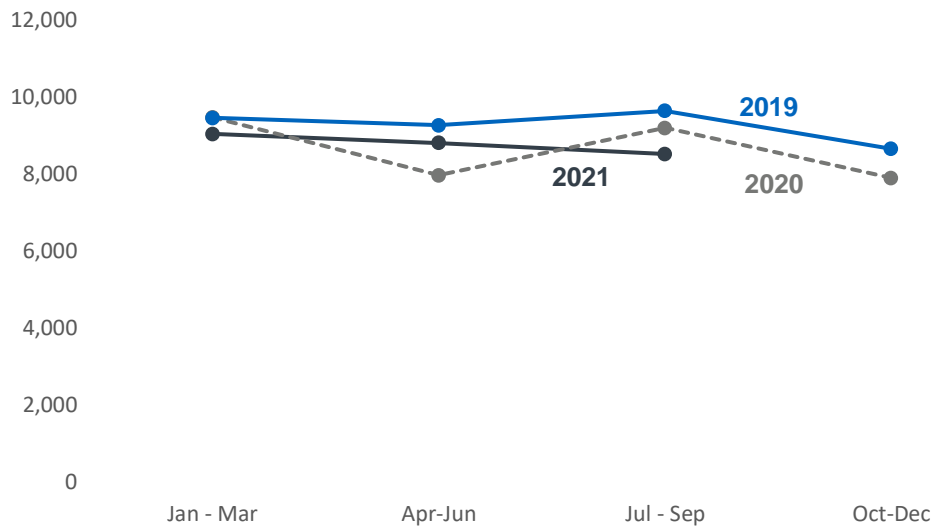
Applications, assessments and households in temporary accommodation

Table A: Annual differences for homelessness applications, assessments and temporary accommodation, April to September 2020 and 2021

	Apr -Sep		Change	
	2020	2021	Number	Percentage
Applications	17,169	17,447	278	2%
Assessed as homeless	13,813	14,161	348	3%
Open cases as at 30 September	27,036	26,001	-1,035	-4%
Households in temporary accommodation as at 30 September	14,151	13,192	-959	-7%

Over the 6 month period 1 April to 30 September 2021, there has been an increase in the number of homelessness applications and households assessed as homeless compared to 2020. However, these figures remain lower than they were pre-pandemic; this is demonstrated for applications in Chart 1.

Chart 1: Homelessness applications still lower than pre-pandemic

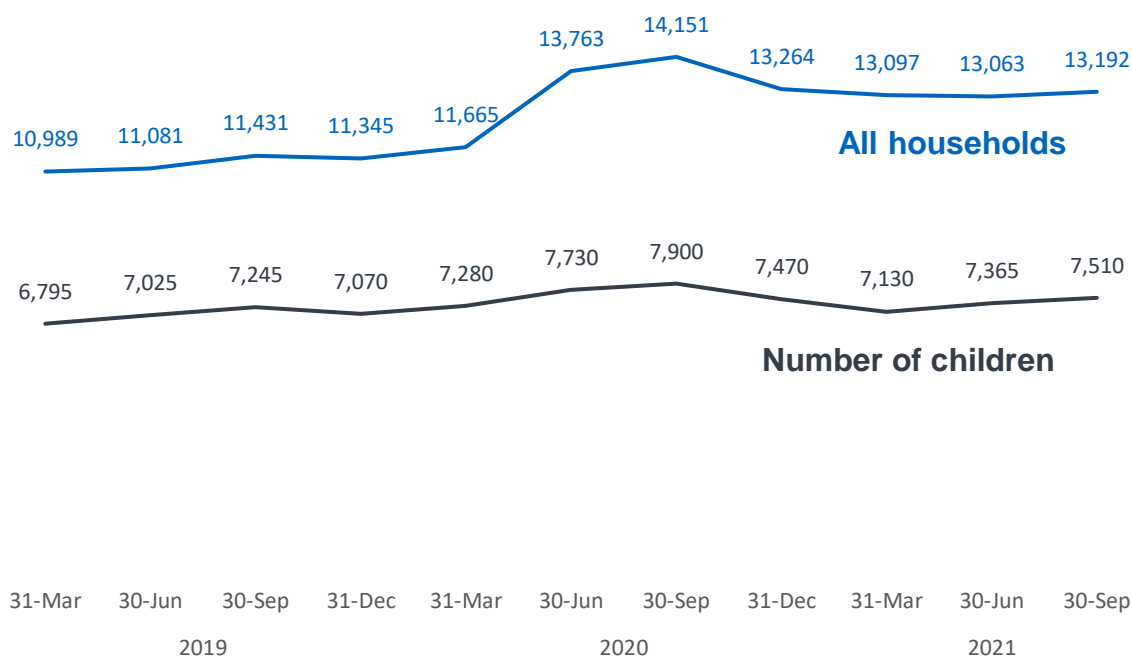


Conversely, decreases have been experienced for open homelessness cases and households in temporary accommodation. There has been a notable increase in the number of homelessness cases closed over this period compared to 2020 which can help explain these decreases. The increase in closed cases may be due to COVID-19 restrictions being lifted, meaning there was increased capacity for households to be moved into settled accommodation.

Following the onset of the pandemic, the number of open homelessness cases reached a peak of 27,036 in September 2020. After two quarters of decline (to 24,835 in March 2021), the last two quarters have seen an increase in open cases again (to 26,001 in September 2021).

As seen in Chart 2, households in temporary accommodation also reached a peak in September 2020 and had been declining until recently. There was an increase in the last quarter for the number of households in temporary accommodation and increases in the last two quarters for households with children and the number of children in temporary accommodation.

Chart 2: Recent increases for those in temporary accommodation



Intentionality

In the 6 month period, 14,161 (82%) applications assessed were found to be homeless or threatened with homelessness, an increase of 348 (3%) compared to 2020. Of all 17,372 assessments, 13,989 (81%) were assessed as unintentionally homeless and 172 (1%) were assessed as intentionally homeless. The small proportions of, and continued numerical decrease in, those assessed as intentionally homeless are due to the changes in legislation from November 2019 which give local authorities the power to assess for intentionality, rather than it being a legal duty to do so.

Local authority differences

Edinburgh has experienced a notable decline in the number of homelessness applications – a decrease of 518 (39%) from 1,327 to 809 in the 6 month period between 2020 and 2021. Similar decreases were experienced for those assessed as homeless (a reduction of 433, 36%) meaning Edinburgh now accounts for only 6% of all households assessed as homeless compared to 9% in 2020. This drop may be due to Edinburgh’s large private rented sector coupled with still lower than pre-pandemic eviction rates, despite eviction bans being lifted. This combined with the increased efforts of Edinburgh’s homelessness prevention team are believed to have prevented 180 households being evicted from the private rented sector in this period.

West Lothian was the local authority with the next biggest numerical decrease of 97 (13%) from 743 to 646 homelessness applications.

Glasgow, on the other hand, has seen an increase of 824 (28%) from 2,917 to 3,741 in the 6 month period and now accounts for 21% of homelessness applications compared to 17% in 2020. This is partly due to the increased number of applications from refugees who have been granted 'Leave to Remain' status. To note: over the 6 month period covered by these statistics, Glasgow was the only Scottish local authority the Home Office directed asylum seekers to while their claim was being processed.

West Dunbartonshire and North Ayrshire experienced the next largest numerical increases in applications (increases of 115, 22% and 96, 20% respectively).

Glasgow has a particularly high increase in the number of closed cases, 1,175 (167%) from 705 to 1,880, noting this is due to increased efforts, in co-operation with Housing Associations, to secure an increased number of settled lets. This is reflected in the increase in the proportion securing a Housing Association property as an outcome.

West Lothian has the largest numerical increase (+92) in households in temporary accommodation while Glasgow has the largest numerical decrease (-250), although their latest figure was an increase on the previous quarter. Edinburgh (-143), Highland (-137), Aberdeen City (-110) and Aberdeenshire (-95) also have large numerical decreases.

Reasons for Homelessness and Prior Circumstances

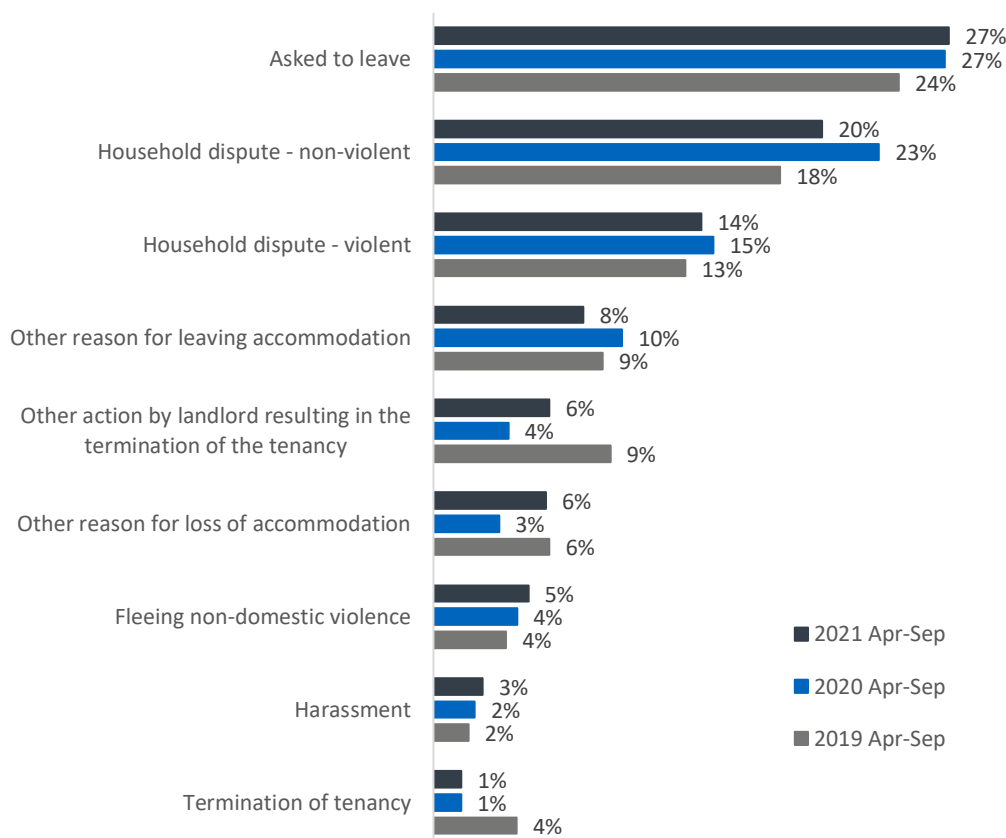
Key Points

- Indications of a return to pre-pandemic proportions in reasons for homelessness and from where households become homeless.
- Rough sleeping numbers remain lower compared to pre-pandemic, although there have been signs of more recent increases.

Reasons

‘Asked to leave’ and ‘household disputes’ remain the most common reasons given for making a homelessness application. The proportion stating ‘asked to leave’ increased following COVID-19 and remains higher than pre-pandemic proportions. Although ‘household disputes’ decreased compared to 2020, this remains higher than pre-pandemic proportions. ‘Fleeing domestic violence’ and ‘harassment’ have both seen an increase from 2019 and 2020. ‘Termination of tenancy / mortgage due to rent arrears / default on payments’ remains lower than pre-pandemic proportions.

Chart 3: Asked to leave still high compared to pre-pandemic levels, while other reasons returning to pre-pandemic proportions

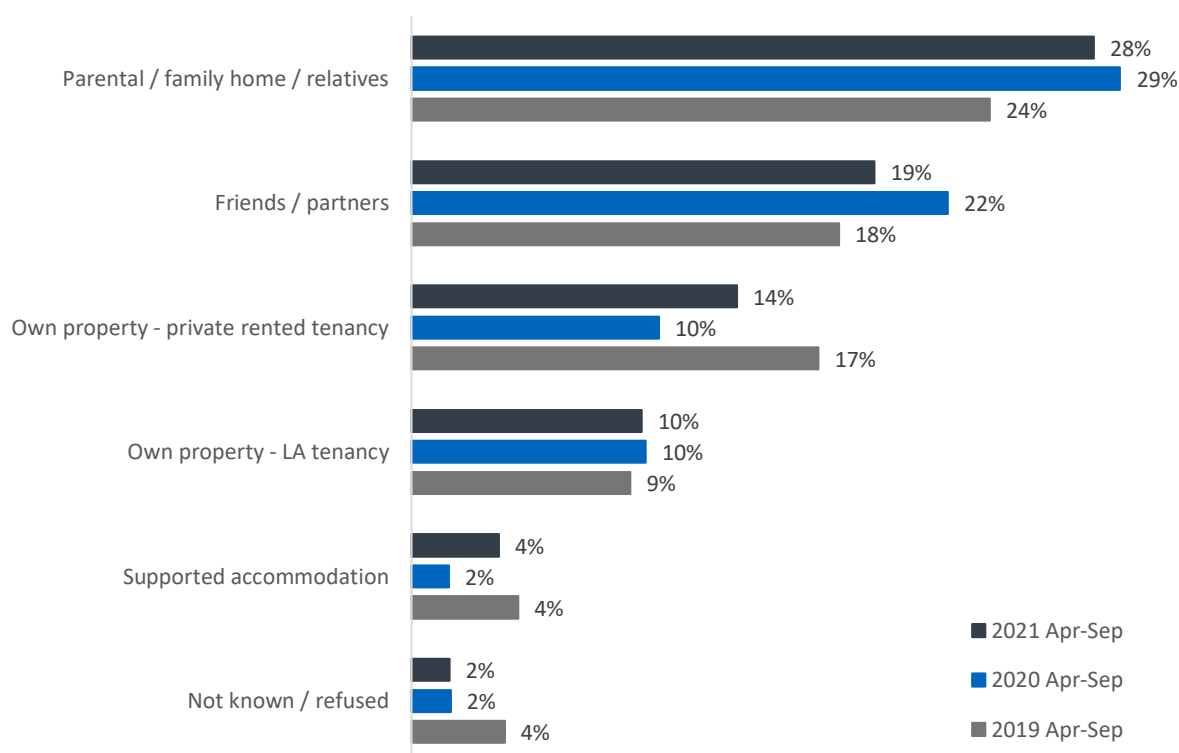


Some applicants (75%) also provided additional reasons for homelessness. Of these, the biggest change in percentage share was for 'not to do with the applicant household' - from 44% to 48% - with 'lack of support from family/friends' experiencing the greatest decrease from 25% to 21%.

Previous property

Similarly, there appears to be a bit of return to pre-pandemic proportions from where people are becoming homeless. This is particularly the case for those becoming homeless from friends/partners. There has been less of a decrease in those from parental/family home compared to 2020. Those becoming homeless from a private rented tenancy have increased from last year, although this remains still quite a bit lower compared to pre-pandemic proportions.

Chart 4: Increase in the proportion becoming homeless from private rented tenancies with an decrease in those from friends and partners



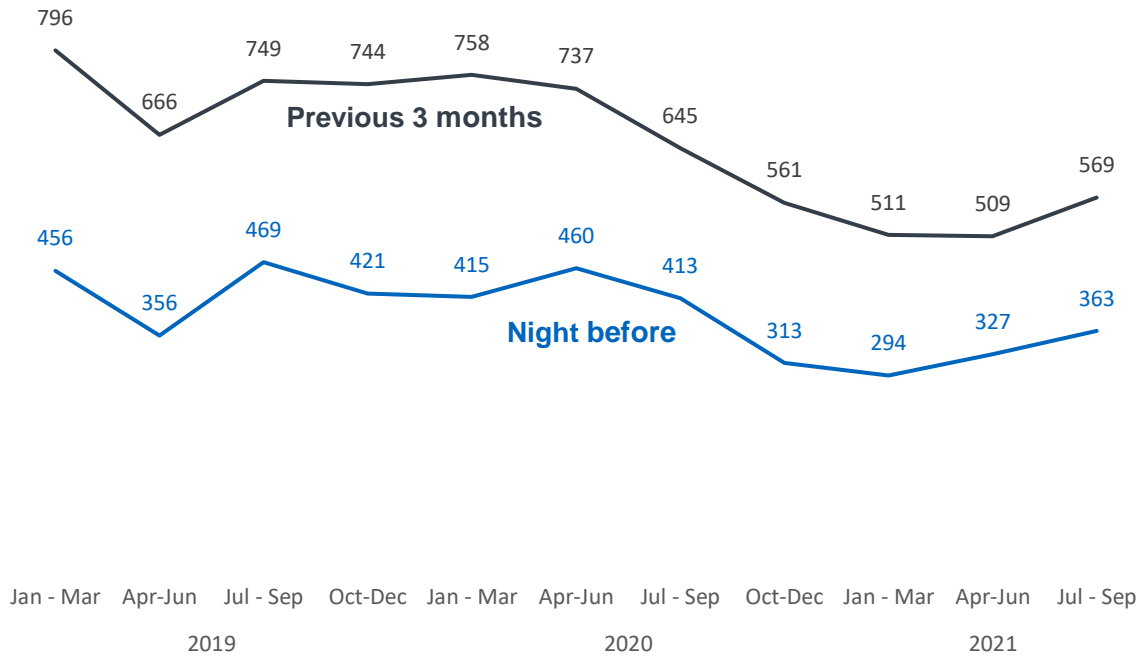
The decline in proportions becoming homeless from friends and partners mirrors the decreases in those becoming homeless following a household dispute. The increase in those becoming homeless from a private rented tenancy may be due to the ceasing of the ban on evictions which were lifted from 17th May 2021, in line with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

Rough sleeping

Between April and September 2021, 690 (4% of all applications) households reported rough sleeping the night before and 1,078 (6% of all applications) in the

previous 3 months. Numbers reporting rough sleepers remain smaller than those pre-pandemic, although there have been some recent increases as demonstrated in Chart 5.

Chart 5: Recent increases in the reporting of rough sleeping following a period of decline



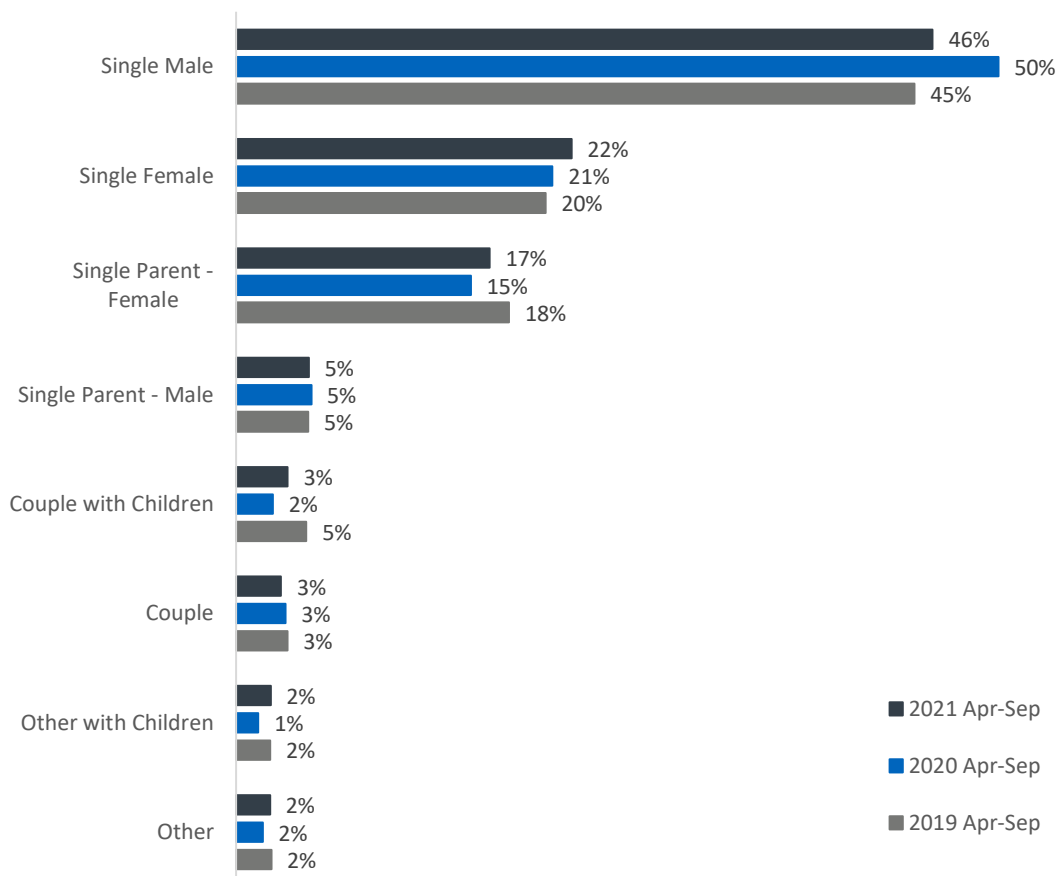
Characteristics

Key Points

- Indications of a return to pre-pandemic levels for age and gender profiles of main applicants as well as household types.
- Decrease in the proportion of White main applicants and an increase for those of Asian ethnicity.

In 2021, 9,529 (68%) homeless households are single people. This compares to 71% in 2020, with the decrease in proportion driven by single male households which experienced a drop from 50% to 46%. There has been an increase in the proportion of households with children from 24% to 27%, which is still lower than the 30% pre-pandemic.

Chart 6: 2021 indicates a return to pre-pandemic proportions



55% of main applications were male and 45% female in 2021. There have been increases in the proportion of those aged 50 and over compared to the previous year (12% to 14%). Consistent with other findings, there have been some movements in

the age and gender profiles in 2021, bringing these back in line with proportions similar to 2019.

85% of main applicants in 2021 stated they were of White ethnicity – a decrease from 90% in 2020, and lower than 87% in 2019. There has been an increase in proportion from 1% to 2% in main applicants of Asian ethnicity, although it should be noted this relates to just over 100 households and caution should be applied when considering changes based on small numbers.

Temporary Accommodation

Key Points

- There were 310 instances of households not being offered temporary accommodation between April and September – 28% less than 2020
- There were 375 breaches of the unsuitable accommodation order – 70% more than 2020 (to be treated with caution see notes below)

Sources of temporary accommodation data

Since 2002, local authorities have provided aggregate snapshot information relating to households in temporary accommodation. While this allows trends to be explored over time, understanding around individual placements and how these relate to assessed households is not possible from the snapshot data. Therefore, since 1 April 2016 placement level information on households in temporary accommodation has been provided to enable a more rounded picture of the use of temporary accommodation.

The snapshot data shows 13,192 households in temporary accommodation as at 30 September 2021. The placement level returns show that there were 13,513 temporary accommodation placements open at 30 September 2021 – 321 (2%) higher than the snapshot returns. Differences may be explained by the returns including different types of temporary accommodation and the placement level returns experiencing a lag in cases being closed.

Both of these figures show households in temporary accommodation at a point in time and, as such, will include those who have recently entered temporary accommodation as well as those who have been in temporary accommodation for a longer period of time (including prior to the reporting period).

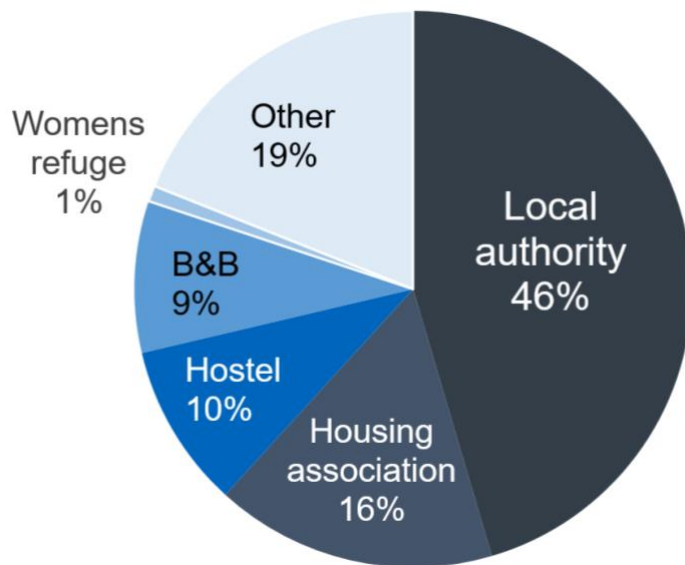
Households entering and exiting temporary accommodation

Between April and September 2021, 10,620 households entered temporary accommodation while 8,926 exited – this is a net difference of +1,694 (+16%) households in temporary accommodation over this period.

Glasgow was the largest numerical difference with 684 more households entering than exiting. The next largest was West Lothian with a net difference of +276.

Types of temporary accommodation used

Chart 7: Types of temporary accommodation used



Hostel accommodation accounted for 10% of all temporary accommodation placements as at 30 September 2021, the same as 2020 and less than the 14% in 2019. During the on-going pandemic, Bed & Breakfast usage peaked at 10% as at 30 September 2020 and has been between 8% and 9% since.

Local authority (furnished), housing association, other and women's refuge accommodation remain more commonly used for households with children compared to those overall. Hostel and bed and breakfast accommodation are used much less for households with children.

Refusals

A household can choose to refuse an offer of temporary accommodation made by the local authority. There were 3,600 refusals of temporary accommodation between April and September 2021. This is 105 (3%) less than the same period for 2020. Refusals were particularly high in July-September 2020 (2,045) and April to June 2021 (1,926).

Failure to provide temporary accommodation

A local authority is required to indicate when they do not offer any temporary accommodation to a household and are therefore acting unlawfully.

Between April and September 2021, there were 310 instances of households not being offered temporary accommodation – 140 for April-June and 170 July-September. These figures are considerably smaller than those reported pre-pandemic, driven largely by the reduction in Glasgow as a result of steps taken to improve access to emergency accommodation, including re-purposing hotels during the pandemic.

A total of 6 local authorities reported at least one instance of not offering accommodation over the 6 month period in 2021, with Edinburgh reporting the majority (290). The others were Angus, Fife, Glasgow, Orkney and South Lanarkshire.

Breaches of the unsuitable accommodation order

Important! Reporting inconsistencies, due to uncertainty caused by the extension to Unsuitable Accommodation Order (UAO) legislation in May 2020, combined with the introduction of COVID-19 exception around the same time, persist. Therefore, these figures should continue to be treated with caution. See below for further detail.

COVID-19 exceptions were still in place up to 30 September 2021 (inclusive), and so will cover the whole reporting period in this publication.

There were 375 breaches of the unsuitable accommodation order (UAO) reported across 8 local authorities between April and September 2021. This is an increase of 155 compared to the same period in 2020 with the 250 reported in July to September being the highest in the series.

Fife accounted for 195 over the 6 month period; Glasgow 110; and East Lothian and West Lothian each around 30.

The increases may be explained by the extension of the UAO legislation to all households in May 2020, especially for local authorities such as East Lothian and Fife who, prior to this, reported very few breaches.

Edinburgh's breaches have reduced considerably since the pandemic, likely related to the application of COVID-19 exceptions.

Changes in legislation

Prior to 5 May 2020, a breach was encountered when a household with a pregnant member and/or child was in unsuitable temporary accommodation for more than 7 days. From 5 May 2020, this was extended to all households.

Covid-19 exceptions

Temporary exceptions were put in place to allow local authorities to provide households with accommodation in response to COVID-19. The legislation noted that a placement was not considered unsuitable if:

- a person in the household has symptoms of coronavirus and the household requires to isolate; or
- the accommodation is required to provide temporary accommodation to ensure that a distance of 2 metres can be maintained between a member of the household and a person who is not a member of the household; or
- the local authority is unable to place the household in suitable accommodation as a result of the impacts of coronavirus on temporary accommodation supply in the area, provided that where a household includes a child or a pregnant

woman the household is not placed in unsuitable accommodation for more than 7 days.

(To note: the first two of these came in to effect in May 2020 and the third came in to effect in September 2020.)

A household placed in unsuitable accommodation for longer than 7 days where an exception did not apply must still be recorded as a breach.

Outcomes

Key Points

- 13,265 homelessness cases assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness were closed in the period April to September 2021 – an increase of 32% compared to 2020.
- The proportion of unintentionally homeless households securing settled accommodation increased from 78% to 82%.
- There was a notable increase in the proportion moving into RSL accommodation from 27% to 33%.

Homelessness cases are closed once the local authority has fulfilled its statutory duty or contact has been lost with the applicant household for 28 days. Local authorities provide information on the circumstances and outcomes of homelessness cases once they have been closed.

Cases closed

There was a sizable increase in the number of applications assessed as unintentionally homeless which closed between April and September 2021 – 13,265, a 32% increase compared to the 10,030 closures over the same period in 2020 for those assessed as homeless.

It is likely that this increase is due to local authorities being more able to move households into settled accommodation in line with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

Lost contact

Contact was maintained for the vast majority of households assessed as unintentionally homeless (96%, a slight increase from last year) and intentionally homeless (94%, a slight decrease from last year, bearing in mind these are based on relatively small numbers).

Outcomes

Of the 12,745 unintentionally homeless cases that closed in the 6 month period (where contact was maintained and the outcome known), 82% secured settled accommodation. Settled accommodation here is defined as a local authority tenancy, a tenancy with a registered social landlord or a private rented tenancy.

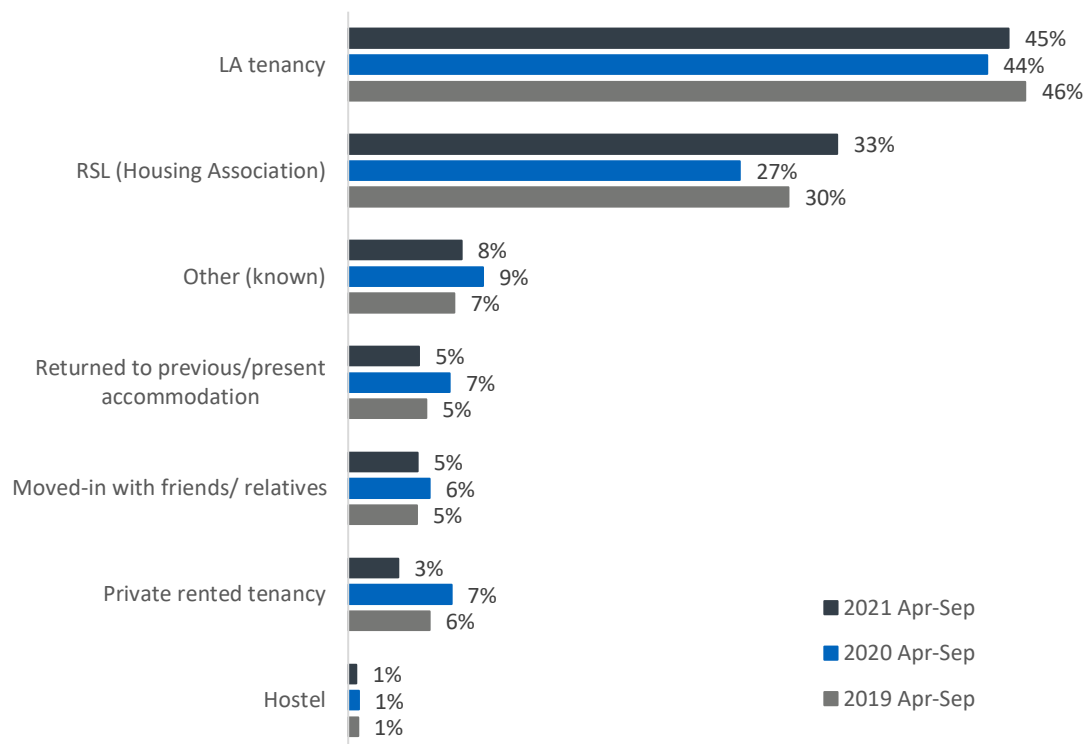
This is an increase from 78% over the same period last year, although it should be noted that the period April-June 2020 had particularly low proportions achieving a

settled outcome (74%) likely due to the impacts of COVID-19 meaning it was difficult to move people into settled accommodation.

In particular, between April and September 2021 there was a much higher proportion moving into RSL accommodation – 33% compared to 27% over the same period in 2020 (this was 30% in 2019). This movement has been influenced by the prior mentioned efforts of Glasgow City in co-operation with the Housing Associations.

There was a decline in people returning to previous accommodation, back in line with pre-pandemic proportions. However, the proportion with accommodation in a private rented tenancy was only 3% - the lowest in the series.

Chart 8: A larger proportion of households moved into RSL accommodation



The proportion of those intentionally homeless securing settled accommodation also increased – from 38% to 52%. However, these are based on relatively small numbers (which have decreased as a result in changes in intentionality legislation), and are therefore particularly susceptible to natural fluctuation.

Housing support assessments

Upon closing a homelessness case, local authorities are required to assess whether any housing support services are required by the household for any cases assessed as unintentionally homeless and where it has reason to believe that support would be beneficial. It also has a duty to provide that support if needed.

Across Scotland, assessments for housing support needs were carried out in 82% of cases where there was a duty to assess between April and September 2021 – an increase from 77% last year. Support was provided for 44% of all cases, although support was not provided for 7% who were identified as needing it (this is a decrease from 10% last year). In 17% of cases where there was a duty to assess, no assessment took place and no support was provided.

Notes on Tables

All of the tables and charts in this publication are available in electronic format at: [Homelessness statistics page](#)

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.

[Data Protection Impact Assessment and Quality Assurance Statement for HL1, HL2, HL3 and PREVENT1 data collections](#)

Updates to previous statistics

The data we use in this publication is collected from local authorities on a quarterly basis. As a result these figures are updated on an on-going basis and may differ from those previously published. This may be a result of 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.

For example, this publication estimates that 9,474 homeless applications were made in January to March 2021, but our annual ‘Homelessness in Scotland: 2020 to 2021’ publication gave a figure of 9,465. This is a difference of 9 applications, or approximately 0.1%. A table comparing the annual number of applications is included in the tables accompanying this publication.

Known data quality issues

There are other data quality issues of which we are aware:

- There are a small number of 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 homelessness 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.

- Snapshot data about temporary accommodation provided by Fife does not include all temporary accommodation placements used, and therefore understates the number of households in temporary accommodation in Fife.
- There were inconsistencies between local authorities in the reporting of breaches of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2020. This was due to changes in legislation – extending breaches from households with only a pregnant women and/or child(ren) to all households – and exceptions put in place in response to COVID-19. The urgency of having to adapt to the revised legislation without any specific guidance means that some local authorities reported being unclear as to how these related to the COVID-19 exceptions in place. Local authorities were able to capture different levels of information regarding breaches around this time (i.e. whether an exception could or could not be applied) which has implications for data comparability.

Comparability with Other UK Homelessness Statistics

Because of the substantial differences in legislative frameworks and data collection methods that exist across the UK care needs to be taken in comparing homelessness statistics across the four countries.

In September 2019 the Office for National Statistics published the [UK homelessness: 2005 to 2018](#) report, which assessed of the comparability and coherence of existing UK government homelessness data sources.

Also published in September 2019 (updated December 2021) the [GSS Homelessness Interactive Tool](#) allows users to explore the similarities and differences between how key concepts relating to homelessness are defined across the four UK countries. It allows users to explore an applicants' process through each of the different homelessness systems and enables users to visualise the different definitions of homelessness currently being used for official statistics and how these compare.

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 was abolished (see Paragraph 24). The Local Authority can then test 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 it 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: [Code of Guidance on Homelessness](#).

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 was more long-term in scope, notably introducing a phasing out of the distinction between priority and non-priority applications. 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:

Unintentionally homeless [and in priority need]¹

¹ If before 31st December 2012.

Provide temporary accommodation until settled accommodation has been secured.

Settled accommodation is defined as:

- A Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST)
- A Private Residential 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.

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

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

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

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

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 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: [Code of Guidance on Homelessness](#)

The 2014 Order specifies that the local authority may provide an applicant with temporary accommodation which does not meet the requirements set out by Article 5 of the Order, but for no longer than 14 days in total in respect of that person's application. The [Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Order 2017](#), which came into force in October 2017, reduces the number of days from 14 to 7 days before a 'breach' is recorded for the applicant remaining in such unsuitable accommodation.

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. Further information on these regulations can be found at:

[Housing Support Duty to Homeless Households - guidance for local authorities.](#)

A National Statistics Publication for Scotland

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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.

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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 [Homelessness statistics - gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot) (www.gov.scot)
- 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.

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