

PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

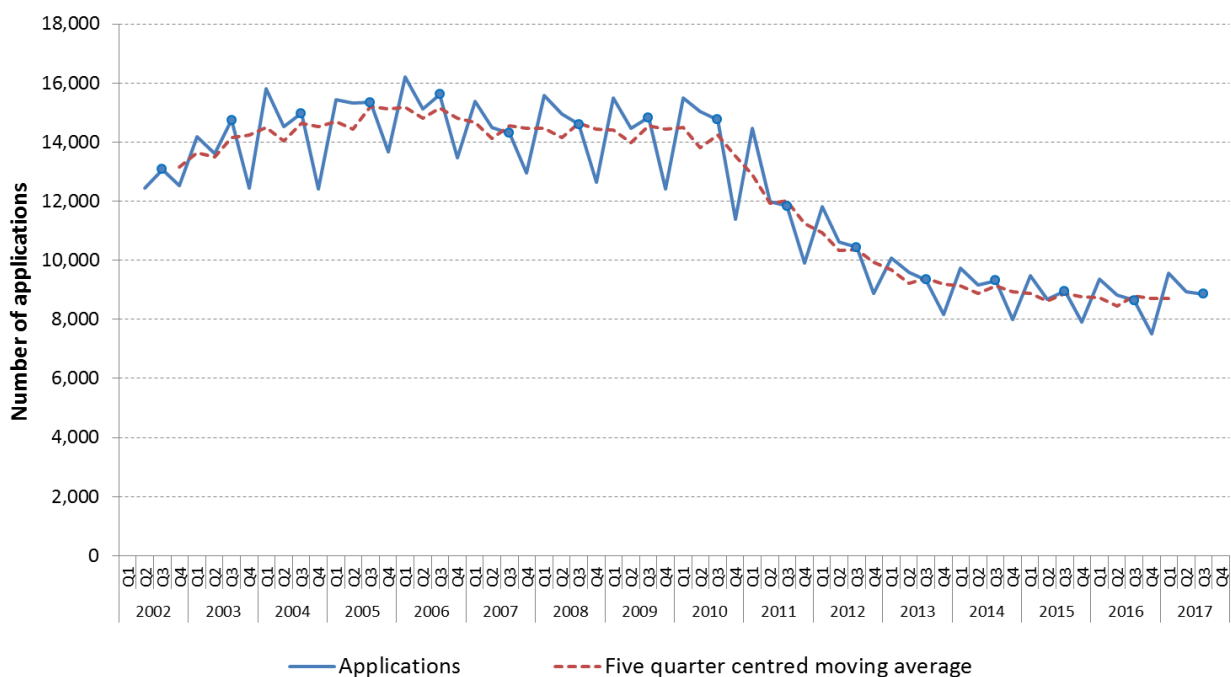
HOMELESSNESS IN SCOTLAND: Bi-annual update 1 April to 30 September 2017

This bulletin provides information on local authority homelessness applications, assessments and outcomes in the period from 1 April to 30 September 2017. It also provides data on the number of households in temporary accommodation as at 30 September 2017, along with the number of households in unsuitable temporary accommodation as defined in the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014.

It is based on data collected from local authorities through the HL1 case-level homeless applications data collection along with the HL2 aggregate temporary accommodation summary return.

Excel workbooks containing tables and charts from this publication are available to download at <http://www.gov.scot/homelessstats>.

Chart 1: Number of applications for homelessness assistance in Scotland, by quarter, from Apr 2002 to Sept 2017



Introduction

This bulletin provides information on Scottish local authority homelessness applications, assessments and outcomes in the period from 1 April to 30 September 2017. It also provides data on the number of households in temporary accommodation as at 30 September 2017, along with the number of households in unsuitable temporary accommodation as defined in the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014¹.

The purpose of this bi-annual bulletin is to provide a summary of the latest quarterly and six monthly results, and to place these in the context of longer term trends.

Separate annual bulletins, the most recent being published on 27 June 2017 which covered the financial year 2016/17, are lengthier publications and provide 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. The next annual publication for the year 2017/18 is planned to be published in June 2018.

This bi-annual 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 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. As a result, it is estimated that the headline number of applications may change by as much as 4% (up to around 360 cases for the current quarter for example) between first and subsequent publications (see the section [Notes on the Statistics](#)).

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, with the latest publication being released on 23 January 2018, the same day as this Homelessness In Scotland publication.

¹ 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> . Further information about the Order, including the recent Homeless Persons Amendment Order 2017 can be found in the [Summary of current legislation](#).

Contents

- Introduction 2
- Main Points..... 4**
 - Applications 4
 - Assessments 4
 - Outcomes 5
 - Temporary accommodation 5
- Applications 6**
 - All applications..... 6
 - Reasons for homelessness 7
- Assessments 8**
 - Overall assessments 8
 - Intentionality..... 9
- Outcomes 10**
 - Overall outcomes..... 10
 - Social Lets 12
 - Housing support regulations 12
 - Assessments under the regulations and actual provision of support 13
- Temporary accommodation 14**
 - All households in temporary accommodation..... 15
 - Households with children in temporary accommodation 17
 - Implementation of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014 18
- Notes on the statistics 19**
- Summary of current legislation..... 22**
- Comparability with other UK Homelessness Statistics 25**
 - A National Statistics publication for Scotland 27
 - Correspondence and enquiries..... 27
 - How to access background or source data 27
 - Complaints and suggestions..... 27
 - Crown Copyright 27

Main Points

For the six-month period of 1 April to 30 September 2017:

Applications

- There were 17,797 applications for homelessness assistance during the 6 months April to September 2017. This was 2% (330 applications) higher than the same 6 month period in 2016. However when looking over the whole of the last 12 months, there has been a smaller 0.3% (118 applications) annual increase from 34,746 applications in the 12 months to end September 2016 to 34,864 applications in the 12 months to end September 2017.
- The number of homelessness applications over time has decreased since 2010, with the latest annual figure of 34,864 applications being 22,842 (40%) less than the 57,706 applications in the 12 months to end September 2010, however this downward trend has slowed down over the last couple of years and has leveled out since 2015.
- In the year to end September 2017, the greatest increase in number of applications was seen in Aberdeen City, where applications increased by 407 (32%) from 1,286 to 1,693. Glasgow City saw the biggest decrease, with applications falling by 447 (8%) from 5,876 to 5,429. Applications in Edinburgh fell by 333 applications (9%) from 3,591 to 3,258. A total of 18 out of 32 (56%) of local authorities saw an increase in applications in the latest year to end September.
- The proportion of **direct homelessness applications** – that is those which don't go through Housing Options first - has increased in the latest 6 month period. During April to September 2017, 46% of all homelessness applications were direct applications, up 6 percentage points (from 40% to 46%) from April to September 2016.

Assessments

- There has been no substantive change in the number of assessments made by local authorities when comparing the latest 6 month period of April to September 2017 with the same period in 2016 (17,733 assessment were made between April to September 2017, compared to 17,713 for the same period in 2016, an increase of only 20 assessments). Over the full 12 month period to end September 2017, the number of assessments made has fallen by 1% (239 assessments) compared to the previous year.
- Of the 17,733 assessments made in the 6 month period April to September 2017, there were 14,607 (82%) homeless or threatened with homelessness assessments. Compared with the same period one year ago, the proportion of cases assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness has remained the same (at 82%).

Outcomes

Of the 10,895 unintentionally homeless households that had an outcome during April to September 2017, around four out of five households (8,815 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 2017. This proportion of households securing settled accommodation has been at a roughly constant level of around four out of five in each quarterly period over the last decade.

Temporary accommodation

As at 30 September 2017:

- There were 10,899 households in temporary accommodation – a 1% increase (139 households) compared to the same date from one year earlier (10,760 households in 2016 (Table 8a).
- Compared with the same time one year ago, 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 Perth and Kinross (-64 households) and Midlothian (-55 households). The largest increases were in Edinburgh (+101 households) and Glasgow city (+82 households) (Table 9).
- On 30 September 2017, there were 3,426 households with children or with a pregnant household member in temporary accommodation (Table 8b). This is an increase of 87 such households (+3%) compared to the same date one year ago. Households with children currently comprise 31% of the 10,899 households in temporary accommodation on 30 September 2017, a similar percentage to that seen one year earlier (31%).
- There were 6,581 children in temporary accommodation on 30 September 2017, an increase of 594 (+10%) compared to 30 September 2016.
- On 30 September 2017, there were 37 households with children or a pregnant member of the household in bed and breakfast accommodation – 25 of these households were in Edinburgh (Table 10) . There was a similar total number of households (37) in bed and breakfast accommodation in the previous year as at September 2016.
- There were 34 households in unsuitable accommodation² on 30 September 2017, the same number as one year previously. Of the 34 households in unsuitable accommodation on 30 September 2017, there were 12 breaches of [The Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Order 2014](#) (i.e. where the household was in unsuitable accommodation for more than 14 days), the same as

² Of the 37 households with children or a pregnant member in bed and breakfast accommodation, 3 households were not considered to be in unsuitable accommodation, as per Article 6 of The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order.

recorded one year previously (see Table 12). As at 30 September 2017, Edinburgh had 25 households in unsuitable accommodation, accounting for 74% of the total Scotland figure, and had 11 breaches of the unsuitable accommodation order, accounting for 92% of the Scotland figure.

Applications

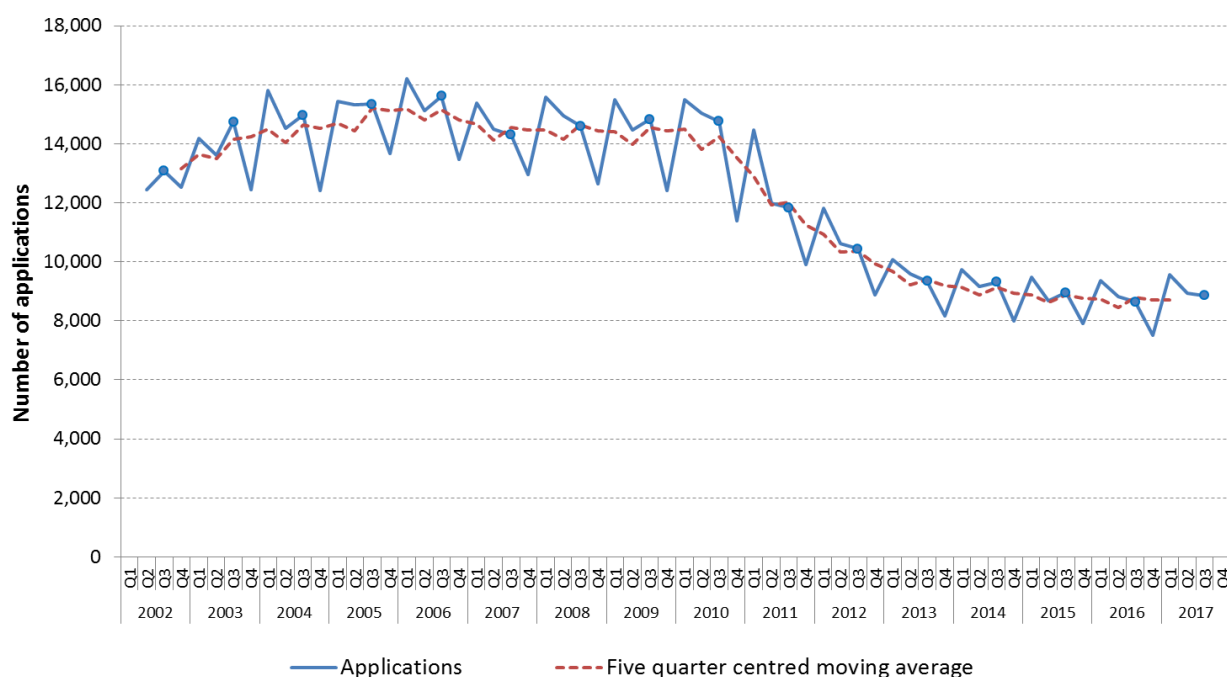
(Table 1 to Table 4 and [Chart 1](#))

All applications

In the 6 months between 1 April and 30 September 2017, local authorities received 17,797 homelessness applications, an increase of 330 (2%) over the same period in the previous year (see **Table 2**).³ However when looking over the whole of the last 12 months, there has been a smaller 0.3% (118 applications) annual increase from 34,746 applications in the 12 months to end September 2016 to 34,864 applications in the 12 months to end September 2017 (**Table 1**).

[Chart 1](#) shows that the number of homelessness applications over time has decreased beginning around Spring 2010. This downward trend has slowed down over the last couple of years and has leveled out since 2015. There are quarterly fluctuations, but this trend is clearer when looking at the five-quarter centred moving average.

Chart 1: Number of applications for homelessness assistance in Scotland, by quarter, from Apr 2002 to Sept 2017



³ Due to I.T. problems, Aberdeenshire submitted partial data for the period July to September 2017; Aberdeenshire data for this period has therefore been estimated based on the aggregate figure of HL1 applications stated in their HL2 return. For more information, see the [data quality section](#).

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 - Housing Options⁴. 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. This is likely to have contributed to an overall downward trend in the number of homelessness applications since 2010.⁵ The more recent leveling out of homelessness applications (since 2015) suggests that the effect of Housing Options on decreasing homelessness application numbers may have reached a plateau.

For April to September 2017, almost 9,700 homelessness applications (54%) had been through a Housing Options service prior to making a homelessness application. During the same period in 2016, 60% of homelessness applications had been through Housing Options first (**Table 1**). This decreasing trend is also evident when looking at annual change. In the 12 months to end September 2017, 56% of applications had been through a Housing Options service first, compared to 62% during the same period in 2016.

When comparing the 12 months to end September 2017 with the previous 12 months to end September 2016, there has been a small 0.3% increase in the number of homelessness applications to local authorities; however trends over time have varied between local authorities. Table 2 shows that when comparing these two time periods, the number of homelessness applications fell in 14 (44% of) local authority areas and increased in 18 (56% of) local authority areas. The largest numerical reductions were in Glasgow (-447 applications, -8%) and Edinburgh (-333 applications, -9%). The largest increases were in Aberdeen city (407 applications, 32%) and Dumfries and Galloway (172 applications, 24%).

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 this since July 2015.

Of the 17,797 homelessness applications received in the 6 months period between April and September 2017:

- The most common reason cited was “asked to leave” – which accounted for a total of 4,527 (25%) applications, an increase of 228 applications (5%) relative to the equivalent period of the previous year;
- The second 3,120 most common reason cited was “non-violent dispute within the household and/or a relationship breakdown” – which accounted for a total of 3,120 (18%) applications, a slight increase of 39 (1%) compared to the same period in the previous year.

⁴ <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/homelessness/housing-options/>

⁵ [Homelessness in Scotland: 2016/17](#), provides further background information on the reductions in homelessness applications over time, in the Applications section.

Table 4a shows that, in the 6 months between 1 April and 30 September 2017, there were 11,600 (65% of the 17,797) homelessness applications where the local authority recorded a reason for failing to maintain the accommodation⁶. Applicants are given a list of possible reasons, and local authorities may select multiple reasons. A greater proportion of applications had a reason for failing to maintain accommodation between April and September 2017 (65%) compared to the same period in 2016 (60%).

Of the 11,600 applicants with reasons for failing to maintain accommodation:

- 4,900 (42% 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 298 (6%) from the same period in the previous year;
- 2,507 (22% of those completing this question) applicants cited lack of support from friends / family as a reason. This is an increase of 500 applications (25%) over the same period in the previous year;
- 2,057 (18% of those completing this question) cited financial difficulties / debt / unemployment as a reason. This is an increase of 445 applicants (28%) compared to the same period in the previous year; and
- 2,550 (22% of those completing this question) applicants cited mental health reasons and 1,026 (9%) 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 507 applicants (25%). The number of times physical health was cited by applicants has increased by 162 (19%).

Assessments

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

Overall assessments

There has been no substantive change in the number of assessments made by local authorities when comparing the latest 6 month period of April to September 2017 with the same period in 2016 (17,733 assessment were made between April to September 2017, compared to 17,713 for the same period in 2016, an increase of only 20 assessments). Over the full 12 month period to end September 2017, the number of assessments made has fallen by 1% (239 assessments) compared to the previous year.

Of the 17,733 homelessness assessments made between 1 April and 30 September 2017, 14,607 (82%) were assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness, 648 (4%) were assessed as not homeless and 833 (5%) had their homelessness resolved

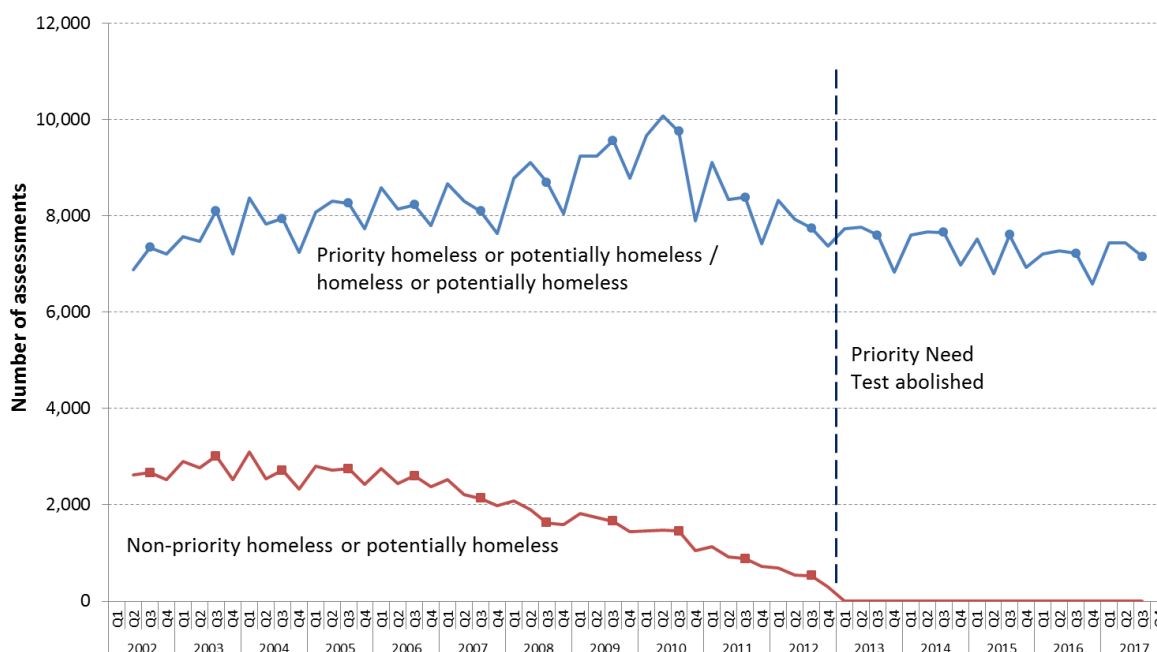
⁶ More information on the questionnaire for homelessness applications can be found in the output specification for the data, found at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/15257/OutputSpecification>

before the assessment was made. There were 1,645 (9%) 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 the same (at 82%).

Note that the number of assessments made during April to September (17,733) is lower than the number of applications for homelessness assistance (17,797). These numbers do not match because some applications made during the period are yet to reach assessment stage; and some assessments during this period are completed for applications that were made before the period.

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, by quarter, April 2002 to September 2017



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.

The proportion of cases assessed as intentionally homeless has generally increased at a national level since 2009, but since 2014 this proportion has reduced from a quarterly average of 6% to 5% (**Table 1 and Chart 3**). Of the 17,733 homelessness assessments made between 1 April and 30 September 2017, there were 784 intentionality decisions, a slight increase of 5 (1%) in the number of such decisions compared with the same period one year earlier.

Chart 3: Percentage of cases assessed as intentionally homeless, by quarter, April 2002 to September 2017

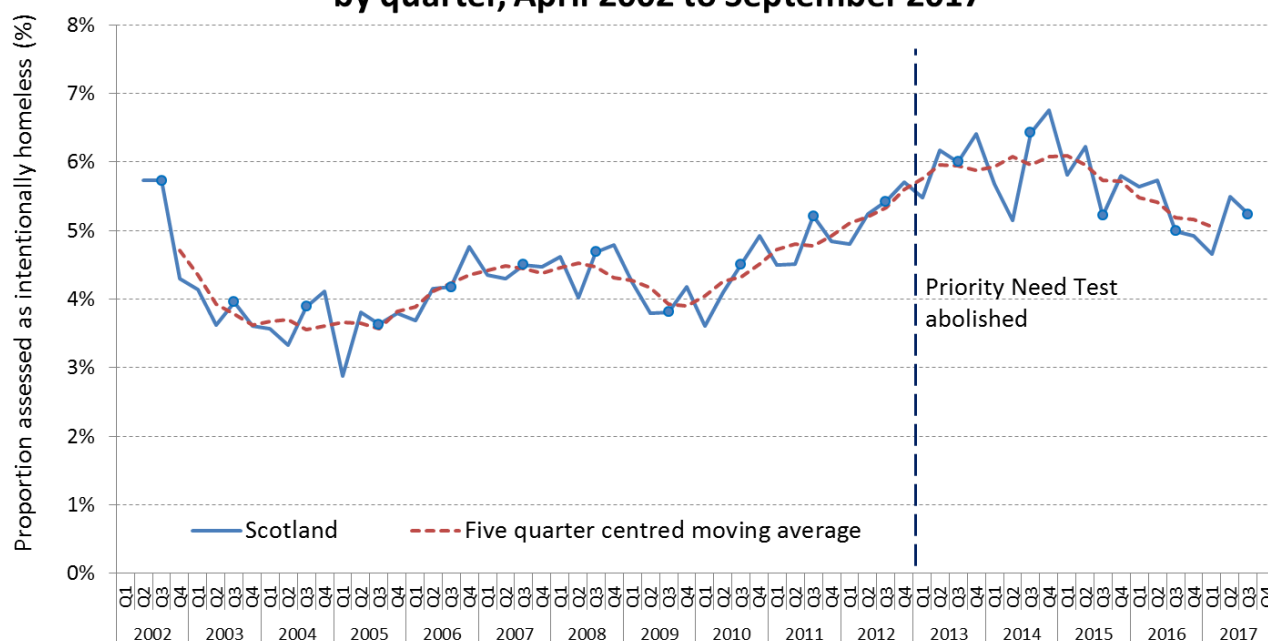


Table 5 shows that, between 1 April and 30 September 2017, there is a high proportion of intentionally homeless assessments in a number of Local Authorities - the highest proportions were in Falkirk (16.3%), Moray (15.8%) and East Lothian (13.1%).

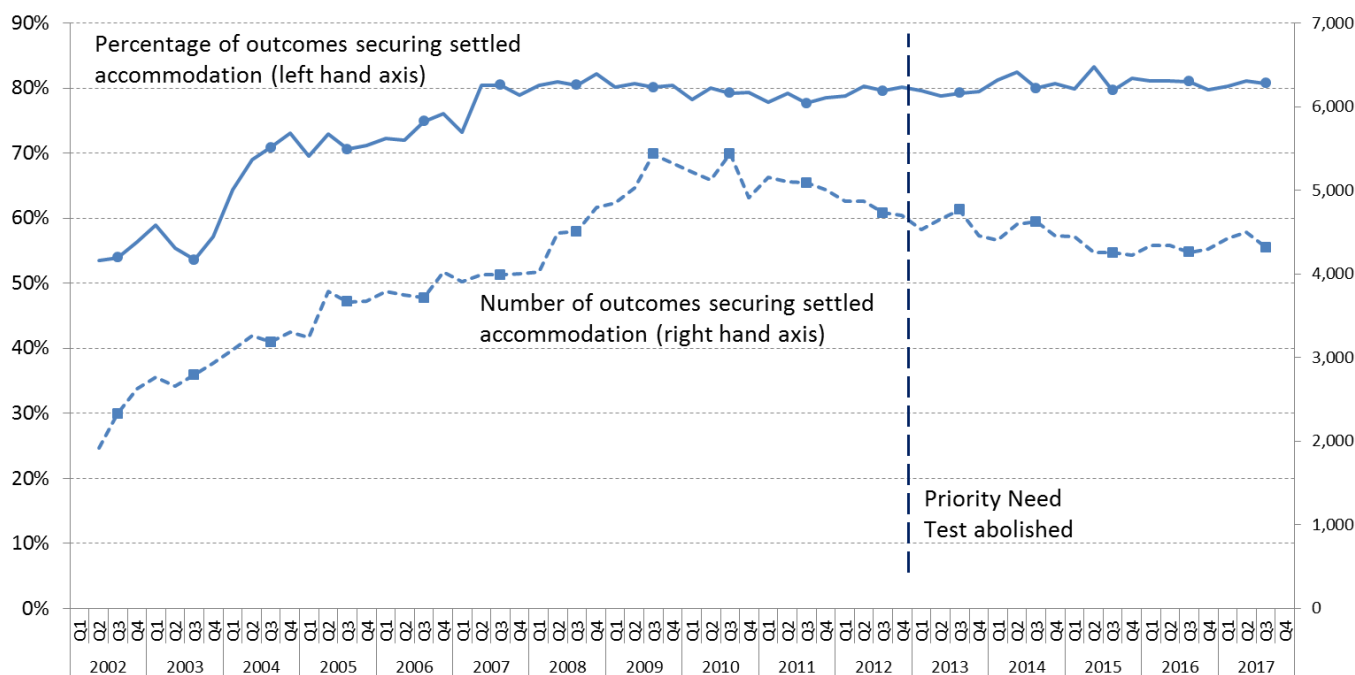
Outcomes

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

Overall outcomes

Table 6 shows that, between 1 April and 30 September 2017, settled accommodation (private and social rented tenancies, including any non-permanent accommodation) was secured for 8,815 (81%) of the 10,985 applications where contact was maintained through to completion of the application. As **Chart 4** shows, the overall number of households securing settled accommodation has decreased since 2010 (the total number of homelessness applications has also decreased over this period); however, when looking at settled accommodation outcomes as a proportion of all outcomes in each period, the proportion has remained stable.

Chart 4: Number and percentage of cases assessed as unintentionally homeless [and in priority need], securing settled accommodation and where contact was maintained to duty discharge, by quarter, April 2002 to September 2017



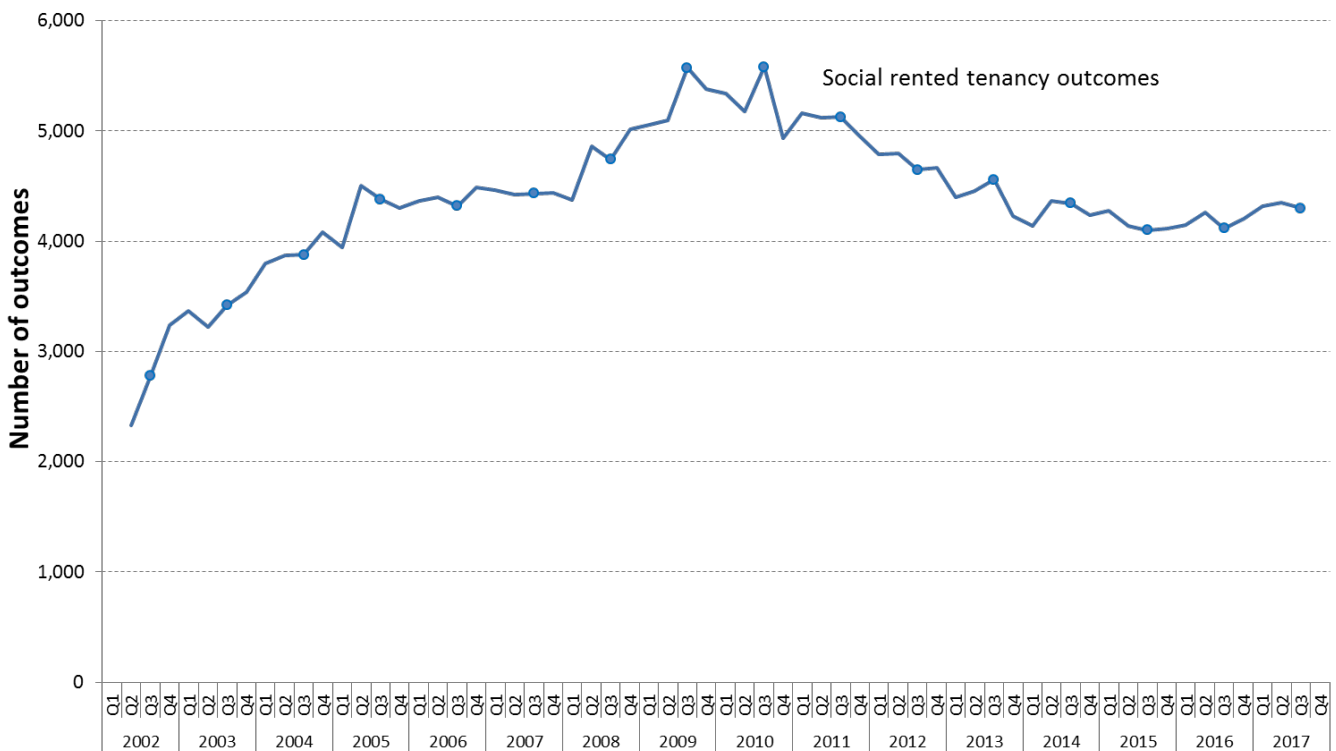
Looking at all types of settled accommodation used during the past six months (April to September 2017), [Table 6](#) shows that Local Authority accommodation comprises almost half (46%) of all outcomes for unintentionally homeless households, where contact was maintained, secured local authority accommodation. Over a quarter (28%) 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. 19% of cases assessed as homeless (where contact was maintained to duty discharge) had other outcomes, including return to previous accommodation (4%), moved in with friends/family (4%), other 'known' outcome (7%), outcome unknown (3%) and hostel (less than 1%).

However note that these percentages can vary between local authorities, for example the proportion of cases securing settled accommodation in the latest 6 month period varies between 64% in Midlothian to 90% in Scottish Borders. The 6 stock transfer authorities of Argyll & Bute, Dumfries & Galloway, Glasgow, Inverclyde, Eilean Siar and Scottish Borders do not have council housing stock to manage following the transfer of social housing stock to housing associations, and therefore settled accommodation with the social sector will generally be to housing association properties rather than local authority properties. The proportion of cases securing settled accommodation in the private rented sector ranges between 0% in Midlothian, Moray, Orkney and Shetland up to 22% in Edinburgh.

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 since fallen back from this peak and has been around 4,000 to 4,300 per quarter since the end of 2013 (see **Table 1** and [Chart 5](#)).

Chart 5: Social rented tenancy outcomes of homeless applications, by quarter, April 2002 to September 2017



Note that Chart 5 is based on outcomes for all applications, regardless of assessment decision or whether contact was maintained until duty discharge.

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 which 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.

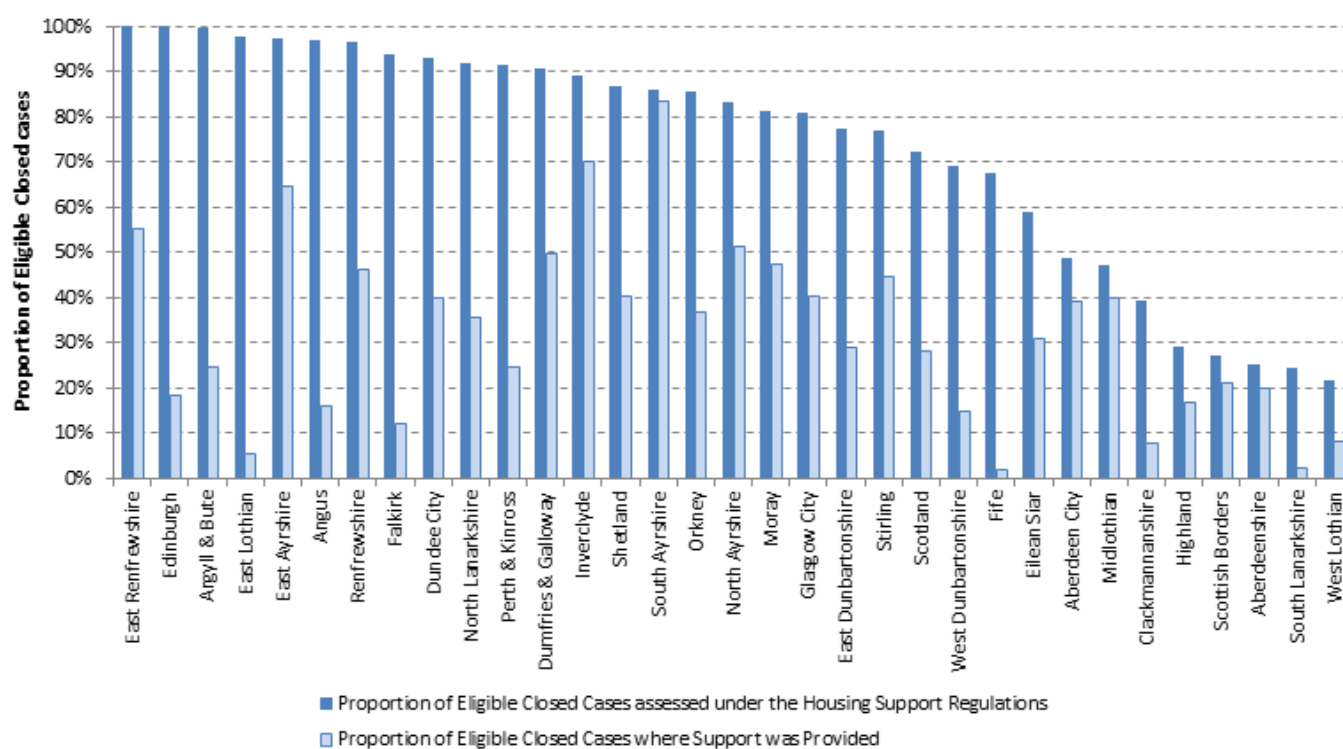
The legislation states that 'housing support services' include any service which provides support, assistance, advice or counseling to an individual with particular needs with a view to enabling that individual to occupy, or to continue to occupy, residential accommodation as the individual's sole or 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 during the 6 month period from 1 April to 30 September 2017, there were 13,314 cases assessed as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness that were closed in this period. Of these, 9,594 (72%) were recorded as being assessed under the housing support regulations, and 3,721 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, including East Renfrewshire and Edinburgh. This is in contrast to other authorities who are recording very few assessments under the regulations, for example in West Lothian. What appears to be even more variable is the extent to which support is then being provided: there are examples where a large majority of those assessed have support provided (for example in South Ayrshire). Conversely, in other local authorities, for example, Fife, a very small proportion of those assessed under the regulations go on to receive support (see [Chart 6](#)).

Chart 6: Proportion of eligible closed cases assessed and with support provided under the Housing Support Regulations, by quarter, April 2002 to September 2017



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 7](#) to [Chart 9](#))

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.

Statistics on numbers of households in temporary accommodation are currently taken from the HL2 quarterly statistical return by Local Authorities. The return provides aggregate 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.

In addition to the data collected via the HL2 data return, from 1 April 2016, Local Authorities began submitting data on temporary accommodation via the HL3 return.

The HL3 return collects placement level information on temporary accommodation and will enable analysis of the total number of people and families who have been offered and accepted temporary accommodation throughout each year.

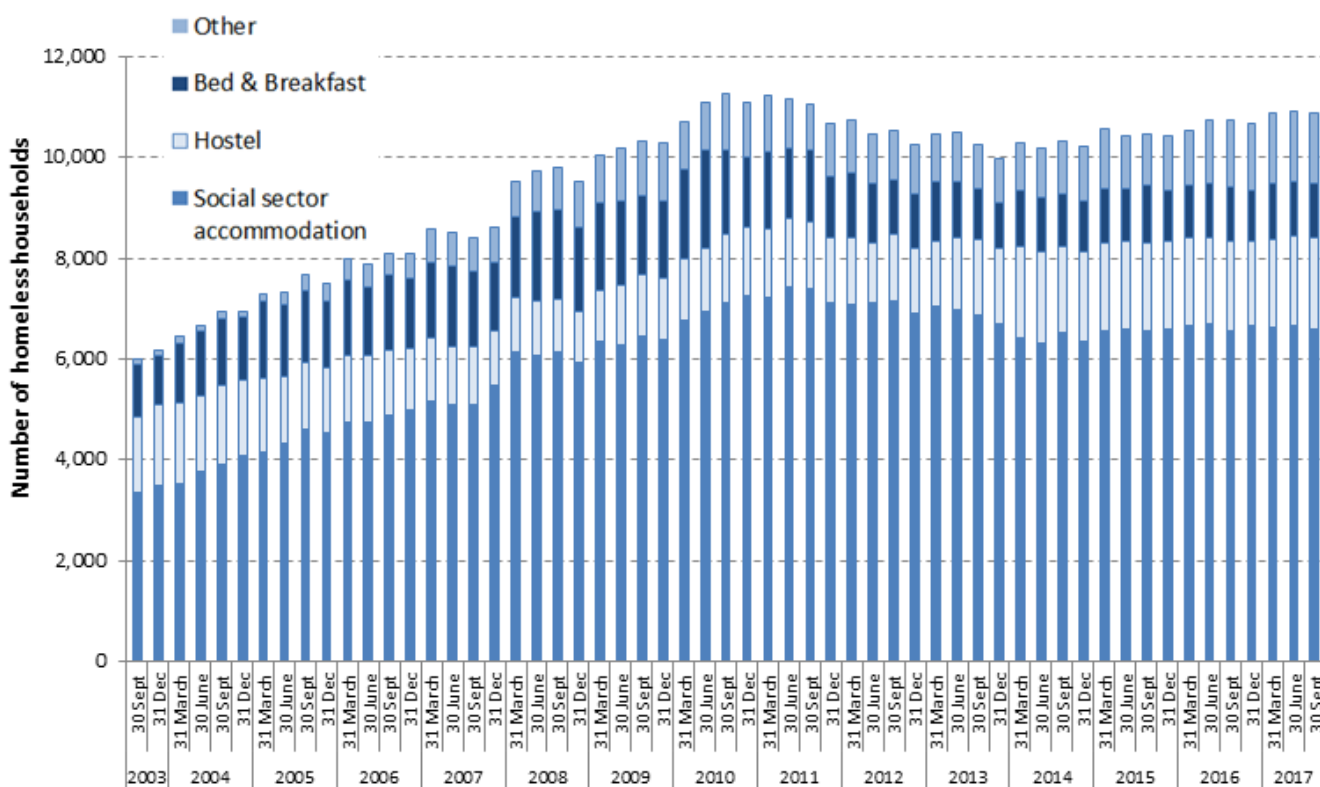
The Scottish Government are working with local authorities to develop and quality assure the HL3 data return. Some authorities are still to provide a fully accurate and usable set of data. Once these data issues have been fully investigated and resolved, the HL3 data will be used to monitor and publish more in-depth information on the use of temporary accommodation.

The Scottish Government will take stock of the status and quality of HL3 data provided by local authorities at the Annual Homelessness Statistics User Group meeting on 20th February 2018 and discuss any outstanding actions required before plans can be developed to publish analysis and statistics from this data source.

All households in temporary accommodation

After a marked increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation - from around 6,000 as at September 2003 to almost double that (11,254) as at 31 March 2011 - the total number of households has subsequently reduced to around 10,000 at the end of 2013, before rising slowly since then to almost 11,000 households in the latest period. On 30 September 2017, there were 10,899 households in temporary accommodation, a 1% increase (139 households) compared with 30 September 2016, when there were 10,760 households in temporary accommodation (see Table 8a and [Chart 7](#)).

Chart 7: Number of homeless households in temporary accommodation in Scotland, by quarter, April 2002 to September 2017

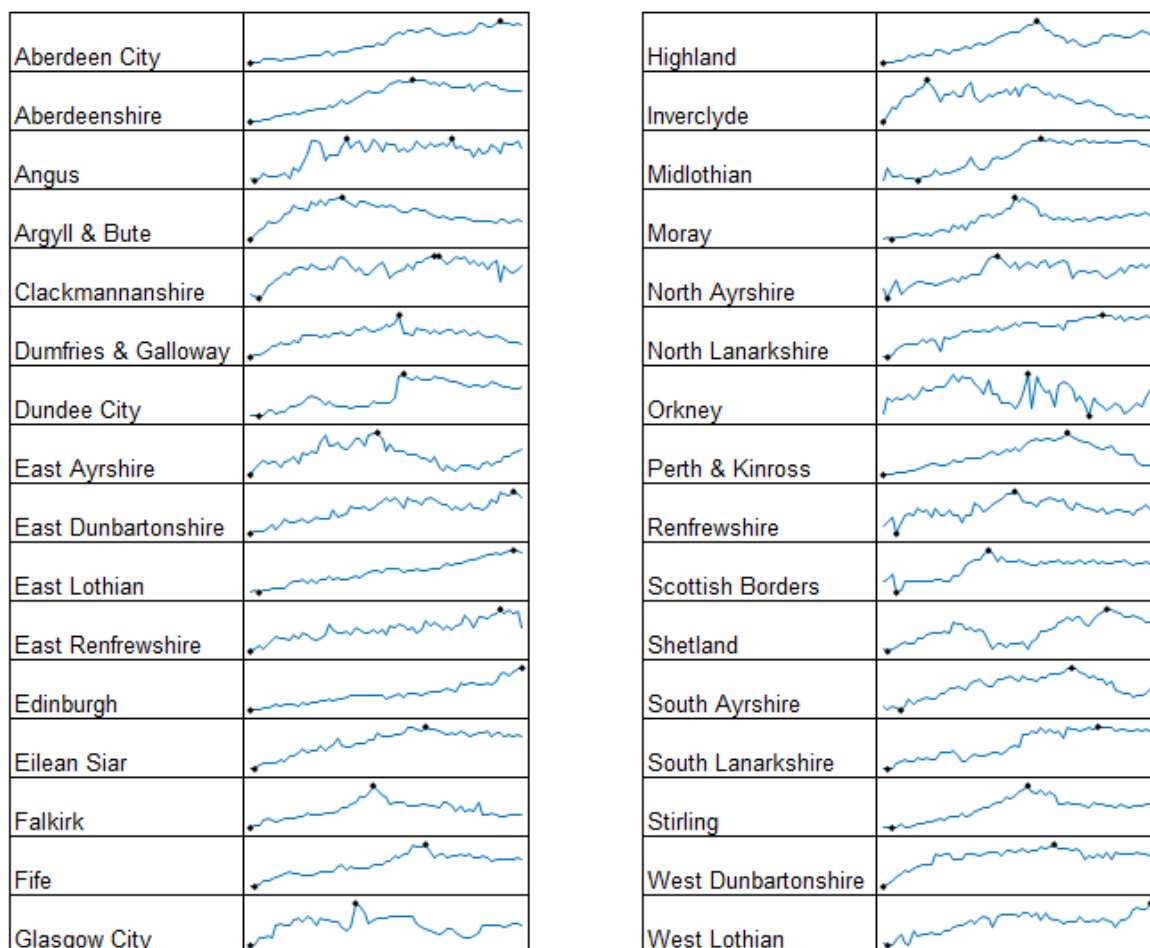


At the Local Authority level, the situation is more complex. Comparing the situation on 30 September 2017 with the same date one year ago, the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation fell in 16 Local Authority areas and increased in 16 Local Authority areas. The largest numerical decreases were in Perth and Kinross (-64 households) and Midlothian (-55 households). The largest increases were in Edinburgh (101 households) and Glasgow (82 households) (see **Table 9**).

[Chart 8](#) 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 Edinburgh and West Lothian. As at 30 September 2017 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 the impacts of Housing Options. A further discussion of these impacts can be found in the annual publication Homelessness in Scotland: 2016/17⁷.

Chart 8: Number of households in temporary accommodation by local authority and quarter, April 2002 to September 2017



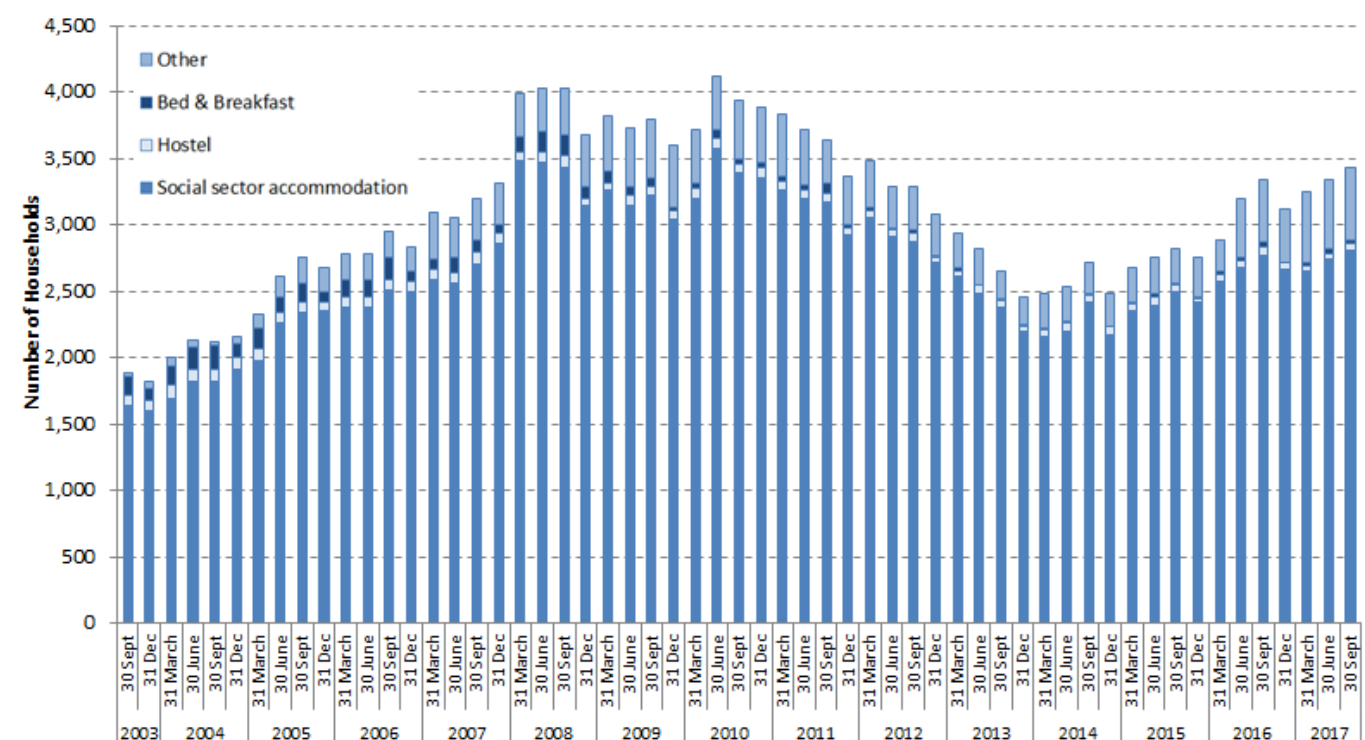
⁷ Which can be found online at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables>

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 visual comparisons across Local Authorities should be avoided.

Households with children in temporary accommodation

On 30 September 2017, there were 3,426 households with children or with a household member pregnant in temporary accommodation (**Table 8b** and [Chart 9](#)). This is an increase of 87 such households (3%) compared to the same date one year ago. Households with children currently comprise almost a third (31%) of the 10,899 households in temporary accommodation.

Chart 9: Number of households with children or pregnant women in temporary accommodation, by quarter, April 2002 to September 2017



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 a pregnant woman was mainly local authority or housing association accommodation (81%), with a small proportion (1%) being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation (see **Table 8b**).

There were 6,581 children in homeless households in temporary accommodation on 30 September 2017, an increase of 594 (+10%) from 30 September 2016 (see **Table 8c**).

On 30 September 2017, 25 out of 32 Local Authorities had no households with children or a pregnant woman in bed & breakfast accommodation. Within the remaining 7 Local Authorities, there were a total of 37 households which had children or a pregnant woman in such accommodation. Edinburgh contained 25 of these households. East Lothian and Glasgow had 3; Fife and Stirling had 2; Eilean Siar and West Lothian had 1 (**Table 10**). Compared to the same date one year ago, the number of households with children or a pregnant woman in bed and breakfast accommodation is the same.

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 (i.e. the household was in unsuitable temporary accommodation for more than 14 days). The figures below show that in the quarter ending 30 September 2017:

- 34 households were in unsuitable accommodation, these were in Edinburgh (25 households), Glasgow (3 households), Fife (2 households), Eilean Siar, East Lothian, Stirling and West Lothian (1 household in each local authority area) (see **Table 11**). Compared to the same time point one year ago, the total number of households in unsuitable accommodation has not changed.
- There were 12 households in breach of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014 (see **Table 12**). These were recorded in three local authorities: Edinburgh (11 households) and East Lothian (1 household). Compared to the same time point one year ago (30 September 2016), the total number of households in breach has stayed the same.

The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2017 recently changed the 2014 Order to reduce the period of time (from 14 to 7 days) that a household in unsuitable temporary accommodation is identified as a breach. This change in legislation came into force on 2 October 2017 and so will be reflected in the reporting of the next set of statistics, to be published in June 2018. For more information see the [Summary of current legislation](#).

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.

Reporting of the Number of Applications (per quarter)											
Publication Date	2015				2016				2017		
	Jan - March	April- June	July - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan - March	April- June	July - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan - March	April- June	July - Sept
23-Jan-17	9,476	8,690	8,959	7,919	9,360	8,827	8,640	7,518	9,549	8,936	8,861
27-Jun-17	9,476	8,692	8,964	7,917	9,353	8,810	8,620	7,481	9,189		
17-Jan-17	9,480	8,696	8,965	7,919	9,347	8,778	8,329				
28-Jun-16	9,497	8,704	8,953	7,615							
05-Apr-16	9,479	8,677	8,779								
12-Jan-16	9,465	8,495									
29-Sep-15	9,292										

*Note the (Annual) June publications do not report quarterly changes, but annual statistics.

Difference in applications between publication shown and most recent publication

27-Jun-17	0	-2	-5	2	7	17	20	37	360
17-Jan-17	-4	-6	-6	0	13	49	311		
28-Jun-16	-21	-14	6	304					
05-Apr-16	-3	13	180						
12-Jan-16	11	195							
29-Sep-15	184								

Percentage difference in applications between publication shown and most recent publication

27-Jun-17	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
17-Jan-17	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	4%		
28-Jun-16	0%	0%	0%	4%					
05-Apr-16	0%	0%	2%						
12-Jan-16	0%	2%							
29-Sep-15	2%								

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 5% of all homeless or potentially homeless). This category has therefore been combined with that of unintentionally homeless for the more complex analysis.

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.

The HL1 data for Aberdeenshire for the period July to September 2017 was not consistent with figures sent through the aggregate HL2 return - the HL1 submission did not include information on around half of Aberdeenshire's homelessness applications.

Aberdeenshire are still investigating this issue. We have therefore estimated HL1 cases for the purpose of this publication and the Scotland totals, and the estimated figures are based on the number of applications received to the local authority as quoted through the HL2 return for Aberdeenshire. Figures on Temporary Accommodation are not affected by this data estimation as they are submitted through the HL2 return.

Once Aberdeenshire have rectified the data extraction problem, the HL1 data for the period in question will be revised – see below.

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

12. 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 once a year. The minutes and papers from meetings of the group can be found on the Scottish homelessness statistics website at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/15257/22540>.

Obtaining additional analyses

13. 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]⁸

- 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/or a pregnant woman 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

⁸ 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. In exceptional circumstances, local authorities may provide households with unsuitable accommodation, but for no longer than 14 days of that households application. Households are in breach of the Order if they are in unsuitable accommodation for longer than this period. [The Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Order 2017](#) has reduced this time from '14' to '7' days. This amendment came into force on 2 October 2017 and therefore will be reported on in the next annual homelessness statistics, released in June 2018.

11. 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.

As of the release of 30 June 2016, statutory homelessness and prevention and relief statistics have been combined into a single statistical release.

The most recent statutory homelessness statistics for England (updated on 14 December 2017 with July to September 2017 data) are available here:

<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:

Josie Knowles

Homelessness Statistics

Telephone: 0131 244 3861

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/homelesstats>
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

Complaints and suggestions

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

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