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PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

HOMELESSNESS IN SCOTLAND: Bi-annual update: 1 April to 30 September 2016

Update to the frequency of future publications

After consulting with users on the frequency of future publications, we have reduced publications from quarterly to bi-annually. This will free up resources for other analyses.

Under the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#), we publish a timetable of statistical releases for twelve months ahead¹.

Comments by email are welcomed to: homelessness_statistics_inbox@gov.scot

¹ The forthcoming publication timetable is available at:
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/ForthcomingPubs>

Introduction

This bulletin provides information on Scottish Local Authority homelessness applications, assessments and outcomes in the period from 1 April to 30 September 2016. It also provides data on the number of households in temporary accommodation as at 30 September 2016, together with data on the implementation of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation)(Scotland) Order 2014².

The purpose of this bulletin is to highlight key quarterly and bi-annual trends. The most recent annual publication – published on 28 June 2016 – provides a more in-depth analysis of the causes of homelessness in Scotland and the characteristics of the households who apply to Scottish Local Authorities for homelessness assistance. As a consequence, this bulletin provides mainly summary tables and charts. Excel workbooks with the tables and charts from this publication are available for download at <http://www.gov.scot/homelessstats>.

In November 2012, the Scottish Parliament approved the Homelessness (Abolition of Priority Need Test) (Scotland) Order 2012. This meets the homelessness commitment and ensures that from 31st December 2012 onwards, Local Authorities no longer apply the priority need test to homeless households. As a result, all unintentionally homeless households in Scotland are entitled to settled accommodation. With the priority need test now abolished, information on this aspect of the homelessness legislation is no longer collected.

This publication also includes information on the Housing Support Services (Homelessness) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. These regulations came into force on 1st June 2013. These regulations place a duty on Local Authorities to assess the need for housing support for every applicant assessed by the Local Authority as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness, and who the Local Authority has reason to believe would benefit from housing support services as prescribed in the regulations. If an assessment of a need for support is made, Local Authorities must ensure the housing support services are provided (see the section [Housing support regulations](#)).

Please note that this bulletin also updates previously published figures. There may be delays in some cases being reported to the Scottish Government due to IT issues, quality assurance processes and delayed entry of data – particularly at the end of the quarter. As a result, it is estimated that the headline number of applications may change by as much as 3% (up to around 300 cases for the current quarter for example) between first and subsequent publications (see the section [Notes on the Statistics](#)).

² The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014 replaces the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004. The 2014 order repeats the 2004 order but additionally includes the provision that accommodation is unsuitable if it is “not wind and watertight”. It can be found online at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2014/243/made>

Readers may be interested to note that Housing Options (PREVENT1) statistics are also available at <http://scotland.gov.uk/homelessstats>. These are also produced on a bi-annual basis.

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Main Points

For the six-month period of 1 April to 30 September 2016:

Applications

- There were 17,107 applications for homelessness assistance during April to September 2016. This was 3% lower than the same 6 month period in 2015.
- The fall in applications is mainly due to the impact of Housing Options/homelessness prevention strategies adopted by most Local Authorities over the past few years rather than to changes in the underlying drivers of homelessness.
- The proportion of direct homelessness applications – that is those which don't go through Housing Options first, is increasing. During April to September 2016, 45% of all homelessness applications – were direct applications, up 9% on April to September 2015.

Assessments

- There has been a small decrease (-1%) in the number of assessments made by Local Authorities in Scotland comparing April to September 2016 with April to September 2015 (17,332 assessment were made between April to September 2016, compared to 17,518 for the same period in 2015).
- Of the 17,332 assessments made, there were 14,124 homeless or threatened with homelessness assessments. This was 2% lower than in the same period in 2015 when there were 14,391 such assessments.
- The number of assessments made during April to September (17,332) is higher than the number of applications for homelessness assistance (17,107). This is because some assessments during this period are also completed for applications that were made before the period.

Outcomes

- Of the 10,312 unintentionally homeless households which had an outcome during April to September 2016, around four out of five households (8,340 households or 81%) secured settled accommodation, that is, predominantly permanent accommodation from social or private rented tenancies (**Table 6**). This refers to those households with whom contact had been maintained and whose case was closed between April to September 2016. This proportion has remained relatively stable since 2007, ranging from 78% to 82%.

Temporary accommodation

As at 30 September 2016:

- There were 10,570 households in temporary accommodation – a 1% increase compared to the same date from one year earlier (10,473 households in 2015 (see **Table 8a**).
- The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation fell in 16 Local Authority areas, and increased in 16 Local Authorities. The largest numerical decreases were in Aberdeenshire (-80 households) and Perth and Kinross (-74 households). The largest increases were in West Lothian (+107 households) and Edinburgh (+68 households) (see **Table 9**).
- On 30 September 2016, there were 3,174 households with children or with a pregnant household member in temporary accommodation (**Table 8b**). This is an increase of 355 such households (+13%) compared to the same date one year ago. Households with children currently comprise 30% of the 10,570 households in temporary accommodation.
- There were 5,751 children in temporary accommodation on 30 September 2016, an increase of 826 (+17%) from 30 September 2015.
- On 30 September 2016, there were 35 households with children or a pregnant member of the household in bed and breakfast accommodation - more than double that which was recorded at the same time on 30 September 2015. Sixteen of these households were in West Lothian and ten were in Edinburgh (see **Table 10**).
- Of the 27 households in unsuitable accommodation on 30 September 2016, there were 12 breaches of [The Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Order 2014](#) (see **Table 12**). Ten of these were in West Lothian and two in Angus.

Applications

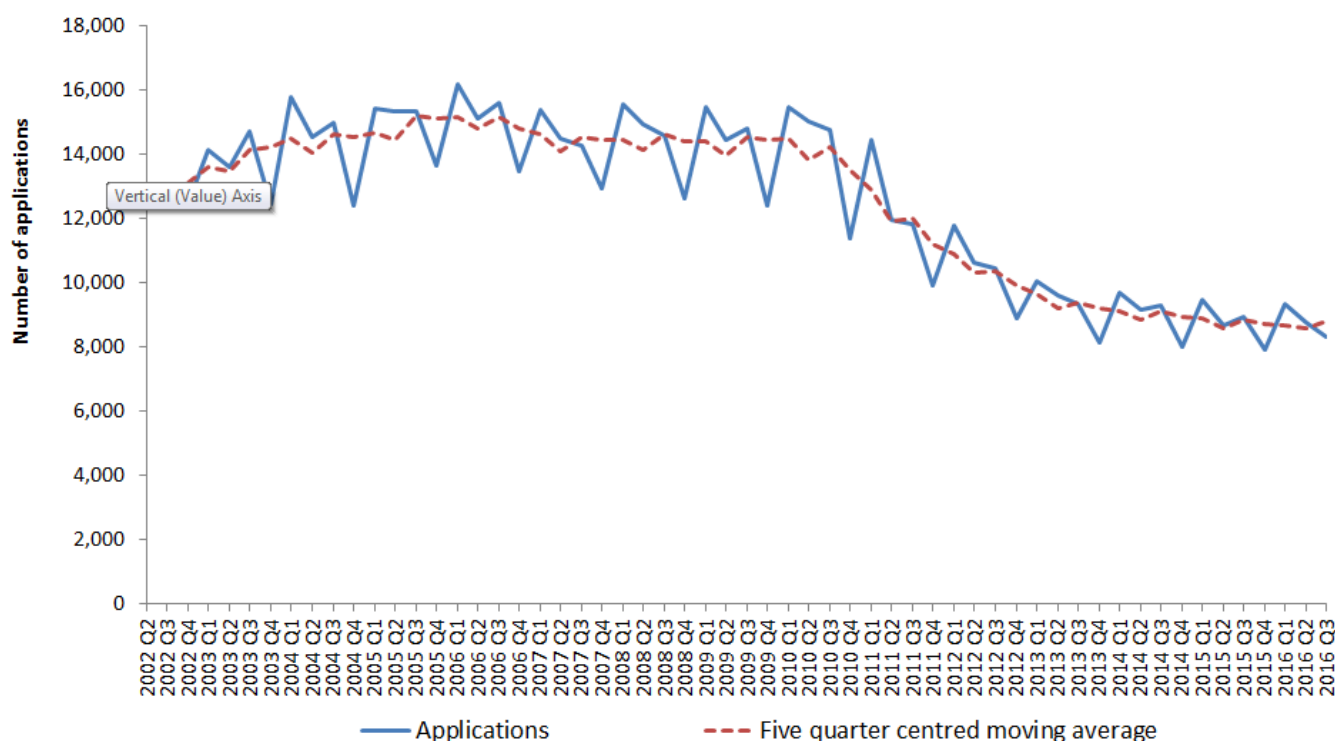
(Table 1 to Table 4 and [Chart 1](#))

All applications

Between 1 April and 30 September 2016, Local Authorities received 17,107 homelessness applications. This is a reduction of 554 (-3%) over the same period in the previous year (see **Table 2**).

[Chart 1](#) shows that the number of homelessness applications over time has decreased beginning around Spring 2010, but this downward trend appears to be slowing down over the last couple of years. There are quarterly fluctuations, but this decrease is clearer when a five-quarter centered moving average is used.

Chart 1: Number of applications for homelessness assistance in Scotland, from April to June (Q2), 2002



This reduction in homelessness applications is likely to be the result of Housing Options work being undertaken by Local Authorities in Scotland. Over the past few years, Local Authorities have been developing services in which staff assist households to consider the range of options available to address their housing needs. As a consequence, some of the households who might previously have made a homelessness application may now have their housing needs met without first becoming homeless or being threatened with homelessness. Further information on the development of Housing Options services

in Scottish Local Authorities is available in the annual homelessness statistics publication³.

Within the overall reduction of 3% over the same period last year, there are large variations between Local Authorities. **Table 2** shows that comparing April to September 2016 with the same period one year ago, the number of homelessness applications was lower in 18 Local Authority areas, higher in 12 Local Authority areas and stayed the same in 2. The largest numerical reductions were in Edinburgh (-175 applications, -9%) and Glasgow City (-168 applications, -6%). The largest increases were in East Ayrshire (+62 applications, 26%) and Falkirk (+54 applications, +10%).

For April to September 2016, almost 9,400 homelessness applications (55%) had been through a Housing Options service prior to making a homelessness application. During the same period one year ago, 64% of homelessness applications had been through Housing Options first (**Table 1**).

Reasons for homelessness

The underlying reasons for homelessness have remained very stable over time in Scotland, since April 2007. **Table 3a** and **Table 3b** show the position since July 2014. The proportions for each reason category have changed little since April 2007.

Of the 17,107 homelessness applications:

- 4,201 (25%) cited a reason of “asked to leave”, a decrease of 415 relative to the equivalent period of the previous year; and
- 3,031 (18%) cited a reason of “non-violent dispute within the household and/or a relationship breakdown”, an increase of 25 over the same period in the previous year.

Table 4a shows that, between 1 April and 30 September 2016, there were 9,827 (57% of the 17,107) homelessness applications where the Local Authority recorded a reason for failing to maintain the accommodation⁴. Applicants are given a list of possible reasons, and Local Authorities may select multiple reasons. For those 9,827 applicants with reasons for failing to maintain accommodation:

- 4,276 (44% of those completing this question) cited that it was not to do with the applicant’s household, but a result of external circumstances (e.g. due to landlord selling property, fire, circumstances of other persons sharing previous property or harassment by others). This figure has increased by 167 from the same period in the previous year;

³ [Homelessness in Scotland: 2015/16](#), provides further background information on the reductions in homelessness applications over time, in the Applications section.

⁴ More information on the questionnaire for homelessness applications can be found in the output specification for the data, found at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/15257/OutputSpecification>

- 1,959 (20% of those completing this question) applicants cited lack of support from friends / family as a reason. This is an increase of 353 applications over the same period in the previous year;
- 1,547 (16% of those completing this question) cited financial difficulties / debt / unemployment as a reason. This is an increase of 87 applicants compared to the same period in the previous year; and
- 1,974 (20% of those completing this question) applicants cited mental health reasons and 831 (8%) applicants cited physical health reasons. Since the same period in the previous year, the number of applicants citing mental health as a possible reason has increased by 342 applicants (21%). The number of times physical health was cited by applicants has increased by 97 (13%).

Assessments

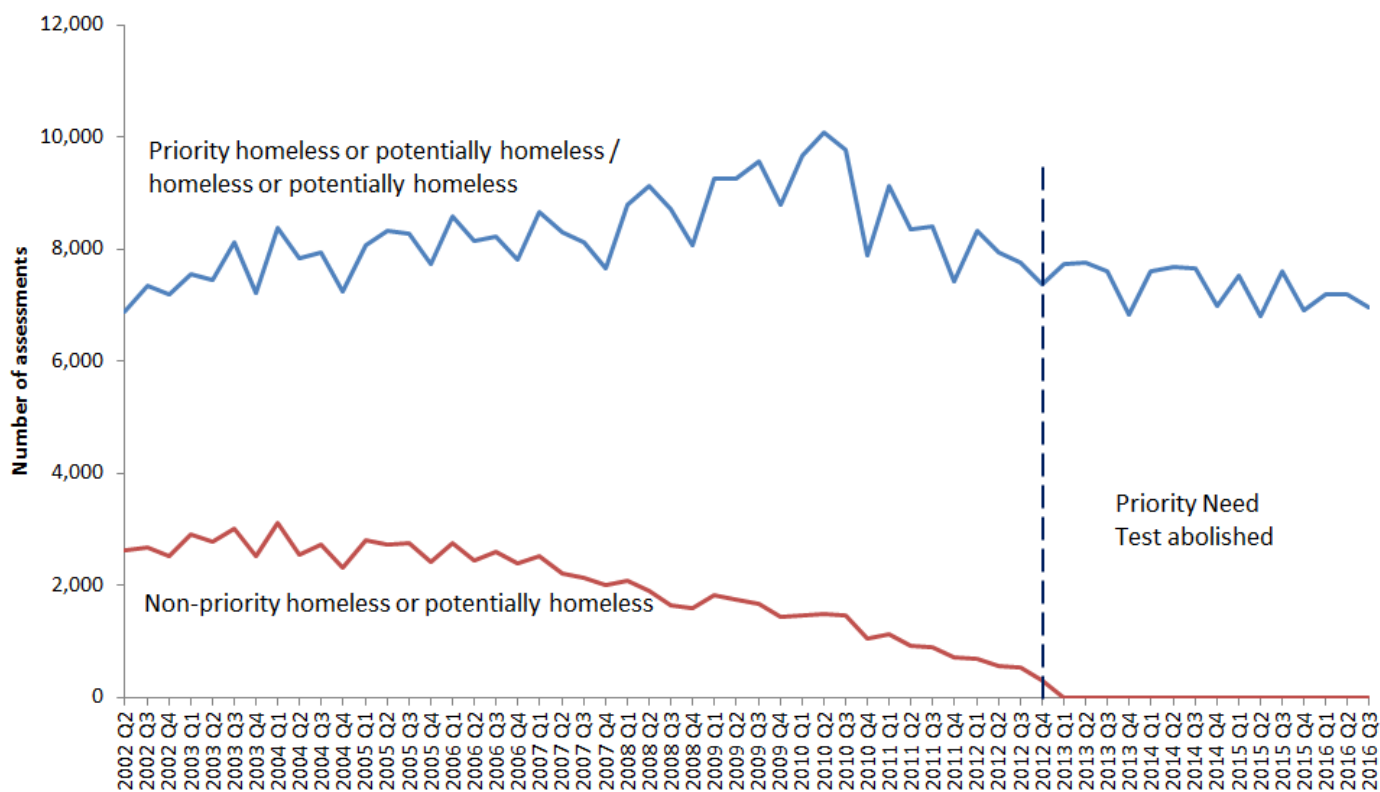
(Table 1, [Chart 2](#) and [Chart 3](#))

Overall assessments

Between 1 April and 30 September 2016, Local Authorities in Scotland assessed 17,332 homelessness applications. Of these 14,124 (81%) were assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness, 686 (4%) were assessed as not homeless and 809 (5%) had their homelessness resolved before the assessment was made. There were 1,713 (10%) applications where contact was lost before assessment, the application was withdrawn or the applicant was ineligible for assistance. Compared with the same period one year ago, the proportion of cases assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness has remained stable at around 82%.

From 31st December 2012 onwards, the distinction between priority need and non-priority need applications was abolished. [Chart 2](#) shows the figures, over time.

Chart 2: Homelessness assessments in Scotland, from April to June (Q2), 2002



To note, prior to 31st December 2012, the priority need category included:

- unintentionally homeless and in priority need;
- intentionally homeless and in priority need;
- unintentionally potentially homeless and in priority need; and
- intentionally potentially homeless and in priority need.

Intentionality

Cases assessed as homeless (or threatened with homelessness) are also tested as to whether they made themselves homeless intentionally. If an applicant has made themselves intentionally homeless, they are not entitled to settled accommodation. They are only entitled to be housed in temporary accommodation for a reasonable period of time, and be given advice and assistance.

At the Scotland level, between 1 April and 30 September 2016, there were 816 intentionality decisions, and this was a decrease of 19 decisions compared with the same period one year earlier (see **Table 1**, **Table 5** and [Chart 3](#)). Overall, the proportion of cases assessed as intentionally homeless has generally increased at a national level over the last decade (see [Chart 3](#)). However, comparing April to September 2016 with the same period one year ago, the proportion of intentionally homeless has remained the same at 5.8% (**Table 1**).

Chart 3: Percentage of cases assessed as intentionally homeless in Scotland, from July to September (Q3), 2002

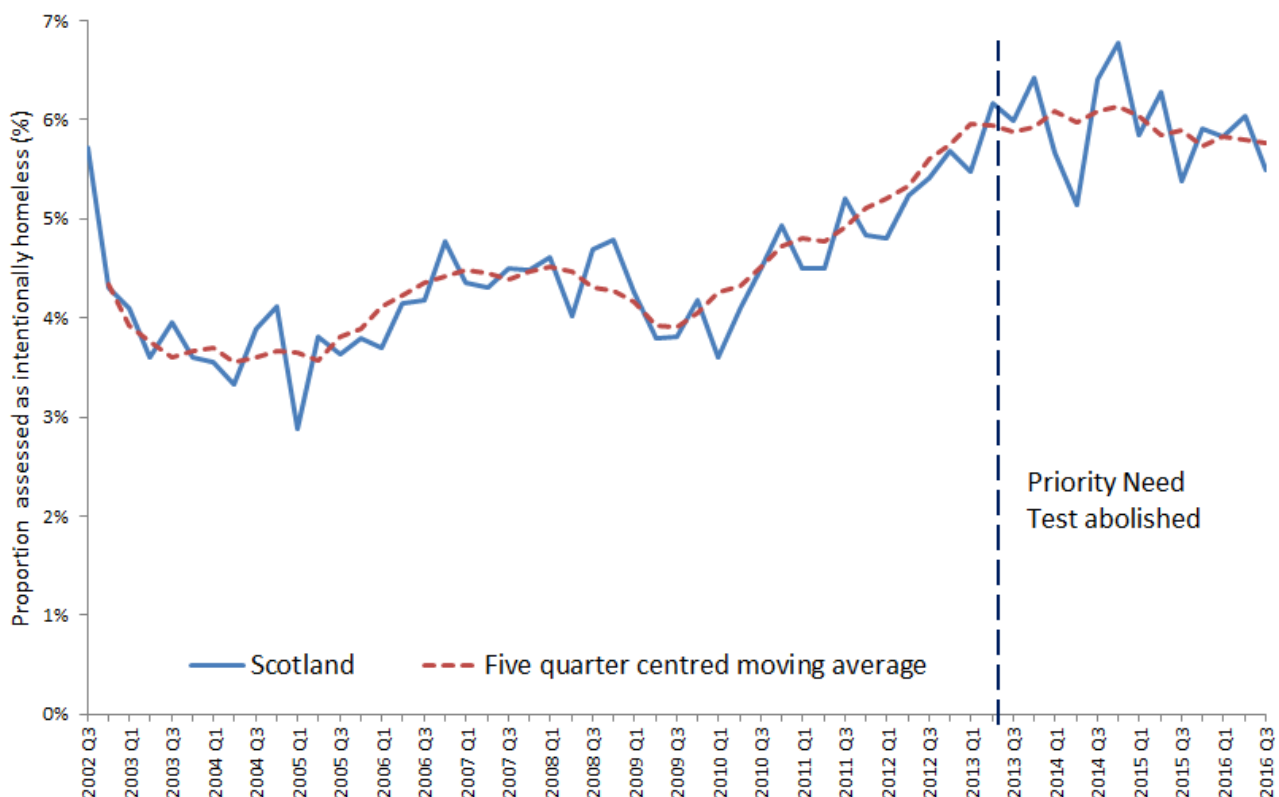


Table 5 shows that, between 1 April and 30 September 2016, there is a high proportion of intentionally homeless assessments in a number of Local Authorities - the highest proportions were in Falkirk (15.9%), North Lanarkshire and Moray (11.6% respectively).

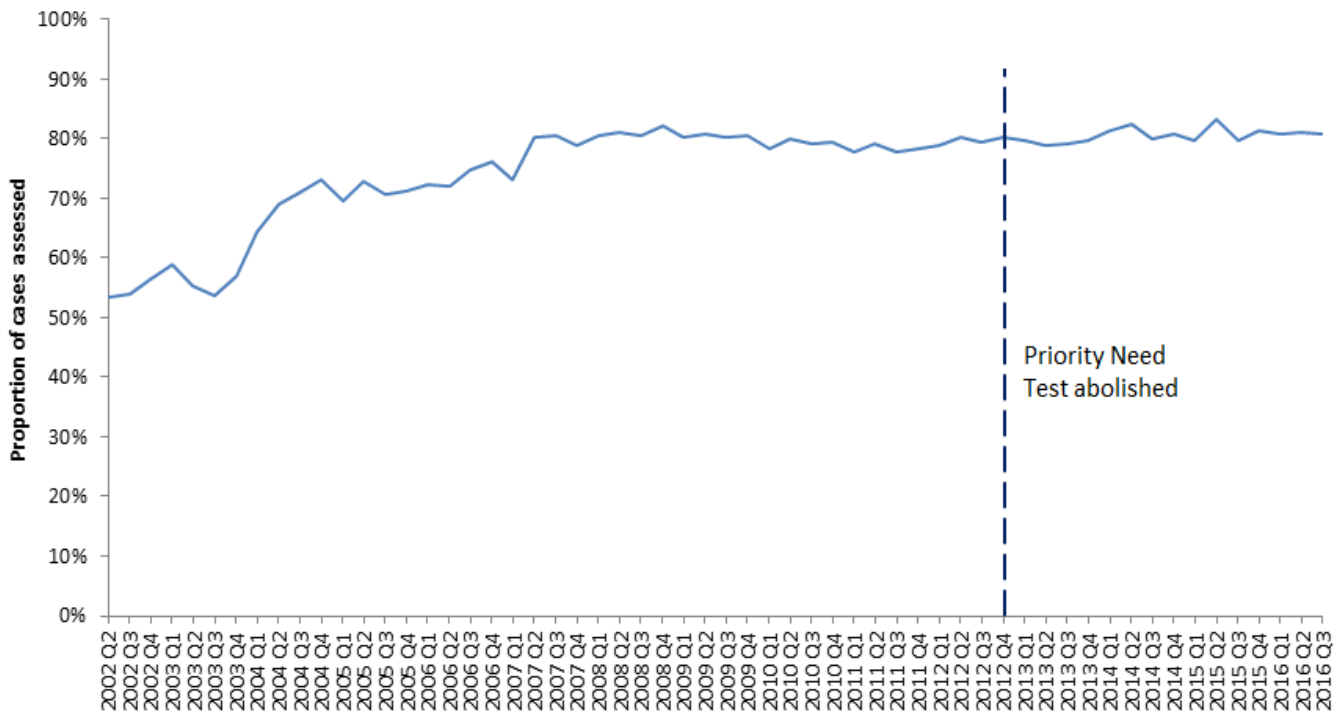
Outcomes

(Table 1, Table 6, Table 7 and [Chart 4](#) to [Chart 7](#))

Overall outcomes

Table 6 shows that, between 1 April and 30 September 2016, settled accommodation (private and social rented tenancies, including any non-permanent accommodation) was secured for 8,340 (81%) of the 10,312 applications where contact was maintained through to completion of the application. This proportion has remained stable for the past eight years (see [Chart 4](#)).

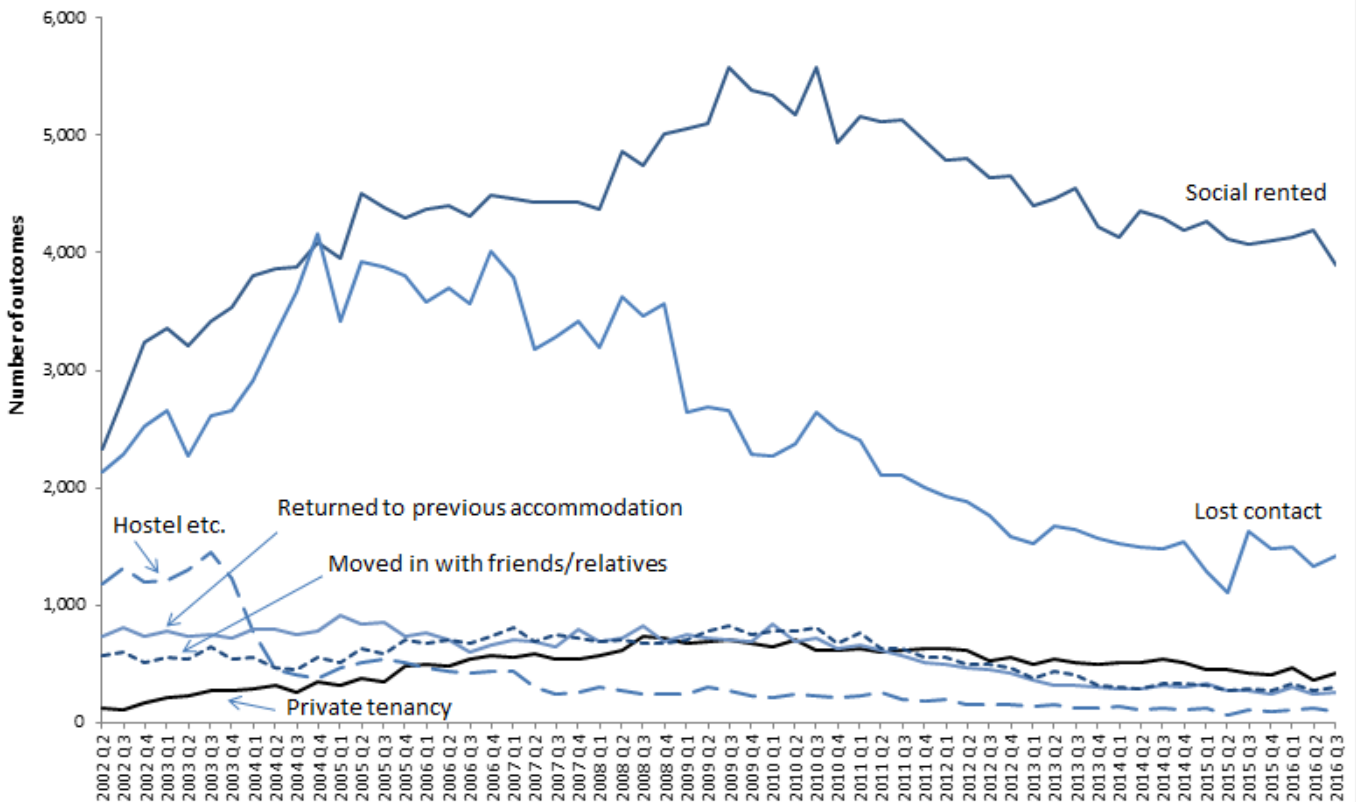
Chart 4: Percentage of cases assessed as unintentionally homeless [and in priority need], securing settled accommodation and where contact was maintained to duty discharge in Scotland, from April to June (Q2), 2002



Social Lets

The number of homeless households securing a social let from either a Local Authority or housing association increased from around 2,500 in the April to June quarter in 2002 (Q2) to a peak of just under 5,600 in the July-September quarter of 2010 (Q3). The total number of social lets to homeless households has fallen back markedly from this peak and stood at almost 4,200 in April to June 2016, falling further to 3,900 in July to September 2016 (see **Table 1** and [Chart 5](#)).

Chart 5: Outcomes of homeless applications in Scotland, from April to June (Q2), 2002



Note: Chart 5 includes outcomes for all applications, regardless of assessment decision or whether contact was maintained until duty discharge. Prior to April 2007, applications that withdrew prior to assessment are recorded together with lost contacts.

Outcomes for cases assessed as unintentionally homeless households

For the past eight years in Scotland, around 80% of cases assessed each year as unintentionally homeless have secured settled accommodation, and the latest six months is no exception - 81% of unintentionally homeless households secured settled accommodation between April and September 2016 (where contact was maintained until duty discharge) (see **Table 6**).

Over the same time period, and using Glasgow City as a highly populated example, the proportion securing settled accommodation reduced from a high of 85% during October

to December 2008 (Q4), to a low of around 70% during April to June 2013 (Q2). The proportion securing settled accommodation increased to 84% during April to June 2015 (Q2) but lowered to 72% during the most recent quarter (July to September 2016) (see [Chart 6](#)). Glasgow City is a stock transfer authority where duty is discharged mostly in Registered Social Landlord (RSL) accommodation.

Chart 6: Percentage of cases assessed as unintentionally homeless, securing settled accommodation and where contact was maintained to duty discharge in Glasgow City and in Scotland, from April to June (Q2), 2002



Notes: Other Local Authorities can be obtained using the chart slider in worksheet “Chart 6” in the “Publication Charts” spreadsheet.

Looking at all types of settled accommodation used during the past six months (April to September 2016), [Table 6](#) shows that Local Authority accommodation comprises almost half (47%) of all outcomes for unintentionally homeless households, where contact was maintained. Over a quarter (26%) of unintentionally homeless households secured Registered Social Landlord (RSL) accommodation and 2% secured non-permanent accommodation provided for the purpose of housing support. Private rented accommodation was taken up in 6% of cases.

Housing support regulations

The legislation which established the housing support duty (Section 32B of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 inserted by Housing (Scotland) Act 2010) states that there is a duty for Local Authorities to conduct a housing support assessment for applicants who are

unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness and that they have 'reason to believe' need the housing support services prescribed in regulations.

'The regulations' are the Housing Support Services (Homelessness) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and were established after public consultation. The services prescribed are:

- (a) advising or assisting a person with personal budgeting, debt counseling or in dealing with welfare benefit claims;
- (b) assisting a person to engage with individuals, professionals or other bodies with an interest in that person's welfare;
- (c) advising or assisting a person in understanding and managing their tenancy rights and responsibilities, including assisting a person in disputes about those rights and responsibilities; and
- (d) advising or assisting a person in settling into a new tenancy.

If an assessment of a need for support is made, Local Authorities must ensure the housing support services are provided. If this assessment is made, an assessment also needs to be made for others that reside with the applicant as part of their household.

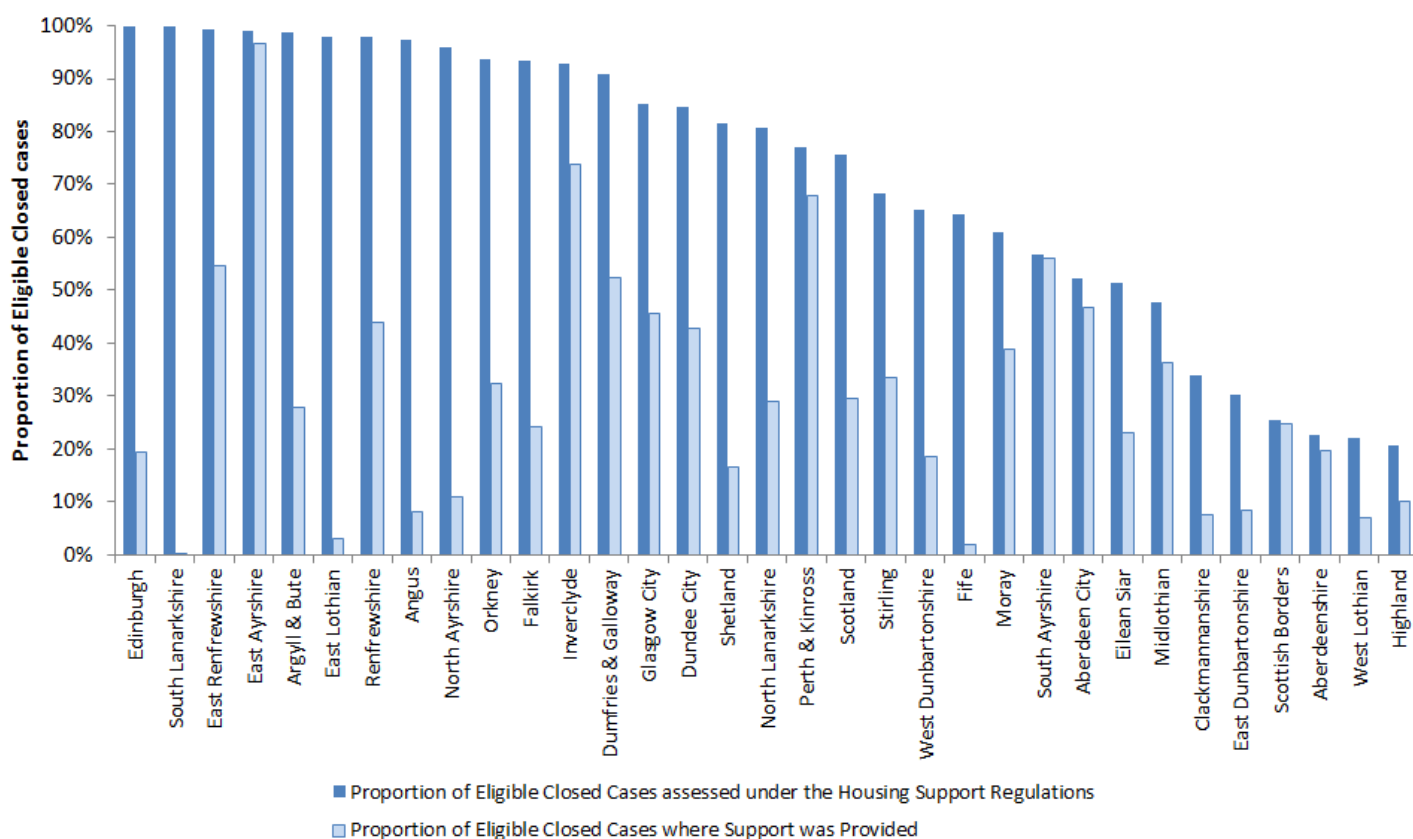
The legislation states that 'housing support services' include any service which provides support, assistance, advice or counseling to an individual with particular needs with a view to enabling that individual to occupy, or to continue to occupy, residential accommodation as the individual's sole or main residence. The form and duration of housing support will vary depending on the individual's circumstances and/or those of the people in the household.

Assessments under the regulations and actual provision of support

Table 7 shows that, from 1 April to 30 September 2016, there were 12,724 cases assessed as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness that were closed in this period. Of these, 9,633 (76%) were recorded as being assessed under the housing support regulations, and 3,754 were recorded as having had support provided (39% of those assessed under the housing support regulations).

There are large fluctuations across Local Authorities in the number who are making assessments under the regulations and the number to whom support is provided. Some authorities are making assessments for all their closed cases, particularly Edinburgh and South Lanarkshire. This is in contrast to other authorities who are recording very few assessments under the regulations, for example in West Lothian, Aberdeenshire and Highland. What appears to be even more variable is the extent to which support is then being provided: there are examples where nearly all those assessed have support provided (for example in East Ayrshire, Scottish Borders and South Ayrshire). Conversely, in South Lanarkshire and Fife, only a small proportion of those assessed under the regulations go on to receive support (see [Chart 7](#)).

Chart 7: Proportion of eligible closed cases assessed and with support provided under the Housing Support Regulations in Scotland, April to September 2016



Note: Eligible closed cases are defined as those assessed as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness and that there is a 'reason to believe' that they need the housing support services prescribed in regulations. The original idea for this chart came from [Scotland's Housing Network](#).

Temporary accommodation

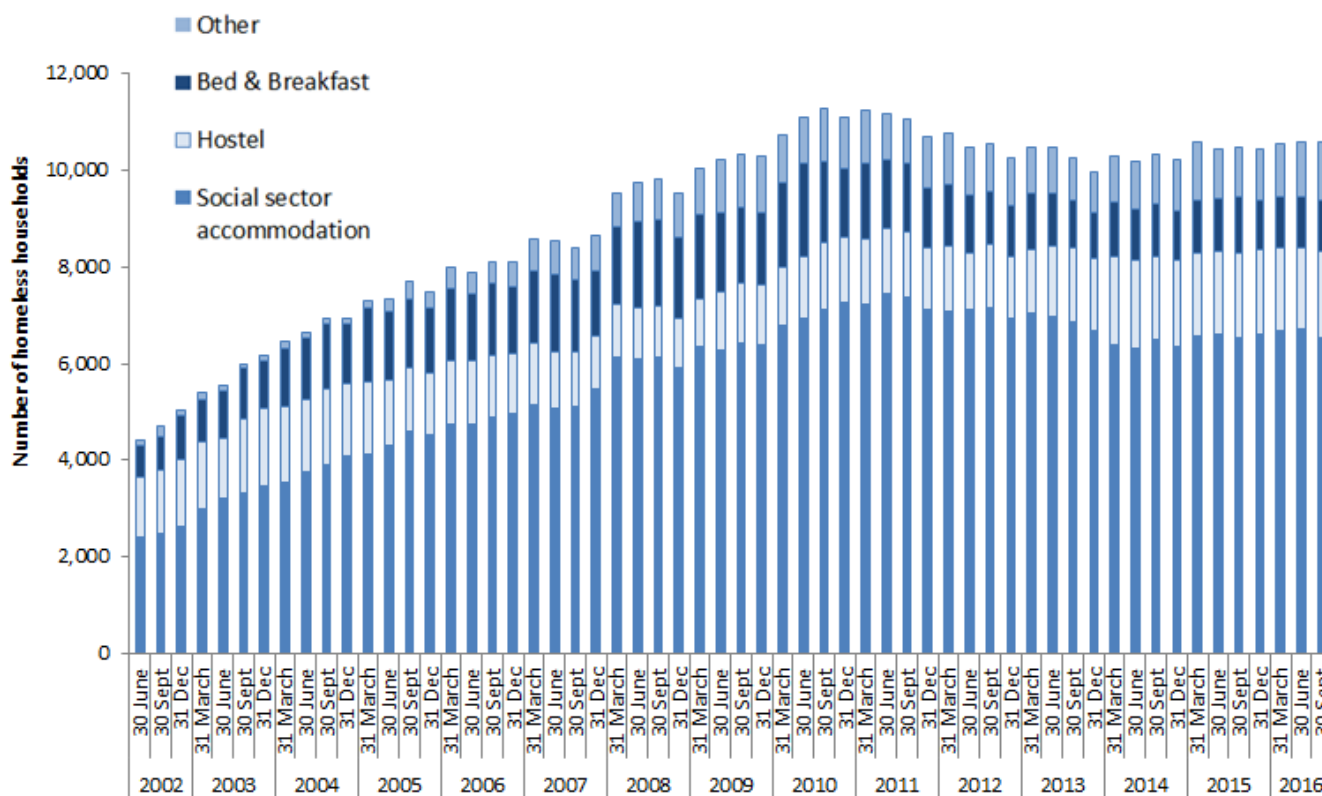
(Table 8 to Table 12 and [Chart 8](#) to [Chart 10](#))

Statistics on numbers of households in temporary accommodation are taken from the HL2 quarterly statistical return by Local Authorities. The return provides summary information on households in temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter who have been placed there as a consequence of their homelessness application. Homeless applicants may be placed in temporary accommodation while the council assesses their application or while awaiting the offer of a permanent let. Also, intentionally homeless households, and before 31 December 2012, non-priority households, may have been placed in temporary accommodation as the outcome of their application.

All households in temporary accommodation

After a marked increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation - from around 4,000 in 2002 to around 11,300 on 31 March 2011, the Scottish total number of households in temporary accommodation has generally been reducing to around 10,000 households at the end of each quarter. On 30 September 2016, there were 10,570 households in temporary accommodation, a 1% increase compared with 30 September 2015 (10,473 households were in temporary accommodation at this time-point) (see Table 8a and [Chart 8](#)).

Chart 8: Number of homeless households in temporary accommodation in Scotland, from 30 June 2002



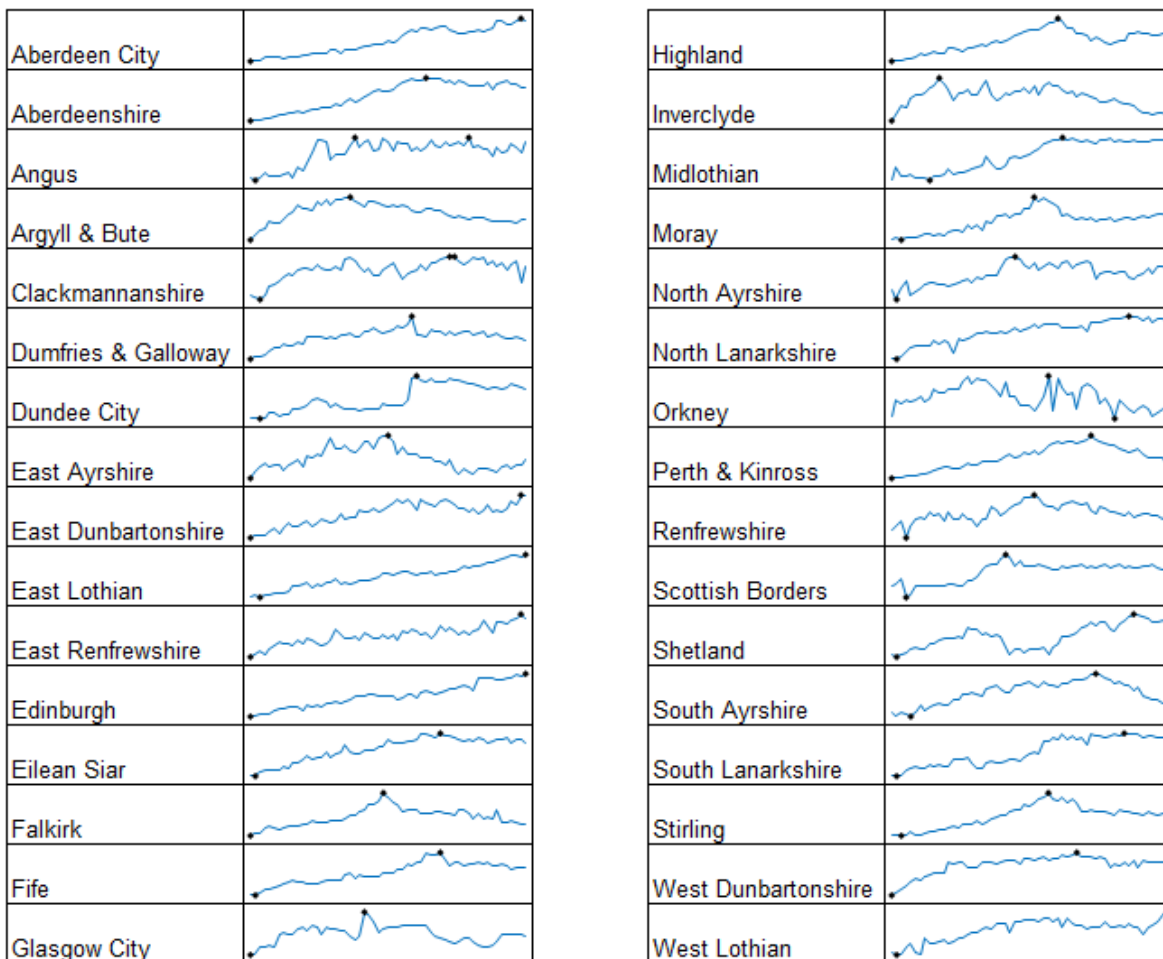
However, at the Local Authority level, the situation is more complex. Comparing the situation on 30 September 2016 with the same date one year ago, the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation fell in 16 Local Authority areas and increased in 16 Local Authority areas. The largest numerical decreases were in Aberdeenshire (-80) and Perth and Kinross (-74 households). The largest increases were in West Lothian (+107 households) and Edinburgh (+68 households) (see **Table 9**).

[Chart 9](#) shows that some Local Authorities have seen noticeable increases in the number of households in temporary accommodation in recent quarters. For example, this is clearly apparent for East Lothian and West Lothian. As at 30 September 2016 both of these local authorities had their highest levels of households in temporary accommodation.

The trends in numbers in temporary accommodation are likely to be due to a combination of the changes to the homelessness legislation, the availability of settled accommodation and, more recently, the impacts of Housing Options. A further discussion of these impacts can be found in the annual publication Homelessness in Scotland: 2015/16⁵.

⁵ Which can be found online at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables/Homelessness201516>

Chart 9: Number of households in temporary accommodation by Local Authority in Scotland, from 31 March 2002 to 30 September 2016

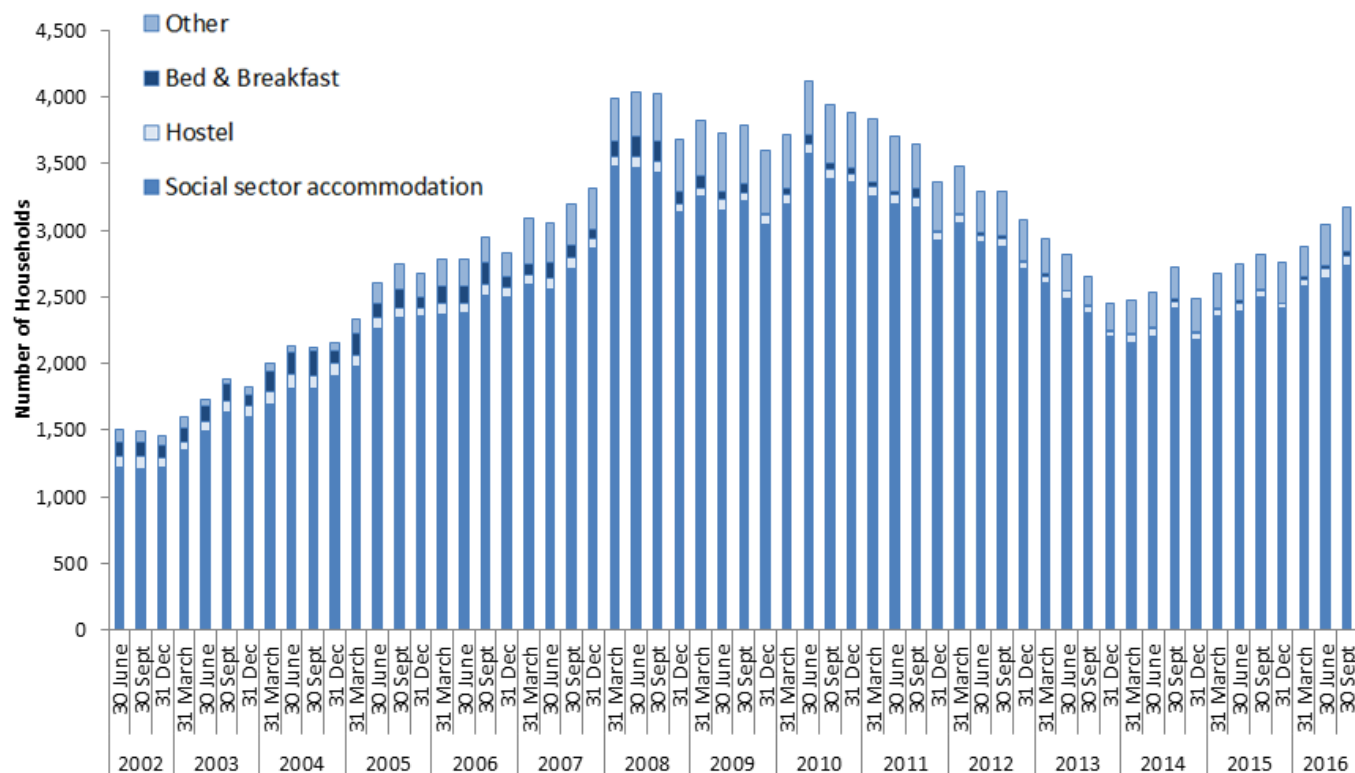


Note: The darker markers on the lines indicate the lowest and highest recorded number of households in temporary accommodation over this period. No axis labels are provided as the chart shows change over time within individual Local Authorities. The maximum and minimum values are different for each Local Authority, and so sparkline comparisons across Local Authorities should be avoided.

Households with children in temporary accommodation

On 30 September 2016, there were 3,174 households with children or with a household member pregnant in temporary accommodation (**Table 8b** and [Chart 10](#)). This is an increase of 355 such households (+13%) compared to the same date one year ago. Households with children currently comprise almost a third (30%) of the 10,570 households in temporary accommodation.

Chart 10: Households with children or with a household member pregnant in temporary accommodation in Scotland, from 30 June 2002



Note: From June 2007, the figures also include households where a member of the household was pregnant.

The accommodation provided to households with children or pregnant women was mainly Local Authority or housing association accommodation (86%), with a small proportion (under 1%) being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation (see **Table 8b**).

There were 5,751 children in homeless households in temporary accommodation on 30 September 2016, an increase of 826 (+17%) from 30 September 2015 (see **Table 8c**).

On 30 September 2016, 26 out of 32 Local Authorities had no households with children or pregnant women in bed & breakfast accommodation. Within the remaining 6 Local Authorities, there were a total of 35 households which had children or pregnant women in bed & breakfast accommodation. Three Local Authorities contained 2 households of this type each (Angus, East Dunbartonshire and East Lothian), Midlothian had 3 of these households, Edinburgh had 10 of these households and West Lothian had 16 (see

Table 10). There is an increase of 21 households of this kind compared to the same date one year ago (14 in total on 30 September 2015, compared to 35 in total on 30 September 2016).

Implementation of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014

[The Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Order 2014](#) came into force on 21 November 2014. It revokes the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004.

For each quarter from June 2005, Local Authorities have reported on the number of households with children, or where a household member was pregnant, who were in unsuitable temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter, and whether the accommodation provided to the household was in breach of the Order. The figures below show that in the quarter ending 30 September 2016:

- 27 households were in unsuitable accommodation, these were in West Lothian (16 households), Edinburgh (5 households), East Dunbartonshire (2 households), Angus (2 households), East Lothian and West Dunbartonshire (1 household respectively) (see **Table 11**). Compared to the same time point one year ago, the total number of households in unsuitable accommodation has increased by 11 households (16 household were in unsuitable accommodation in the quarter ending 30 September 2015).
- there were 12 households in breach of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014 (see **Table 12**). These were recorded in two local authorities: West Lothian (10 households) and Angus (2 households). The number of breaches recorded is the highest since the Order was introduced in 2014 and is double that which has been recorded at the end of any quarter of the past two years.

Please note: All of the tables in this publication are available in electronic format at: <http://www.gov.scot/homelessstats>

Notes on the statistics

1. The statistics presented in this release relate to applications made under the legislation. Given the continuous nature of the recording system, figures are updated on an on-going basis and may differ from those previously published.

Publication Date	Reporting of the Number of Applications (per quarter)													
	2013			2014				2015			2016			
	April - June	July - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan - March	April - June	July - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan - March	April - June	July - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan - March	April - June	July - Sept
17-Jan-17	9,603	9,343	8,155	9,720	9,160	9,314	8,000	9,480	8,696	8,965	7,919	9,347	8,778	8,329
05-Apr-16	9,604	9,354	8,163	9,728	9,173	9,327	8,017	9,497	8,704	8,953	7,615			
12-Jan-16	9,602	9,345	8,158	9,720	9,162	9,319	8,015	9,479	8,677	8,779				
29-Sep-15	9,602	9,344	8,156	9,718	9,161	9,318	8,013	9,465	8,495					
30-Jun-15	9,747	9,393	8,239	9,855	9,154	9,314	8,004	9,292						
31-Mar-15	9,743	9,394	8,234	9,847	9,144	9,295	7,858							
13-Jan-15	9,639	9,359	8,187	9,797	9,124	9,059								
30-Sep-14	9,619	9,349	8,163	9,682	8,917									
24-Jun-14	9,599	9,340	8,115	9,403										
25-Mar-14	9,597	9,326	8,007											
21-Jan-14	9,508	9,114												
19-Nov-13	9,474													

*Note the 28th June 2016 publication did not report quarterly changes, but annual statistics.

Difference in applications between publication shown and most recent publication

05-Apr-16	-1	-11	-8	-8	-13	-13	-17	-17	-8	12	304
12-Jan-16	1	-2	-3	0	-2	-5	-15	1	19	186	
29-Sep-15	1	-1	-1	2	-1	-4	-13	15	201		
30-Jun-15	-144	-50	-84	-135	6	0	-4	188			
31-Mar-15	-140	-51	-79	-127	16	19	142				
13-Jan-15	-36	-16	-32	-77	36	255					
30-Sep-14	-16	-6	-8	38	243						
24-Jun-14	4	3	40	317							
25-Mar-14	6	17	148								
21-Jan-14	95	229									
19-Nov-13	129										

Percentage difference in applications between publication shown and most recent publication

05-Apr-16	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
12-Jan-15	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	
29-Sep-15	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%		
30-Jun-15	-1%	-1%	-1%	-1%	0%	0%	0%	2%			
31-Mar-15	-1%	-1%	-1%	-1%	0%	0%	2%				
13-Jan-15	0%	0%	0%	-1%	0%	3%					
30-Sep-14	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%						
24-Jun-14	0%	0%	0%	3%							
25-Mar-14	0%	0%	2%								
21-Jan-14	1%	2%									
19-Nov-13	1%										

2. The data presented in these tables are based on the time period relevant to the analysis. In some cases, this might be the quarter of application, while in others this might relate to the quarter in which the assessment was made or action taken. All years refer to financial years, 1 April to 31 March.

3. To facilitate comparisons between authorities, some of the Local Authority tables are presented in the form of percentages. However, where the number of applications is small the percentage figures should be treated with caution.

4. Unless otherwise stated, the assessment category of 'homeless' includes both homeless and those threatened with homelessness, as well as unintentional and intentional homeless. Although the focus of the homelessness legislation is on providing settled accommodation to those assessed as unintentionally homeless, the number of applications assessed as intentionally homeless is relatively small – typically 400 cases per quarter (around 6% of all homeless or potentially homeless). This category has therefore been combined with that of unintentionally homeless for the more complex analyses.

5. In December 2001, the Scottish Government changed the data collection system for the case-based HL1 return to provide more detailed information on applications by individual households and to allow more timely reporting. This entailed changing to an electronic data capture system which allows cases to be registered and updated on a continuous basis, as well as enabling applications made by the same household to be linked.

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

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

Interpretation of statistics on temporary accommodation

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

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

How we maintain quality

10. The quality of this publication depends critically on the quality and consistency of the information supplied to us by Local Authorities on the HL1 and HL2 returns. The quality statement on the Scottish homelessness statistics website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/15257/quality> sets out the ways in which we do this. The main focus of our systems is to ensure consistency between the HL1 and HL2 returns and consistency of the case level information within each HL1 return.

How we deal with revisions and corrections

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

How we consult with users and providers of statistics

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

Obtaining additional analyses

12. The HL1 returns provide a very rich dataset capable of supporting a great deal more analysis than we provide in our regular publications. If you can't find the analysis you need, contact us at homelessnessstatisticsinbox@scotland.gsi.gov.uk. We can also supply case level extracts from the HL1 database suitably anonymised to prevent disclosure.

Summary of current legislation

1. 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.
2. The legislation currently requires Local Authorities to make inquiries into the circumstances of applicants to satisfy themselves whether the applicant is homeless or potentially homeless. Once the authority is satisfied this is the case, prior to 31st December 2012, it also determined whether the applicant had a priority need. However, from 31st December 2012, the priority need test has now been abolished (see Paragraph 24). The Local Authority then tests whether the applicant became homeless intentionally and, in some cases, whether the applicant has a local connection with another authority in Scotland, England or Wales. A local connection with an authority means that the applicant normally resided in that area from choice, either because he/she was employed in or had family associations with it, or for other special reasons.
3. 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.
4. Section 25 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended, defined the categories of household regarded as having a priority need for accommodation. Further details can be found in the Code of Guidance on Homelessness. This is available on-line at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/05/31133334/33366>.
5. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 amends the 1987 Act and requires councils to provide a minimum of temporary accommodation, advice and assistance to all applicants assessed as homeless, regardless of whether they have been assessed as being in priority need. The Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 is more long-term in scope, notably introducing a phasing out of the distinction between priority and non-priority applications, and enabling the suspension of the test of local connection. The ultimate aim of the Act was to ensure that everyone assessed as being unintentionally homeless was entitled to settled accommodation from 31st December 2012.
6. 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.

7. A Local Authority's duty to homeless households can be summarised as follows:-

Unintentionally homeless [and in priority need]⁶

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

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

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

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.

8. 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

⁶ If before 31st December 2012.

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.

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

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

10. The Housing Support Services (Homelessness)(Scotland) Regulations 2012 came into force on 1st June 2013. These Regulations make provision in relation to the duty of Local Authorities to assess whether some persons found to be homeless or threatened with homelessness (“an applicant”) need housing support services. Regulation 2 prescribes four types of housing support services which apply for the purposes of that duty. If a Local Authority has reason to believe that an applicant may be in need of one or more of these services, it must assess whether the applicant, or any person residing with the applicant, is in need of such support. If so, the Local Authority must ensure that the service is provided to the person who needs it. For further information on these regulations can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/3279/2>.

Comparability with other UK Homelessness Statistics

England

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

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

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

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

Wales

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

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

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

Northern Ireland

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

The most recent statutory homelessness statistics for Northern Ireland are available at: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-housing-statistics-2015-16>

Scotland

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

Key similarities and differences

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

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

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

A National Statistics publication for Scotland

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

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

Correspondence and enquiries

For enquiries about this publication please contact:

Susan Carsley

Social Security and Housing Access Statistics

Telephone: 0131 244 7232

e-mail: homelessness_statistics_inbox@gov.scot

For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics please contact:

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 Andrew's House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

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