

Ending Homelessness Together Annual report to the Scottish Parliament

October 2021



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Foreword



**Shona Robison MSP,
Cabinet Secretary for
Social Justice, Housing
and Local Government**



**Councillor Kelly Parry,
COSLA Spokesperson
for Community
Wellbeing**

Everyone needs a safe, warm and affordable place they can call home.

The Scottish Government and COSLA updated the joint [Ending homelessness together action plan](#) in October 2020. Since then, a number of other policy statements have recognised just how important a secure and settled home is for people's wellbeing.

In March 2021, the Scottish Government published Scotland's first long-term national housing strategy, [Housing to 2040](#). The same month the Scottish Government and COSLA published an anti-destitution strategy, [Ending destitution together](#), and we also provided an [initial response](#) to the report of the Social Renewal Advisory Board. In September 2021, the Scottish Government published its programme for government for 2021/22, [A fairer, greener Scotland](#).

What all four documents share is the message that decent housing is a fundamental human right.

This annual report describes our progress towards ending homelessness in Scotland and how we are turning the words and policies in [Ending homelessness together](#) into meaningful action.

Living with the pandemic has made us re-evaluate the true meaning of home. It has shown us that tackling inequality is more important than ever. It has changed who we see as lifesavers and heroes – as countless frontline homelessness workers have continued to do their jobs during the crisis, putting themselves at risk to provide support for others.

During the last 12 months there has been remarkable progress towards our goal of ending homelessness. We have demonstrated that, with the right approach and funding, local authorities and their third sector partners have the means to end rough sleeping in Scotland. We kept night shelters closed by providing better quality emergency accommodation. We hit our 100,000 affordable homes milestone. We extended the temporary ban on the enforcement of eviction orders to provide renters with safe homes during the pandemic. We introduced hardship schemes to support those struggling to pay their rent. We helped people with no recourse to public funds to avoid destitution. We amended legislation so that no homeless household has to stay in unsuitable accommodation for more than seven days. We saw our Housing First pathfinder programme sail past the milestone of 500 tenancies. We have amplified the voice of lived experience.

We were building on strong foundations. There was already a real determination from local authorities to tackle homelessness. There has been a much greater focus on homelessness prevention activity in recent years. And a strong collaborative ethos already existed in the housing options hubs. All these factors have facilitated the transition to rapid rehousing by default.

We have taken bold steps forward but wider challenges remain. While there were fewer homelessness applications in the last year, the number of households in temporary accommodation has increased as a result of the pandemic. We have made long-term investments in affordable housing in Scotland but some of the poorest households are finding their situation compounded by UK Government policies on welfare and immigration.



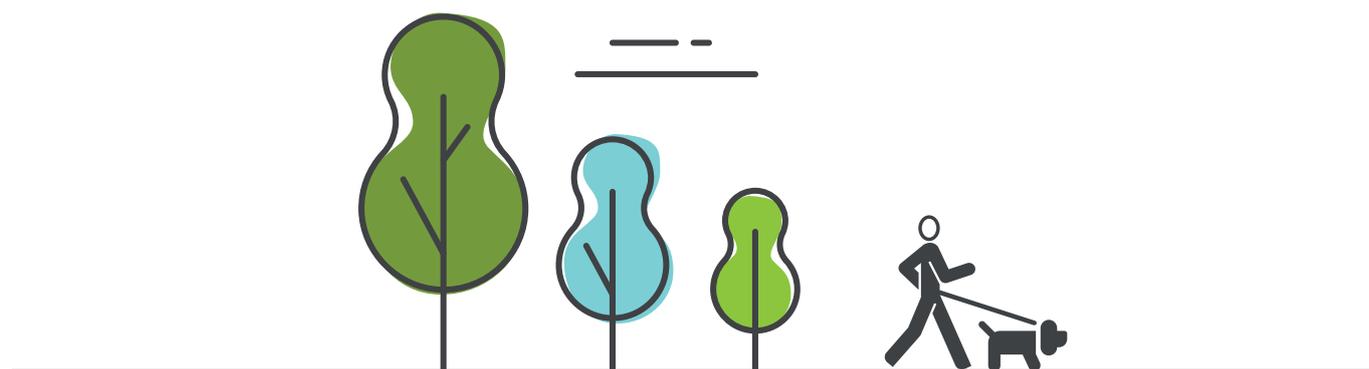
We know that there are no simple solutions to ending homelessness. What works for one person does not necessarily work for another. We are committed to a person-centred, trauma-informed and no wrong door approach, which means that homelessness support should fit around the person and their individual needs. We do not expect people to follow a set path or to adapt to a standard range of services. We want our policies and funding decisions to be grounded in the best evidence and that is why we will continue to learn from our expert advisers on the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group, from people with lived experience of homelessness and from other nations.

We believe Scotland is leading the way in our commitment to end homelessness but we cannot afford to be complacent. We and our partners must find the energy to dig deeper. We have to maintain momentum with the downward trend in numbers of people rough sleeping. We must step up efforts to address

the inequalities that were exposed during the pandemic. We need to get better at joining up services, data and decisions. We must accelerate rapid rehousing approaches to reduce the number of people stuck in temporary accommodation. We must and will deliver on our promises to introduce new homelessness prevention legislation and a new right to adequate housing in Scotland.

Scotland's homelessness strategy is already backed by a £50 million fund, which has helped us to implement major changes to homelessness policy in the last four years. The Scottish Government has doubled this fund and will invest an additional £50 million over this parliamentary term to implement the next phase of our work with partners to end homelessness and rough sleeping.

Our vision has not changed. Our determination to succeed remains firm. Together we can end homelessness in Scotland.



Homelessness vision:

Everyone has a home that meets their needs
Homelessness is ended



National Performance Framework: Our Values

'We are a society which treats all our people with kindness, dignity and compassion...'

To end homelessness we will:

Embed a person-centred approach

- MY SUPPORT IS FLEXIBLE AND BUILDS ON MY STRENGTHS AND SUCCESSES
- I ALWAYS HAVE CHOICE AND CONTROL
- I AM LISTENED TO, VALUED AND TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

Prevent homelessness from happening in the first place

- I CAN FIND SUPPORT QUICKLY IF I NEED IT, BEFORE REACHING CRISIS POINT
- I AM HELPED TO KEEP MY HOME, WHICH HELPS ME FOCUS ON OTHER GOALS
- MY HOUSING OPTIONS ARE CONSIDERED WHEN MY OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE

Join up planning and resources to tackle homelessness

- I KNOW WHERE TO GET HELP
- I EXPECT SERVICES TO WORK TOGETHER, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ME
- I TRUST THAT THE RIGHT PEOPLE ARE INFORMED ABOUT MY NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES

Respond quickly and effectively whenever homelessness happens

- I EXPECT MY HOUSING CRISIS TO BE RESPONDED TO WITH URGENCY
- THE HELP I GET IS RIGHT FOR ME, AND REDUCES THE RISK OF HOMELESSNESS HAPPENING AGAIN

Prioritise settled homes for all

- I CAN EXERCISE MY RIGHT TO ACCESS AND MAINTAIN A SAFE AND SECURE HOME
- I BUILD AND MAINTAIN POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND AM PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Status of actions 2021

The following table provides information on the status of all the actions, organised by the five themes. We have deleted actions that were already complete at the time of our last publication and have grouped actions that are similar.

Key

- ✓ Completed since last publication
- Well underway
- Started
- Planned in the next 12 months

Theme		Action	Status
Embed a person-centred approach	1	Develop the evidence base on homelessness and, in particular, understand the impact of COVID-19 on the risk of homelessness for particular groups	●
	2	Strengthen the role and influence of the Change Team	✓
	3	Support people to access digital equipment, data and training	●
	4	Apply a gendered analysis to our actions, ensuring the homelessness system meets the needs of diverse groups of women	●
	5	Ensure homelessness services are grounded in no wrong door and person-centred principles (explore options for taking forward personal housing plans; ensure child wellbeing assessments are undertaken; and develop housing options training toolkit)	●
	6	Raise public awareness of homelessness and challenge stigma	●

Theme		Action	Status
Prevent homelessness from happening in the first place	7	Introduce the transfer of tenancy provisions for social housing tenancies as part of the Domestic Abuse Bill	✓
	8	Improve outcomes for women experiencing domestic abuse (publish an implementation plan to respond to the recommendations of the domestic abuse pathway group; and develop and implement human rights-based accommodation pathways for women and children with no recourse to public funds who are experiencing domestic abuse)	●
	9	Increase focus on tenancy sustainment and share innovative and successful examples of early prevention and effective tenancy sustainment work	●
	10	Work with COSLA and local authorities to consider shared and more streamlined application processes for discretionary housing payments and use information sharing powers to help local authorities target people who are most in need of discretionary housing payments	●
	11	Support the social housing sector to identify and support households at risk of homelessness before they reach crisis point and create a homelessness prevention fund for social landlords	✓
	12	Develop cross-sector project to establish mechanisms for avoiding evictions into homelessness	●
	13	Take forward further awareness raising activity on financial support and tenancy rights	✓
	14	Look further at affordability in the private rented sector, building on the work to set up and review rent pressure zones	●
	15	Assess the impact of temporary pre-action protocols in the private rented sector to inform the development of permanent pre-action protocols	●

Theme		Action	Status
Prevent homelessness from happening in the first place	16	Support the First-tier Tribunal to improve transparency around outcomes for tenants through better use of data	●
	17	Respond to the recommendations from the prevention review group, setting out our next steps in 2021	●
	18	Develop prevention pathways for groups at particular risk (develop rapid protocols with public institutions as part of prevention pathway work and test, learn from and improve the homelessness prevention approaches recommended in the pathways)	●
	19	Prevent and respond effectively to youth homelessness	●
	20	Make homelessness assessments more flexible	●
	21	Understand the impact of UK welfare reforms	●
	22	Review implementation of the SHORE standards	●

Theme		Action	Status
Prioritise settled homes for all	23	Take forward work on the right to adequate housing (through work on First Minister's national taskforce for human rights leadership)	●
	24	Roll out Housing First in Scotland (support the Housing First Scotland pathfinder programme in five cities; build on early results from pathfinder programme and work with local authorities to scale up Housing First more rapidly; and forge partnerships with health and justice systems to embed Housing First)	●
	25	Significant increase to the proportion of social homes allocated to people who are homeless while we are still in phase 3 of Scotland's route map	●
	26	Complete the delivery of 50,000 affordable homes as soon as it is safe to do so	●
	27	Encourage the housing sector to prioritise the process of bringing empty homes back into use and support local authorities to build stronger relationships with the private rented sector and to develop their empty homes services and private rented sector access schemes	●
	28	Develop best practice examples of choice in settled housing and assess impacts of providing wide range of housing options in local areas	●
	29	Set out our position on a temporary accommodation funding framework	●
	30	Establish a third sector homelessness fund to support transformational change and launch it by the end of 2020	✓

Theme		Action	Status
Respond quickly and effectively whenever homelessness happens	31	Work with local authorities and other partners to provide access to safe and self-contained accommodation during the pandemic	●
	32	Share summaries of the audits of the numbers and needs of people in emergency accommodation with the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group	●
	33	Support local authorities and health and social care partners with their efforts to provide appropriate move on support and stable accommodation for all those currently in emergency accommodation	●
	34	Support local winter planning, including efforts by partners to modify night shelter provision in Edinburgh and Glasgow and end the use of night shelter and dormitory-style provision in future	●
	35	Publish guidance later in 2020 on the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and bring forward a further Scottish statutory instrument that will provide clarity on the changes to the Order	●
	36	Develop a model of frontline outreach and train and support frontline staff	●
	37	Support people engaged in street begging	●
	38	Prevent homelessness for those with no recourse to public funds (press UK Government on migrant homelessness; form alliances with like-minded partners; work with the Everyone Home Collective; explore alternative routes through which to provide accommodation to people with no recourse to public funds; and extend funding for projects that provide advocacy and legal advice to destitute asylum seekers and people with no recourse to public funds)	●
	39	Set out broader range of accommodation options in crisis situations, including information about short-term community hosting as a crisis response	●

Theme		Action	Status
Respond quickly and effectively whenever homelessness happens	40	Revise legislative arrangements for intentionality and local connection and amend intentionality definition to focus more closely on 'deliberate manipulation'	●
	41	Introduce temporary accommodation standards	●
	42	Complete voluntary review of homelessness provision at Glasgow City Council	●
	43	Learn from recent initiatives and consider what further support is needed to help people with the transition out of the crisis	●
Join up planning and resources to tackle homelessness	44	Ensure next National Performance Framework review includes explicit consideration of homelessness	●
	45	Work with Public Health Scotland to ensure that guidance on infection prevention and control remains fit for purpose and develop separate guidance for homelessness services in Scotland	✓
	46	Improve how we use Public Health Scotland data and intelligence capabilities to ensure improved outcomes	●
	47	Learn from the crisis period to further improve drug and alcohol treatment and harm reduction services	●
	48	Embed homelessness as a public health priority	●
	49	Improve join up between health, social care, housing and homelessness planning	●
	50	Ensure local authorities, housing providers and public bodies join up to prevent homelessness	●
	51	Produce cross-government response to the Hard Edges report	●

Theme		Action	Status
Join up planning and resources to tackle homelessness	52	Update code of guidance on homelessness and review need for code of practice in code of guidance on homelessness	●
	53	Join up housing, employment and employability support	●
	54	Work with local authorities and delivery partners on effective implementation of Ending Homelessness Together	●
	55	Support the homelessness system to respond more appropriately to the shared needs of mothers and children	●
Other actions	56	Review the homelessness data collection (HL1) to improve our understanding of the causes of homelessness and the outcomes, improve homelessness data on protected characteristics and ensure Scottish Government data collections reflect the increased priority of tackling homelessness	●
	57	Conduct equality impact assessments	●
	58	Undertake analysis of the economic impacts of homelessness	●

Progress against actions in theme 1: we will embed a person-centred approach

We have made steady progress against the outstanding actions in this section. We have completed one action; three actions are well underway; and work has started on the remaining two.

We are taking a person-centred approach to our policy making, to the people we serve and to the homelessness services we provide.

We have committed to **develop the evidence base on homelessness**. In particular, we said we would **build on the evidence base to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the risk of homelessness for particular groups**. We also said we would **apply a gendered analysis to our actions, ensuring the homelessness system meets the needs of diverse groups of women**.

The Scottish Government's [latest homelessness statistics](#) show that the pandemic has had an impact on homelessness. The number of homelessness applications received by local authorities has reduced but the number of households staying in temporary accommodation has increased.

The impacts of COVID-19 have been and are likely to continue to be borne unequally. Unequal outcomes between different groups existed pre-COVID, and the effects of the pandemic have worsened this. Analysis carried out at the end of 2020 showed that those groups disproportionately impacted include households on low incomes or in poverty, low-paid workers, children and young people, older people, disabled people, minority ethnic groups and women. Mothers have been more vulnerable than fathers to job loss during the crisis, either as a result of the shutdown or due to an inability to keep working while managing childcare responsibilities. The evidence also suggests that domestic abuse incidents reported to the police went up during the lockdown period, although referrals to services initially decreased during the early stage of lockdown, suggesting that access to support may have been reduced.

This evidence is contributing to our understanding of the impact of the pandemic on the risk of homelessness and has prompted the Scottish Government and COSLA to refresh the membership and terms of reference of our expert [Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group](#) so that the interests of all those at risk of homelessness are considered and represented.

- We have reported openly on how COVID-19 has affected progress towards Scotland's [national outcomes](#) and impacted on particular groups. With input from COSLA, the Scottish Government produced a report, [Scotland's Wellbeing: The Impact of COVID-19](#), in December 2020.
- The Scottish Government included equality characteristics in its main [homelessness statistics](#) publication in June 2021¹.
- We appointed someone with gender expertise to our Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group in 2020 and we recently invited to the group a new member with expertise on the housing and homelessness concerns of people from minority ethnic communities.
- The Scottish Government has introduced new legislation to strengthen the housing rights of victims-survivors of domestic abuse (more details are provided [later in the document](#)).
- The Scottish Government is in the process of commissioning research to better understand those people who are homeless, at imminent risk of homelessness or who face housing insecurity but do not appear in Scotland's official figures.
- The Scottish Government has organised gender competency training for policy makers in the homelessness unit.
- Rapid rehousing transition plans are supported by an equality impact assessment (EQIA). In 2021, The Scottish Government asked local authorities to review EQIAs through a gender lens, taking account of the [recommendations](#) from the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Scotland and Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) on how to improve housing outcomes for women and children experiencing domestic abuse.

We know that some people are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness but do not appear in official homelessness statistics. This type of homelessness is hidden from view. Particular groups, including women, young people, ethnic minorities, migrants and people in rural areas are likely to be part of this hidden population. For example, we know that domestic abuse is the leading cause of women's homelessness in Scotland, and some victims-survivors report that they have been forced into hidden homelessness, staying with friends or family to escape the perpetrator of domestic abuse.

1 In 2019 and 2020, the equalities breakdown of our statistics was published later in the year in a separate publication.

People with personal and frontline experience of homelessness from the Change Team are already represented on our [Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group](#) but we said we would **strengthen the role and influence of the Change Team.**

- Change Team members have collaborated with government officials on the job description for a senior post in the homelessness unit and they have contributed to thinking on plans for a new right to adequate housing in Scotland. The Change Team has also launched a [national conversation](#) to find out how the actions in [Ending homelessness together](#) are helping to make change on the ground.
- The Scottish Government has invited members of the Change Team to join corporate sessions² in the homelessness unit.
- The Scottish Government committed in its [Housing to 2040](#) strategy to offering a secondment to someone with lived experience of homelessness.
- In August 2021, following a competitive recruitment process, we seconded a member of staff from Homeless Network Scotland to the homelessness unit. The new member of staff is contributing to the policy development process and ensuring that policies and practice are grounded in real life experience of what works to prevent homelessness.

Our evidence base must be informed by people who use homelessness services. However, there are lower levels of voter registration among people experiencing homelessness and this means that those who are not registered are less able to influence local and national politics. We want people experiencing homelessness to have a say on the subjects that affect and concern them.

- In advance of the Scottish Parliament elections in 2021, we included new information on the Scottish Government's website about [registering to vote](#) in Scotland if you do not have a settled address.

Scottish local authorities rapidly adapted their service provision and methods of engagement with people experiencing homelessness at the start of the pandemic in line with no wrong door and person-centred principles. Balancing the risks of COVID-19 transmission with the benefits of providing effective responses to homelessness, local authorities worked hard to provide stability and care for clients. Some councils offered telephone and online services; others have continued to provide socially distanced face-to-face support throughout this fast-changing period.

- Throughout the pandemic, local authorities have adapted their homelessness service provision to safely meet the needs of people at risk of and experiencing homelessness.

² There have been two events in the last 12 months (December 2020 and August 2021) and the sessions incorporate business planning, team building, policy discussions and learning and development activities.

We also said we would **support people to access digital equipment, data and training.**

We were pleased to see the positive outcomes achieved by Simon Community Scotland through its Get Connected digital inclusion pilot at the start of lockdown, where 36 people were supported to get connected. People said they felt less isolated, improved their digital skills and confidence and experienced a greater sense of wellbeing. As part of our [winter plan for social protection](#), the Scottish Government funded Simon Community Scotland³ to extend this project. It meant we could build on Simon Community Scotland's existing training framework, developed with service providers and people with lived experience.

- The Scottish Government provided a grant of £40,000 to Simon Community Scotland in December 2020 for its [Get Connected 100](#) project, which provided 100 people experiencing homelessness in Scotland with devices, unlimited connectivity for 12 months and training.
- Early findings from this latest project show that participants' lives have already been improved. Being connected digitally has supported people with their mental health and recovery, opened up learning opportunities and increased autonomy and independence.
- The Scottish Government has allocated a further £160,000 to support digital inclusion for people experiencing homelessness during 2021/22.

3 Simon Community Scotland worked in partnership with frontline partners in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen, Fife and Ayrshire.

"I got a choice out of a phone or a tablet. I chose the tablet. It gave me a bit of relief, I'm a recovering addict and it's helped me get to online meetings, it's helped me when I've been struggling and I've been down. I've had that help, I've had that support."

Supported person

"I'm a bit more confident now, than I ever have been, because I didn't even know how to send an email. It made me a lot more positive with what you can use on a phone as I had no idea at all. I'm in contact with family that I haven't been in contact with in a long time. I find that a great bonus because there was no way of my daughter and I being in contact with each other. She's 14 and wants to ask questions and I feel it's opening up a friendship on the horizon."

Supported person

"Since [M] had the phone, the bond and links with support is completely like night and day. She's available to us and we're available to her. The phone was the link that pulled it together. That was what helped us sustain the tenancy."

Kevin, Support Worker

We said we would **explore options for taking forward personal housing plans; ensure a child wellbeing assessment is undertaken where children are homeless; publish the first modules of the housing options training toolkit and support frontline staff in their work with people experiencing homelessness.**

The Scottish Government previously funded Shelter Scotland and Healthcare Improvement Scotland to explore the potential for developing a Scottish personal housing plan model. Our intention in looking more closely at personal housing planning was to support local authorities to better understand the wider support needs of households alongside their housing aspirations as part of housing options discussions. Shelter Scotland and South Lanarkshire Council worked together to pilot an approach to delivering personal housing planning in South Lanarkshire in order to understand what does and does not work. This was underpinned by an evidence and literature review to gather information on best practice approaches to personal housing plans and other types of housing planning across the UK. Following this, draft guidance and a personal housing plan template were developed for local authorities.

We received Shelter Scotland and Healthcare Improvement Scotland's final report, guidance and template in April 2021. Having considered the materials submitted, Scottish Government officials want to review in more detail the merits of implementing a personal housing plan model in Scotland. We also want to make sure that people with lived experience are involved in this work. It is not yet

clear what additional benefits would be gained from implementing a standard personal housing plan approach, given the housing support assessments and outcome tools already in use, including Housing Options, Housing First, Better Futures and Homelessness Star. However, the Scottish Government will consult with local authorities in the housing options hubs on how best to ensure quality and consistency.

We recognise that homelessness is an adverse childhood experience with the potential for longer-term impacts. The Scottish Government is planning to include practical advice on what to cover in child wellbeing assessments in the updated code of guidance. We will make sure this advice is aligned with the plans for [new legislation on children's rights](#).

- We have explored the potential for a Scottish personal housing plan model and note that there are existing and valid processes of recording people's needs and options. Building on the evidence provided by Shelter Scotland and Healthcare Improvement Scotland, the Scottish Government is now working with local authorities in the housing options hubs to understand the range of assessment processes in place with a view to ensuring a consistent service to homeless households wherever they are in Scotland. We will consider how different assessment processes are valued by people using the service.
- The Scottish Government will include practical advice on child wellbeing assessments in the updated code of guidance.

More detail on the actions we are taking to train and support frontline staff, including development of the housing options toolkit, appears [later in this document](#).

We also promised to **raise public awareness of homelessness and challenge stigma**.

When we talk about homelessness, the words and [images](#) we use are important. People who have lived experience of homelessness tell us that they dislike some of the terms used as they can be stigmatising and dehumanising. The Scottish Government and COSLA are committed to changing this language to combat stigma and exclusion.

We know that to end homelessness in Scotland, we will need a powerful narrative to capture people's attention, improve understanding of the structural factors that lead to homelessness and show that homelessness is not inevitable.

- In March 2021, we worked with partners⁴ on a set of style guidelines, [Responsibly communicating homelessness](#), for use by all those who write about homelessness, including politicians, journalists, providers of statutory services and third sector organisations. The guide is designed to ensure the language we use is not detrimental to the people we are trying to support.
- Crisis promoted the guidelines through its social media channels and sent them to the Scottish Parliamentary Journalists' Association.
- Plans for an in-person event to contextualise the guidelines were delayed because of the pandemic. However, Crisis is planning a future event for journalists in Scotland.
- We will further promote the style guidelines and evaluate their impact during 2022.

4 The guide was produced in collaboration with Aberdeen Cyrenians, All in for Change, Bethany Christian Trust, Crisis, Glasgow City Mission, Homeless Network Scotland, Rock Trust, SeAscape, Shelter Scotland, Simon Community Scotland, Street Soccer, Social Bite and A Way Home Scotland.

Progress against actions in theme 2: we will prevent homelessness from happening in the first place

We have made good progress against the outstanding actions in this section. We have completed three actions; six actions are well underway; work has started on the five; and work will start on the remaining two in the next 12 months.

We said in our [Ending homelessness together action plan](#) that we and our partners would work together to ensure that our policies and practice to prevent and end homelessness are informed by a gendered analysis of homelessness. We have taken important steps towards this aim in the last year.

We said we would **introduce the transfer of tenancy provisions for social housing tenancies as part of the Domestic Abuse Bill.**

The Scottish Government included provisions in the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill to improve the housing outcomes of victims-survivors of domestic abuse who are living in social housing. Making domestic abuse a specific ground for eviction in social housing sends a clear message to tenants that domestic abuse is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. These provisions should help to prevent homelessness in the immediate and longer term for victims-survivors of domestic abuse who wish to continue living in the family home.

- The Scottish Government passed the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill in March 2021 and it became an Act on 5 May 2021. The new legislation will, when the provisions come into force, help prevent women's homelessness by barring the perpetrator of domestic abuse from the home and giving social landlords the ability to transfer tenancies to the victim-survivor.
- Work to commence the social housing provisions in the Domestic Abuse (Protection) Act 2021 is underway and the legislation is expected to come into force by the end of 2022.

We said we would **improve outcomes for women experiencing domestic abuse.** This action is linked to our commitments to **publish an implementation plan to respond to the recommendations of the domestic abuse pathway group** and to **develop and implement human rights-based accommodation pathways for women and children with no recourse to public funds who are experiencing domestic abuse.**

Argyll and Bute Council has used the flexible emergency fund to respond rapidly on more than 120 occasions to people in critical need during the last year. The council has used the fund to help women experiencing domestic abuse to escape to a place of safety; purchase essential clothing; cover household bills following separation from abusive partners; and buy home security devices.

Feedback from recipients of the fund:

“My camera sends me a message if anybody is at my door and lets me see who it is even when I’m out and I’ll remember to report it to the police every time it’s him so they have it on record. This is my secret weapon! Can’t thank you enough.”

“Thank you for helping me get back on my feet. If I live to be 100 I’ll never forget how trapped and helpless I felt before I called you. I was at rock bottom that day and when you said you could cover my petrol money to get us away from him it was like a light at the end of the tunnel. It’s been a hard seven months but we’re settled now, and the boys love their new school. One day at a time but we all love not being scared! God bless you all xx!”

- We accepted 27 [recommendations](#) in December 2020 from an expert group chaired by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Scotland and Scottish Women’s Aid (SWA) on how to improve housing outcomes for women and children experiencing domestic abuse. The report emphasised the need to protect all women, including victims-survivors with no recourse to public funds and EEA nationals.
- The Scottish Government reinforced the commitment to implement the recommendations in its [Housing to 2040](#) strategy.
- Scottish Government officials led discussions with local authorities, COSLA, the Improvement Service and Public Health Scotland on the recommendations that focus on a gendered analysis of policies and practices.
- The Scottish Government is convening a group to implement and monitor the [recommendations](#) from the expert group, which includes the recommendation to develop and implement human rights-based accommodation pathways for women and children with no recourse to public funds. We have developed a draft implementation plan, which will be published once it has been agreed by the implementation group.
- Work is underway to consider the actions needed to improve housing outcomes for women and children experiencing domestic abuse in the private rented sector.
- We will also consider the actions needed to prevent homelessness for women and children in the Gypsy/ Traveller community experiencing domestic abuse.

We said we would **increase our focus on tenancy sustainment and share innovative and successful examples of early prevention and effective tenancy sustainment work.**

All 32 local authorities are represented in the five housing options hubs. This model for sharing learning and experiences has been invaluable during the pandemic. It meant new and innovative practice could be passed on and rapidly adopted by hub members.

Perth and Kinross Council's 'Home First' approach to tackling homelessness has resulted in a 33 per cent reduction in homeless presentations since it was launched in 2017/18. The council has dramatically reduced its housing backlog from 537 homeless households waiting for an offer of settled housing to 31 households. This mature model of rapid rehousing has transformed the use of temporary accommodation in Perth and Kinross: fewer people are staying in temporary accommodation and stays are for much shorter periods of time.

- Local authorities have shared innovative approaches to homelessness prevention and tenancy sustainment through regular housing options hubs meetings; at focused sessions such as the rapid rehousing transition plan coordinators' event in June 2021 and the rural Housing First learning group; and at bilateral meetings.

- In November 2020, the Scottish Government made awards from the homelessness prevention fund to 11 housing association projects (more details are provided later in this section).
- The Scottish Government has allocated more than £80 million to enable local authorities to make discretionary housing payments (DHPs) in 2021/22. DHPs help sustain tenancies by supporting people who are struggling with their housing costs. They help mitigate the most harmful impacts of UK Government welfare reform, including the bedroom tax and benefit cap.
- To better support councils with the shift to rapid rehousing, the Scottish Government plans to develop a private rented sector forum so that local authorities can share learning and good practice on the use of the private rented sector for homelessness prevention and tenancy sustainment.

We said we would **work with COSLA and local authorities to consider shared and more streamlined application processes for discretionary housing payments and use information sharing powers to help local authorities target people who are most in need of discretionary housing payments.**

We know that local authorities have different processes for assessing applications for discretionary housing payments and application forms vary considerably in length and complexity. Financial and information technology constraints make it neither feasible

nor desirable to introduce a standard application process. However, there is scope for improvement so that people who are struggling with their housing costs are not discouraged from seeking support.

Officials in the Scottish Government and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had previously identified a legal route for sharing data with local authorities, which would facilitate identification of households in Scotland who could benefit from discretionary housing payments. Due to the pandemic, DWP officials have not had the capacity to prioritise this workstream and the work has been delayed.

- The Scottish Government has undertaken an initial analysis of the range of discretionary housing payment applications in use by local authorities and plan to set up a discretionary housing payment practitioner forum to share good practice among authorities.
- We will ask DWP officials to prioritise cross-government data sharing in the months ahead.

We also said we would **understand the impact of UK welfare reforms** and how this puts some people at greater risk of homelessness.

The Scottish Government continues to highlight to the UK Government the detrimental impact of its welfare reform policies on rent arrears, tenancy sustainment and food poverty and to push UK ministers to make changes to the welfare system.

- In March 2021, the Scottish Government published research on [homelessness and universal credit](#), which investigated the links between universal credit and homelessness. While isolating the impact of universal credit on homelessness is challenging, the researchers observed some statistically significant correlations suggesting that benefit sanctions and the five-week-wait for the first payment have contributed to homelessness in Scotland.
- In August 2021, Shona Robison MSP, the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government; the Welsh Government's Minister for Social Justice; and the Northern Ireland Executive's Minister for Communities sent a [joint letter](#) to Thérèse Coffey MP, the UK Government's Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, expressing their grave concerns at the plans to allow the £20 per week increase to universal credit and working tax credits to expire, and urging her to reverse the decision.
- The Scottish Government and local authorities are working together to better understand the impact of the UK Government's decision earlier this year to freeze local housing allowance rates at the 30th percentile. This represents a cut in real terms and is likely to make it difficult for some tenants to afford their rent.
- We continue to work with the Scottish Fiscal Commission to assess UK Government data on housing benefit and universal credit caseloads so we can forecast the impact of the bedroom tax in Scotland and put in place mitigation measures.

We said we would **support the social housing sector to identify and support households at risk of homelessness before they reach crisis point and create a homelessness prevention fund for social landlords.**

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations is administering a three-year £1.5 million homelessness prevention fund on our behalf. Applicants to the fund were required to demonstrate how their projects would contribute to reducing child poverty and to preventing homelessness by supporting households most at risk of poverty and homelessness, including lone parents, people with a disability, larger families, victims-survivors of domestic abuse or young parents.

- In November 2020, the Scottish Government made awards from the homelessness prevention fund to 11 housing association projects⁵. The projects support tenants by offering services such as advice on income maximisation, mentoring, preventing eviction and promoting tenancy sustainment.
- We will monitor the impacts of these projects and ensure good practice is shared.

We said we would **develop a cross-sector project to establish mechanisms for avoiding evictions into homelessness.**

The Scottish Government is already taking forward a range of activity to avoid evictions into homelessness. We have made significant progress in improving standards, tenants' rights and support schemes but we want to do more. We plan, as part of the draft rented sector strategy to be published by the end of 2021, to deliver a new deal for tenants.

- The Scottish Government will carry out a public consultation on the new deal for tenants early next year which will include plans for a new housing regulator for the private rented sector; new and strengthened tenants' rights; greater restrictions on evictions over winter; and additional penalties for illegal evictions.
- As part of this work, we will examine mechanisms for avoiding evictions into homelessness.
- The final rented sector strategy – which we will publish later in 2022 – will be backed up by a Housing Bill in the second year of this parliamentary session.

⁵ See [Funding strengthens housing associations' homelessness prevention work - The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations Limited \(sfha.co.uk\)](https://www.sfha.co.uk/funding-strengthens-housing-associations-homelessness-prevention-work).

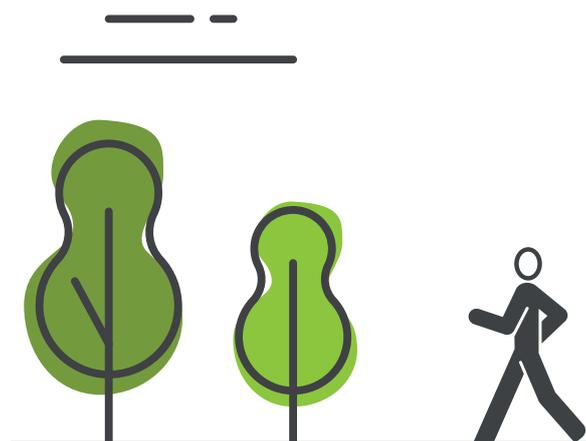
We also said we would **take forward further awareness raising activity on financial support and tenancy rights.**

- In December 2020, the Scottish Government's £10 million [tenant hardship loan fund](#) opened for applications, offering interest-free loans to tenants who are struggling with rent arrears.
- We organised a social media campaign in December 2020 to raise awareness of tenants' rights and the financial support available, including the [tenant hardship loan fund](#).
- To support tenants who have built up significant arrears during the pandemic, we announced plans in June 2021 for a [£10 million grant](#) to avoid evictions. The [new fund launched](#) at the end of September 2021.
- A further national tenancy rights awareness campaign is planned later in 2021.

We said we would **look further at affordability in the private rented sector, building on the work to set up and review rent pressure zones.**

As set out in the [Housing to 2040](#) strategy, we want everyone to have access to a safe, warm, affordable home whether they are tenants in the social rented or private rented sectors or owner-occupiers and rents are affordable is an essential part of realising that vision. For many people, the private rented sector has become increasingly unaffordable. The Scottish Government's proposals for rent control are rooted in addressing the high rents we see in parts of the private rented sector.

- In line with the commitment to deliver a new deal for tenants, the Scottish Government will implement an effective national system of rent controls, with an appropriate mechanism to allow local authorities to introduce local measures.
- We know that this work depends on having good quality data on local rental markets and we will set out our intentions for collecting better data in the private rented sector by the end of 2021.
- A national system of rent controls must be sufficiently flexible to respond to different circumstances across Scotland. To get this right, we will consult on the options. Our aim is to introduce legislation and implement rent controls by the end of 2025.
- We will develop a shared understanding of housing affordability, which is fit for the future; takes account of the inequalities and economics of the housing market;



relates to people's income and circumstances; and takes into consideration the real costs of housing. To do this, we will work with and consider the views of a wider range of stakeholders, some of whom are not finding their needs adequately met by the market.

We said we would **assess the impact of temporary pre-action protocols in the private rented sector to inform the development of permanent pre-action protocols.**

Work to gather and assess information on the impact of the rent arrears pre-action requirements on private landlords is nearing completion.

- The Scottish Government launched a [consultation on COVID recovery](#) on 17 August 2021 to seek the public's views on legislative reform to support Scotland's recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This includes asking stakeholders for their views on making the pre-action requirements for private landlords permanent. The consultation is due to close on 9 November 2021.

We also said we would **support the First-tier Tribunal to improve transparency around outcomes for tenants through better use of data.**

- In March 2021, the President of Scottish Tribunals published an [annual report](#) covering the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 providing more information on case types and outcomes for the Housing and Property Chamber than in previous years.
- We will continue to review the data provided by the President of Scottish Tribunals to monitor tribunal decisions and keep abreast of policy implementation, including changes to in response to the pandemic.



We said we would **develop prevention pathways for groups at particular risk**. This includes commitments to **develop rapid protocols with public institutions as part of the prevention pathway work** and to **test, learn from and improve the homelessness prevention approaches recommended in the pathways**.

We also said we would **prevent and respond effectively to youth homelessness**.

- Two new pathways to prevent homelessness have been published in the last year: [Improving housing outcomes for women and children experiencing domestic abuse](#) in December 2020 and the [Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway](#) in March 2021.
- The second Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway addresses the needs of all young people who are at risk of homelessness, including young people with care experience or at the edges of care, LGBTI+ young people, those involved in the justice or health systems and those who have multiple and complex needs. The report recommends that all those involved in delivering services should be trauma-informed.
- We have convened a group involving the Scottish Government's improving lives for people with care experience unit, the Away Home Scotland coalition and CELCIS (the centre for excellence for children's care and protection) to lead the effective implementation of recommendations in both the first youth homelessness prevention

pathway for care leavers [Improving Care Leavers Housing Pathways](#), which was published in November 2019, and the second Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway.

- The Scottish Government is developing monitoring plans as we implement the recommendations of the existing prevention pathways so that we can measure the impact of the changes we are making and make any necessary changes. We will provide evidence of impact in future annual reports.
- A pathway to prevent homelessness for veterans and service leavers is in development and is due to be completed by November 2021.
- We have committed to developing a homelessness prevention pathway for people leaving hospital. The new homelessness prevention duty and statutory guidance will specifically address hospital discharge.

We said we would **respond to the recommendations from the prevention review group, setting out our next steps in 2021.**

We are very grateful for the work of the expert group and are pleased that the report was developed in consultation with people with lived and frontline experience of homelessness. We made it clear in our [Ending homelessness together action plan](#), in [Housing to 2040](#) and in the [programme for government 2021/22](#) that we are absolutely committed to preventing homelessness from happening in the first place. We believe that the new prevention measures, once implemented, will make Scotland a world leader in preventing and ending homelessness.

- The Scottish Government and COSLA welcomed the [recommendations of the prevention review group](#) when they were published in February 2021.
- The Scottish Government has set out the next steps for meeting the commitment to new homelessness prevention legislation in [programme for government 2021/22](#).
- We have developed a delivery plan and are engaging with stakeholders in the wider public, private and third sectors to raise awareness of the proposals.
- Many local authorities are already doing excellent work on homelessness prevention, which we can build on and learn from.
- Scottish Government officials have consulted with counterparts in the UK and Welsh Governments who already have a prevention duty in place. We

are learning from their experiences and from the impact evaluations they have carried out.

- We will launch a public consultation by the end of 2021 seeking views on the development and implementation of the homelessness prevention legislation.
- We intend to introduce the new homelessness prevention legislation via the upcoming Housing (Scotland) Bill during 2022/23.

We said we would **review implementation of the SHORE (sustainable housing on release for everyone) standards.**

We know that people leaving prison are at high risk of homelessness. An important part of preparing people to reintegrate successfully in their community is by ensuring that their housing needs are identified and prioritised. The SHORE review was delayed due to the pandemic but work has now resumed.

- Late in 2020, the Scottish Government re-established the review steering group, created a terms of reference and refreshed the group's membership to ensure we had input from professionals with an understanding of the needs of prison leavers at risk of homelessness.
- The Scottish Government has already engaged with all 32 local authorities and a number of community justice partnerships to map national provision of the housing options available for prison leavers.

- We also met with representatives of the Change team to hear from people with lived experience of homelessness and the justice system.
- The steering group will consider the findings from the mapping exercise once the information has been analysed. We anticipate that the steering group will make recommendations for the most suitable national delivery model, and the steps to achieve this, in 2022.
- We are supporting the Scottish Prison Service to hold focus groups in prisons.
- We will undertake a similar mapping exercise with the Scottish Prison estate.
- We will work closely with the Scottish Prison Service to revise the SHORE standards, taking into account any recommendations from the steering group, while strengthening approaches for women and young people in the justice system. We are also considering the impact of being released from court into homelessness.

We said we would work with local authorities to **make homelessness assessments more flexible** in order to make it as easy as possible for people to access their right to assistance.

- Local authority housing officers and third sector partners in some areas have information sharing protocols in place so that they can tackle rough sleeping more effectively. Third sector partners provide information to the council so that homelessness assessments and offers of accommodation can happen more rapidly. This results in a more integrated and timely response to an individual's accommodation and support needs.
- We plan to develop this model further to involve registered social landlords.
- We intend to develop a shared case management system to enable confidential exchange of relevant information between organisations supporting people experiencing homelessness. The Scottish Government will work in collaboration with frontline organisations, local authorities and people with lived experience of homelessness to develop the new system. We will restart this work by the end of 2021.



Progress against actions in theme 3: we will prioritise settled homes for all

We have made steady progress against the outstanding actions in this section. We have completed one action; two actions are well underway; and work has started on the remaining five.

We said we would **take forward work on the right to adequate housing**.

- The National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership published 30 [recommendations](#) in March 2021 for a new human rights framework for Scotland.
- The Scottish Government has accepted all of these recommendations, and a new multi-treaty Human Rights Bill will be introduced this parliamentary term.
- The Scottish Government committed in its [Housing to 2040](#) strategy in March 2021 to take action to realise the right to adequate housing in Scotland.
- Scotland's new Human Rights Bill will incorporate into Scots law, as far as possible within devolved competence, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, alongside three further UN human rights treaties. This includes the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, including the right to adequate housing.
- An [advisory board](#) to support the development of the new human rights legislation has been established and it met for the first time on 9 September 2021. The board includes representatives from the housing and homelessness sector.
- Affordability is an important element of the right to adequate housing. The Scottish Government has created a new housing affordability team and has committed to working with stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of housing affordability.
- To establish the best way to make the right to adequate housing a reality, we will undertake a comprehensive audit of our current housing and homelessness legislation. This work will begin later in 2021. The audit will help us to identify where there are gaps in current domestic legislation and where remedies for violations of housing rights can be strengthened. It will also help us to assess how well current legislation protects marginalised groups and people with protected characteristics.

We said we would **support the Housing First Scotland pathfinder programme in five cities, build on the early results from the Housing First pathfinder programme and work with local authorities to scale up Housing First more rapidly.** We also committed to **forge partnerships with health and justice systems to embed Housing First.**

The three-year Housing First pathfinder programme, which involved Aberdeen/shire, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling, is in its final year. Scottish Government officials have met with all the pathfinder areas to understand their plans for mainstreaming Housing First. The majority of local authorities have been developing their own Housing First programmes alongside the pathfinder and many are already offering Housing First⁶ as part of their service provision. A representative of Healthcare Improvement Scotland already sits on the [rapid rehousing transition plans subgroup](#) but we have plans to develop stronger links to ensure the continued success of Housing First.

Highland Council launched its Housing First project last year. The project brings together a small multi-disciplinary team of partners from NHS Highland Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service, the Salvation Army and Highland Council and aims to support homeless people at the highest risk of harm or death as a result of drug and/or alcohol use. So far, the partners have helped 12 people at high risk of drug-related harm or death to secure and sustain tenancies.

- Scotland's three-year Housing First pathfinder programme – the largest of its kind in the UK – passed the 500 tenancy milestone in May 2021. The pathfinder was launched in April 2019 in Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire, Dundee, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Stirling with the help of funding from the Scottish Government (homelessness and health budgets), The Merchants House of Glasgow and Social Bite.
- Homeless Network Scotland developed, consulted and then published [Branching Out](#) in March 2021. This is a national framework, endorsed by the Scottish Government and COSLA, that captures the learning from the Housing First pathfinder and guides housing professionals on starting up and scaling up Housing First in Scotland.

⁶ Only three local authorities, Shetland Islands, Orkney Islands and Clackmannanshire councils, will not be developing a Housing First programme in their area. All three will have support available for people who require it but the scale of need is smaller in these areas.

- The Scottish Government provided an additional £5 million to local authorities for rapid rehousing transition plans in December 2020 as part of our [winter plan for social protection](#). This takes our total investment in rapid rehousing and Housing First to £37.5 million.
- The latest [Housing First pathfinder tracker](#) summarises the progress made in pathfinder areas by 31 August 2021. The number of tenancies started in the pathfinder is 545 with a tenancy sustainment rate of 84 per cent. Nobody has been evicted from their home.
- The Scottish Government has been actively involved in events to promote learning about the pathfinder, including [Housing First Connect](#) meetings – which bring the five pathfinder areas together – and [Scotland’s Housing First conference 2021](#). Speakers at the conference included Scotland’s former housing minister and Scotland’s minister for drugs policy.
- We have set up a rural Housing First group to explore how Housing First works in a rural context. It is convened by Aberdeenshire Council and involves 15 local authorities.
- North Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway councils have developed formal relationships with the Scottish Prison Service so that Housing First can be offered to people being liberated from prison.
- We have developed a quarterly monitoring tool to capture Housing First activity across Scotland from April 2021. This will track Housing First tenancies; referral routes; support received; delivery partners; and outcomes.
- The pathfinder programme is being formally evaluated by Heriot-Watt University’s Institute for Social Policy, Housing, Equalities Research and an [interim report](#) was published in September 2021.
- In partnership with Homeless Network Scotland, we tested a self-assessment and peer assessment tool to monitor fidelity to the seven principles of Housing First⁷ at a roundtable event in July 2021. The tool will initially be used by local authorities with at least one year’s experience of delivering Housing First.
- To improve partnerships in health, we will establish a new group that will bring together members of health and social care partnerships and rapid rehousing transition plan coordinators.

7 Housing First is built around a series of principles to meet, rather than a series of specific tasks or activities to deliver. The seven principles are:

1. People have a right to a home
2. Flexible support is provided for as long as it is needed
3. Housing and support are separated
4. People have choice and control
5. An active engagement approach is used
6. The service is based on people’s strengths, goals and aspirations
7. A harm reduction approach is used

“I had been working full-time as a chef but when my marriage collapsed, I lost my job and eventually my home. Through the Salvation Army I was offered a place on the Housing First project. It’s been life-changing. Sharon, my support worker, is a lifeline – from making sure I’ve paid my bills to reminding me about attending appointments. Having my own home means I can have a proper relationship with my children again. That’s especially important around Christmas time. We are just about to move into our very first house together and are excited about getting our first Christmas tree and making things special for the children. I’m looking forward to Christmas this year thanks to The Salvation Army because I will be able to spend it with my family.”

Mick, Housing First client (case study reproduced with kind permission from the [Salvation Army](#))

We said we wanted to see **a significant increase to the proportion of social homes allocated to people who are homeless** while we were still in phase 3 of Scotland’s route map⁸.

The former housing minister wrote to all social landlords in Scotland in late October 2020 seeking their commitment to help increase the number of allocations in social housing to households experiencing homelessness. The minister wrote separately to registered social landlords in Glasgow – a stock transfer

authority – as the council depends on its registered social landlords to move homeless people into settled accommodation.

As a result of the pandemic, many home moves were halted and there were fewer social housing lets overall during 2020/21 when compared with the previous year. However, we did see an increase in the proportion of lets by social landlords to homeless households.

- Overall, social landlords let a higher proportion of homes (44 per cent of all allocations) to homeless households in 2020/21 than they did in 2019/20 (36 per cent of all allocations).
 - Local authorities increased the proportion of lets to homeless households to 50 per cent of all lets in 2020/21 (up from 44 per cent in 2019/20).
 - Registered social landlords increased the proportion of lets to homeless households to 38 per cent of all lets in 2020/21 (up from 28 per cent in 2019/20).
- Social landlords let 18,568 homes to homeless households in 2020/21. This was 5.5 per cent fewer lets than in 2019/20 but that should be viewed in the context of a reduction of 23 per cent in all lets.

⁸ The move to phase 3 was announced in July 2020. Most of the remaining legally imposed restrictions were lifted in August 2021.

“The support from Glasgow’s registered social landlords meant that 3,288 homes were let to homeless households in 2020/21⁹. This is an increase of 876 on the number of lets to homeless households in 2019/20 (2,412). Early indications are that this pattern of letting activity has continued in 2021.”

**Homelessness service manager,
Glasgow City Health and Social Care
Partnership**

We said we would **complete the delivery of 50,000 affordable homes as soon as it is safe to do so.**

We remain committed to increasing the supply of affordable homes and to expanding Scotland’s social housing stock. The impact of coronavirus restrictions delayed the delivery of our 50,000 affordable homes target. The pace of delivery is also affected by current shortages in labour and in construction materials. The Scottish Government is planning to spend more than £6.8 billion on the affordable housing supply programme over the 10-year period from 2016-2026. The Scottish Government’s per capita spending on affordable housing is more than three times higher than per capita spending by the UK Government. This investment will be complemented by funding from local authorities and registered social landlords who will work closely with the Scottish Government to ensure delivery reflects local strategic priorities and rents are affordable.

- The latest [quarterly affordable housing supply programme statistics](#) show that between April 2016 and June 2021 we delivered 42,948 affordable homes, over 29,000 of which were for social rent.
- The Scottish Government recently issued five year resource planning assumptions to local authorities to provide the certainty and assurance that the housing sector needs to deliver more affordable homes.
- We will deliver the remaining homes as quickly as it is safe to do so.
- In our [programme for government 2021/22](#), the Scottish Government has committed to deliver 110,000 affordable homes across Scotland by 2032, with at least 70 per cent in the social rented sector and 10 per cent in our remote, rural and island communities.

We said we would **encourage the housing sector to prioritise the process of bringing empty homes back into use and support local authorities to build stronger relationships with the private rented sector and to develop their empty homes services and private rented sector access schemes.**

Tackling empty homes remains a priority for local and national government, even more so when people have been unable to bring homes back into use due to the pandemic. We want to see all homes occupied and none left empty without good reason. We know that one of the best ways of tackling empty

⁹ These figures relate to households supported to secure settled accommodation via a referral made under Section 5 the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

homes is positive engagement with private owners. We continue to support the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership and want to see dedicated empty homes officers working across all local authorities. This approach has brought more than 6,000 homes back into use since 2010. We have set out actions in Housing to 2040 to ensure that our empty homes are maintained, improved and put to the best possible use while helping to revitalise our communities and town centres.

- We continue to support the work of the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership.
- The Scottish Government has extended funding (£140,000 provided to date) for a pilot operated by Cyrenians and Crisis in Edinburgh to facilitate access to the private rented sector for people whose backgrounds and needs may have previously prevented them from sustaining a tenancy in private rented accommodation.
- The private rented sector pilot has helped 24 tenants to secure a home so far and the first tenant has now been in his home for a year. Tenant satisfaction with the support received before and after moving in is high.
- The Cyrenians and Crisis have plans in place to disseminate learning from the Edinburgh pilot with other local authorities.
- The Scottish Government is working with local authorities to audit empty homes and determine those that should be brought back into use.
- The Scottish Government will give councils the powers they need to regulate and charge owners appropriately for homes lying empty, ensuring they have the mechanisms to bring them back into productive use.
- We will create a support package for homeowners in trouble to help them stay in their home, if that is right for them, and to prevent homes falling into disrepair or becoming empty in the first place.
- We will establish a new fund for local authorities to apply to use in order to bring empty homes and potential empty homes back into residential use and convert suitable empty commercial properties in town centres.

“I’ve been sofa-surfing for nearly two years, after my life fell apart and I had a total breakdown. During that time, I’ve tried many different routes back to being housed, and it’s felt like a never-ending chain of obstacles. And a vicious circle, as everything that needed fixing, depended on something else that also needed fixing. I’ve been mostly unmedicated, and haven’t had any real privacy the whole time, and I’ve also been trying to process numerous traumas and personal losses.

I really had lost everything apart from hope, and I was just barely holding on to that. It seemed absolutely inconceivable, when I was first put in touch with you, that within a month I could actually have my own, privately rented flat. Or that within two months I would have all my utilities and bills sorted, and be free of virtually all the worries that for so long have been ever present in my every waking moment.

“This has been truly life-changing. I really had started to wonder if I needed to prepare myself for years of trying to get back to zero, and I now find myself content, and secure, and excited about the future, and making actual plans.

I can’t overstate how much it means to have my independence and autonomy back. To have a space that’s just mine, where my time is my own, and I can enjoy privacy, and peace, and figure out how I want my space to look and feel. It’s liberating, and it inspires me to really seize every opportunity.”

Participant in the Edinburgh private rented sector pilot

We said we would **develop best practice examples of choice in settled housing and assess the impacts of providing a wide range of housing options in local areas.**

The aim of the City of Edinburgh Council's private rented sector (PRS) team is to reduce the number of people becoming homeless from the private rented sector and to work with private landlords to establish the private rented sector as an option for homeless households. Since March 2020, the PRS team has assisted 324 households to either remain in their current private rented sector tenancies or to secure new tenancies.

The team recently assisted a tenant who got into rent arrears as a result of ill health and loss of employment. The letting agent was keen for the tenant to remain if the arrears could be cleared. The PRS officer supported the tenant to claim relevant benefits, including a personal independence payment, and an affordable debt plan was put in place. The tenant was also helped to apply for a discretionary housing payment to cover the rent arrears. As a result of this support, the tenant has been able to remain in the property.

The five housing options hubs regularly discuss opportunities for developing approaches to choice in settled housing and share their examples of it. Scottish Government officials make sure ideas are disseminated widely. We have seen very positive use of the private rented sector to

tackle homelessness in the Highlands, in the north east of Scotland and in Edinburgh.

- The City of Edinburgh Council's work to prevent homelessness from private rented homes contributed to a 44 per cent decrease in the number of homeless households in Edinburgh in 2020/21.
- Local authorities are developing shared models of accommodation to enable people to access settled housing more easily.
- The Scottish Government plans to develop a private rented sector forum so that local authorities can share learning and good practice on the use of the private rented sector.

We said we would **set out our position on a temporary accommodation funding framework.**

We know there are barriers to helping people move on from temporary accommodation and out of homelessness. Some of this relates to the way temporary accommodation is funded for people claiming benefits. Housing Benefit for temporary accommodation is administered by local authorities but responsibility lies with the UK Government. An aspect of the funding was devolved to Scotland in 2017 and, as a result, local authorities are allocated an annual share of £23.5 million¹⁰ so they can mitigate temporary accommodation overspend through homelessness prevention measures. The distribution is based on a percentage share of homeless households in temporary accommodation

¹⁰ The former 'temporary accommodation management fee' was previously paid via a subsidy from the Department for Work and Pensions for each household in temporary accommodation. It ended on 31 March 2017 and the funding was devolved to Scotland.

in each local authority over a three year average. This £23.5 million prevention fund is distinct from resource allocated to local authorities to support rapid rehousing transition plans (RRTPs), but local authorities are asked to indicate in RRTP reports any other resources – including the prevention fund – that have been used to support RRTP activity.

The Scottish Government/COSLA settlement and distribution group, which provides advice to ministers and council leaders on the allocation of funding to local government, has agreed to review the way in which the prevention fund and rapid rehousing transition plan funding is used to prevent homelessness. We aim to combine these resources and implement a new funding framework to transform the use of temporary accommodation.

Analysis of data gathered from local authorities will inform these proposals, which will then be considered by ministers, the settlement and distribution group and COSLA leaders.

- We are reviewing the resources allocated for prevention and rapid rehousing transition plans and plan to implement a new funding framework that is better aligned with our aims to prevent homelessness and to transform the use of temporary accommodation.

We said we would **establish a third sector homelessness fund to support transformational change and launch it by the end of 2020.**

The Scottish Government initially established the three year £4.5 million third sector homelessness fund in 2019 and, in early 2020, third sector organisations were invited to apply. Awards from the fund, which is administered by Corra Foundation on behalf of the Scottish Government, were delayed due to the outbreak of COVID-19. In June 2020, ministers took the difficult decision to postpone allocating funding for new projects to allow organisations across Scotland to focus on responding to the pandemic. To mitigate the impact on the third sector during this first year, the Scottish Government offered funding extensions to recipients of our Housing Voluntary Grant Scheme¹¹. We were pleased to announce [the relaunch of the third sector homelessness fund](#) at the start of this year.

- The Scottish Government relaunched the fund in January 2021 and organisations were invited to submit applications for years two and three of the fund.
- Awards were made from April 2021 to 20 organisations (in addition to awards from the Housing Voluntary Grant Scheme to 10 organisations). These organisations provide support to a range of groups with specific needs, including women experiencing homelessness, young people facing homelessness and those with no recourse to public funds.

11 Some awards from the Housing Voluntary Grant Scheme were for 18 months or two years.

Progress against actions in theme 4: we will respond quickly and effectively whenever homelessness happens

We have made steady progress against the outstanding actions in this section. Seven actions are well underway; and work has started on the remaining six.

We said we would **work with local authorities and other partners to provide access to safe and self-contained accommodation during the pandemic.**

- National and local government and third sector partners have continued to respond rapidly to accommodate people experiencing homelessness, including people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough and those with no recourse to public funds.
- The provision of hotel accommodation with private bathroom facilities has contributed to people feeling safer and more valued.
- A multi-agency on-site service in the rapid rehousing welcome centres means the right support has been focused around the individual and their needs.
- We have seen positive work to assess and respond to mental health and drug and alcohol addiction needs and to consider the specific needs of women.

- There has been a concerted effort to move people with low support needs on to settled accommodation more rapidly.
- In June 2021, the Scottish Government published Scotland's [homelessness statistics](#) covering the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. Of the 22,967 unintentionally homelessness cases that closed in 2020/21 (where contact was maintained and the outcome was known), 80% (18,313) secured settled accommodation¹² as their outcome.

“From the end of March 2020 to the end of March 2021, we ensured that every individual seeking emergency accommodation, including people who were rough sleeping and those with no recourse to public funds, was offered safe emergency accommodation. During this period, we received 12,530 requests for emergency accommodation.”

**Homelessness service manager,
Glasgow City Health and Social Care
Partnership**

¹² Settled accommodation here is defined as a local authority tenancy (which accounted for 42% of outcomes), a tenancy with a registered social landlord (32%) or a private rented tenancy (5%).

We said we would **share summaries of the audits of the numbers and needs of people in emergency accommodation with the [Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group](#)**.

- COSLA will provide an update on the numbers and needs of people in emergency accommodation at the next meeting of the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group.

We said we would **support local authorities and health and social care partners with their efforts to provide appropriate move on support and stable accommodation for all those currently in emergency accommodation**.

- Scottish Government officials continue to meet regularly with senior officers in Glasgow and Edinburgh city councils to discuss progress with move on from emergency accommodation. Progress in other local authority areas is shared at the monthly housing options hubs meetings.
- Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership is piloting a matching process with the Wheatley Group and three community-based registered social landlords in the Govan area of Glasgow, where homeless households are matched with empty properties based on their housing need. This has resulted in accommodation being offered more quickly to homeless households and fewer refusals of accommodation.

- Between April and August 2021, Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership worked with Wheatley Care to help all 57 residents of the Bellgrove Hotel¹³ move into more settled accommodation, including mainstream tenancies with support. This followed Wheatley Group's acquisition of the Bellgrove Hotel in April 2021.
- Local authorities have reported on progress with implementation of their rapid rehousing transition plans, including efforts to reduce the use of temporary accommodation, in their activity and spend templates, which were submitted at the end of June 2021.

We said that we would **support local winter planning**, including efforts by partners to **modify existing night shelter provision in Edinburgh and Glasgow in winter 2020/21 and actively end the use of night shelter and dormitory-style provision in future**.

The Scottish Government provided a contribution of £276,000 towards the establishment of two new rapid rehousing welcome centres. The centres are part of our plan to end the use of night shelters entirely by expanding rapid rehousing approaches such as Housing First. They provide short-term emergency accommodation for people who have no other options during the coldest months of the year, but the aim is to support people to move on to more settled accommodation. In Edinburgh, the centre

¹³ The Bellgrove Hotel was a large private hostel in Glasgow known for its unsuitable living conditions. Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership did not use the Bellgrove Hotel as a means of accommodating homeless people but led on the work to support residents to move to more settled accommodation.

operated from 5 October 2020 to 3 May 2021; in Glasgow, the centre operated from 1 December 2020 until 31 March 2021.

People using the centres were offered health and social care support as well as assistance with legal, immigration and employment matters. Although our overall ambition is to transition away from these centres in future, we recognise that there may always be a need for a small amount of emergency or rapid access accommodation.

Guest: 33 year old woman
Length of stay: nine nights
Presenting needs: fleeing extremely abusive partner, traumatised and had nothing.

Support provided: provisional homelessness assessment with Bethany link worker, supported to report abuse to police, emotional support, crisis grant referral, support to access bank account, referral to advice shop.

Outcome: moved to supported accommodation for women at risk of harm.

Case study from Edinburgh's rapid rehousing welcome centre, reproduced with kind permission from [Bethany Christian Trust](#)

To complement this work, as part of our [winter plan for social protection](#), the Scottish Government provided £100,000 to third sector organisations for personalised budgets and essential household items for people experiencing homelessness.

- We ensured that night shelters remained closed in winter 2020/21 by contributing to the costs of rapid rehousing welcome centres in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The centres provided people at risk of rough sleeping with short-term hotel accommodation with private bathroom facilities, alongside housing and welfare support.
- In winter 2020/21, the Scottish Government awarded £50,000 to five frontline homelessness organisations providing services in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Fife, Dundee and Perth and Kinross so that staff could provide people experiencing homelessness or rough sleeping with cash payments to meet immediate needs. The flexibility of the scheme was welcomed by frontline services.
- Recognising that the pandemic meant a longer stay in temporary accommodation for some households, the Scottish Government awarded £50,000 to Homeless Network Scotland for the [winter warmer](#) project to provide 1,000 people in temporary accommodation with £50 each in the form of a bank transfer or retail vouchers.
- The commitment to ensure that there is no return to dormitory style night shelters in the future has been restated in the [programme for government 2021/22](#) and the Scottish Government will contribute to the costs of the rapid rehousing welcome centres in winter 2021/22.

We said we would **develop a model of frontline outreach**, which is linked to our commitments to **train and support frontline staff** in their work with people experiencing homelessness. We also said we would **support people engaged in street begging**.

Scottish Government officials have continued to engage regularly with representatives from frontline homelessness organisations across Scotland, to ensure they have the tools and the latest information to support people at risk of or already experiencing rough sleeping.

Scotland does not have a reliable method of counting people who are sleeping rough. We evaluate the extent of rough sleeping by asking street outreach teams to carry out an informal count of people sleeping rough in the areas where it is concentrated. We reported in our [Ending homelessness together action plan](#) in October 2020 that we had seen a dramatic reduction in the number of people sleeping rough. Outreach teams report that while figures do fluctuate, the overall number remains low. Our challenge is to maintain this downward trend.

Street begging tends to take place in areas of high footfall. Levels of street begging fell in the last year, partly due to the considerable efforts by partners to engage with everyone at risk of sleeping rough and partly due to the impact of nationwide lockdowns. However, there are signs that they are increasing again. We will continue to explore the reasons why people beg and the role that mental health and addiction problems can play.

Our focus during the pandemic has been on protecting those experiencing the most acute forms of homelessness, which has delayed progress with our plans to develop a model of frontline outreach. An initial workshop to identify a delivery model took place in June 2021 and we intend to build on this momentum in the year ahead.

The housing options hubs are continuing with work to develop a training toolkit made of six modules covering the knowledge and skills involved in delivering housing options services. The toolkit is an example of long-term co-production that brings together all 32 Scottish local authorities and involves subject matter experts, including Scottish Women's Aid. It is designed to support frontline staff in their work with people experiencing homelessness.

- The number of people sleeping rough – in the areas where rough sleeping is concentrated in Scotland – remains low.
- Scottish Government officials worked with frontline staff to ensure that people who were sleeping rough, in emergency accommodation and in supported accommodation were included in a priority group for the coronavirus vaccine (more details are provided [later in the document](#)).
- The First Minister announced in November 2020 that health and social care staff on the frontline, including frontline homelessness staff, would receive a one-off [£500 payment](#) to recognise the extraordinary effort they have made during the pandemic.
- We have extended the [National Trauma Training Programme](#) for a further two years, to 2023, to facilitate a trauma-informed workforce and services¹⁴.
- Aurion Learning is launching the first three modules (introduction to housing options; accessing accommodation; and maintaining existing accommodation) of the housing options training toolkit at the end of January 2022. The second set of modules (health and wellbeing; income and affordability; and employment and training) are due to be launched later in 2022.
- We will have further stakeholder workshops in the year ahead so we can regain momentum with the development of a model of frontline outreach.

We said we would **prevent homelessness for those with no recourse to public funds**. As part of this work, we said we would **press the UK Government on migrant homelessness; form alliances with other devolved nations and cities; work with the Everyone Home Collective¹⁵** so that the route map to end destitution informs our anti-destitution strategy; **explore alternative routes through which to provide accommodation to people with no recourse to public funds; and extend funding for projects that provide advocacy and legal advice to destitute asylum seekers and people with no recourse to public funds.**

National and local governments have continued to provide accommodation and funding for essential items for people with no recourse to public funds to protect them and reduce the spread of the virus.

- In November 2020, the Scottish Government made £278,784 available to six organisations supporting people with no recourse to public funds in Edinburgh and Glasgow. This funded the provision of food, clothing, essential travel and digital access.
- As part of our [winter plan for social protection](#), the Scottish Government awarded £33,392 to Turning Point Scotland to provide people with no recourse to public funds with accommodation, advice and advocacy services in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

¹⁴ This is a commitment in the Scottish Government's [programme for government 2021/22](#).

¹⁵ The Everyone Home is a collective of 35 third and academic sector organisations that have come together during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect the progress that has been made.

- In February 2021, the Scottish Government awarded awarded Homeless Network Scotland £24,000 to develop the proposals in the [Everyone Home Collective route map to end destitution](#) and design a new gateway to a safe destination for people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). The NRPF gateway was developed in collaboration with the Scottish Government, COSLA and the third sector.
- In March 2021, the Scottish Government and COSLA published [Ending destitution together](#), a strategy to improve support for people with no recourse to public funds living in Scotland. This was informed by the Everyone Home Collective's route map. The Scottish Government is making an initial investment of £500,000 to support delivery of the actions in the first year of the strategy.
- Scottish Government officials have established a regular four nations meeting to share thinking and good practice with UK counterparts on policies to support people with no recourse to public funds at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Scottish ministers have continued to press UK ministers to reverse policies that contribute to migrant homelessness:
 - Ben Macpherson MSP, formerly Scotland's Minister for Public Finance and Migration, wrote to Kevin Foster MP, Minister for Future Borders and Immigration, in November 2020 to express his concern at the new grounds for refusal included in the Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules and the impact this has on efforts to end homelessness in Scotland.
 - In March 2021, Kevin Stewart MSP, Scotland's former Minister for Local Government Housing and Planning and Councillor Kelly Parry, COSLA's Community Wellbeing Spokesperson, wrote to Kevin Foster MP, Minister for Future Borders and Immigration, to invite him to a future meeting of the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group to discuss support for people with no recourse to public funds who are facing destitution.
 - In March 2021, Aileen Campbell, Scotland's former Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government wrote to Priti Patel MP, Home Secretary, urging her to lift the no recourse to public funds condition.

Support for migrant workers in Perth and Kinross

Following the closure of a hotel in Pilochny during the pandemic, housing officers in Perth and Kinross Council worked in partnership with PKAVS Minority Communities Hub to support staff who had lost jobs and tied accommodation. The council helped 10 households with no recourse to public funds by providing furnished accommodation and support. As restrictions eased, council staff worked with the householders to explore their housing options. All have successfully moved into private sector housing and have secured alternative employment.

Perth and Kinross Council responded swiftly when the 2 Sisters food processing plant in Coupar Angus temporarily closed following a coronavirus outbreak. The plant employed staff with over 20 different nationalities, many of whom had limited employment rights and were ineligible for benefits. There was a concern that some people would take risks and not follow self-isolation rules in order to earn money to pay their rent and feed themselves. Council officers worked with PKAVS Minority Communities Hub to reach affected migrant workers and calls were made to over 200 workers living in the area. The council used food fund monies to create a bespoke scheme for people with no recourse to public funds. A one-off payment of £190 was paid to each member of staff that met the qualifying criteria.

We said we would **set out a broader range of accommodation options in crisis situations**, including **information on short-term community hosting**.

The Nightstop community hosting model has been adopted in Glasgow, Edinburgh and West Lothian to provide short-term emergency accommodation for young people aged between 16 and 25. The pandemic made these sorts of accommodation models more challenging due to the precautions required to limit the spread of the virus between households.

In 2019, the joint Scottish Government and COSLA Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group tasked the A Way Home Scotland coalition with developing youth

homelessness prevention pathways for young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Scotland. The second youth homelessness prevention pathway was published earlier this year. More details are provided [earlier in the document](#).

- In March 2021, the A Way Home Scotland coalition published a [youth homelessness prevention pathway](#) for all young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Scotland, which recommends upscaling community hosting and shared tenancy models so that young people do not have to navigate adult services. We intend to work in partnership with the coalition to implement the pathway recommendations.

We said we would **publish guidance later in 2020 on the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and bring forward a further Scottish statutory instrument that will provide clarity on the changes to the Order.**

The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) Scotland Order 2014, known as the Unsuitable Accommodation Order, protects pregnant women and families with children who are homeless from being accommodated in hotels or bed and breakfast accommodation for more than seven days. The Scottish Government amended this legislation in May 2020 to extend these protections to all households.

Owing to the uncertain trajectory of COVID-19, temporary exceptions to the order remained in place until 30 September 2021. These temporary exceptions allowed councils to continue to use hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation in certain circumstances.

The temporary exceptions expired on 1 October 2021 and local authorities will be in breach of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order if any homeless household stays in unsuitable accommodation for more than seven days. All local authorities are making positive progress towards reducing the use of unsuitable accommodation but we are aware that full compliance with the Order from October 2021 will be challenging for some local authorities.

Some councils are testing new approaches so that they can provide a good standard of temporary accommodation. Highland Council is now offering shared temporary tenancies to homeless households who are willing to share a two bedroom property. The project has been informed by the [sharer's toolkit](#) developed by Crisis.

- The Scottish Government made an [amendment](#) to the legislation on 11 December 2020 which came into force on 31 January 2021. This provided clarity on the changes to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and amended earlier drafting errors.
- We published [guidance on the Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Order](#) on 31 January 2021 to provide clarity on the application of the Order in practice and to set parameters to ensure that in extending the Order to all homeless households no group is disadvantaged. The guidance also provides detail on the new models of temporary accommodation now included in the legislation (community hosting, shared tenancies and rapid access accommodation) and the circumstances that permit their use.
- Scottish Government officials have met with the local authorities that are facing the greatest barriers in complying with the Order to hear concerns and discuss what support is available to aid compliance.

- The Scottish Government organised and hosted an event on 19 August 2021 so that local authorities could share good practice on compliance with the legislation and discuss different approaches to avoid the use of unsuitable accommodation.
- We intend to make a further amendment to the legislation to provide clarification on how to record breaches of the legislation.
- We will keep the [guidance](#) on the Unsuitable Accommodation Order under review.

We said we would **revise legislative arrangements for intentionality and local connection** and **amend the intentionality definition to focus more closely on ‘deliberate manipulation’**.

The Scottish Government is working to modify local connection rules so that people in housing crisis have the freedom to settle where they choose with access to the support they need.

Although the Scottish Government’s original intention was revise the local connection arrangements as early as possible in the current parliamentary session, we have delayed the changes until December 2021 in response to concerns raised by some local authorities about the impact of suspending local connection referrals when combined with the changes to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.

Since November 2019, local authorities no longer have a legal duty to investigate whether someone is intentionally homeless. This is now a discretionary power. We had intended to review the impacts of this change later in 2020 to inform our next steps, but this work has been delayed.

- Following a consultation period, the Scottish Government published a [ministerial statement](#) on 22 March 2021. This sets out the circumstances and general criteria which will act as the reference for exercising the power to modify local connection.
- Legislation is being prepared which will suspend, for all Scottish local authorities, their power to refer a person/household who is homeless or threatened with homelessness to another local authority in Scotland on the grounds of their local connection. The suspension will apply only to the power of local authorities in Scotland to make referrals to other Scottish local authorities.
- The Scottish Government aims to lay the local connection legislation in December 2021 and the law will come into force in February 2022.
- We will restart work with legal colleagues and partners later in 2021 to explore options to focus the definition of intentionality on ‘deliberate manipulation’ of the homelessness system.

We said we would **introduce temporary accommodation standards**.

In our [Ending homelessness together action plan](#), we said that would set up a working group to develop a legally enforceable standards framework by the end of 2020, with the aim of bringing forward proposals in 2021. We delayed this work to focus on the amendments to the Unsuited Accommodation Order. Work to improve standards in temporary accommodation is now resuming at pace.

- From 1 October 2021, local authorities will be in breach of the Order if any homeless household stays in unsuitable accommodation for more than seven days.
- We have established an expert working group to develop a temporary accommodation standards framework and appointed a chair. The short-life working group will hold its first meeting before the end of 2021.

We said we would **complete a voluntary review of homelessness provision at Glasgow City Council**.

The Scottish Government has been working with Glasgow City Council to carry out a voluntary review into its homelessness services. The aim of the review was to determine the reasons why homeless people were not offered temporary accommodation. The review has now concluded. We found that, since the pandemic, Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP) has stepped up efforts to ensure people are offered temporary accommodation and, in the last 12 months, the council has complied fully with its duties to provide temporary accommodation. This voluntary review was separate from the Scottish Housing Regulator's inquiry into Glasgow's homelessness services.

- The Scottish Housing Regulator published a [report](#) in November 2020, setting out the findings from its separate inquiry into Glasgow City Council's work to improve outcomes for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- Scottish Government officials sit on Glasgow's rapid rehousing transition plan delivery group and are working closely with GCHSCP to ensure it builds on the strong progress it has made in the last year.

We said we would **learn from recent initiatives and consider what further support is needed to help people with the transition out of the crisis.**

We have learned a lot since the start of the pandemic. The most important lesson is that we demonstrated that we have the will and the means to end rough sleeping in Scotland. We worked in new ways; funded initiatives such as the Edinburgh pilot to facilitate access to the private rented sector and the winter warmer payment; and launched new schemes, such as the tenant hardship loan and the tenant grant scheme during the pandemic.

- We ensured evaluation was built in to all new initiatives and we have considered the evidence on what has worked and – just as importantly – what has not worked.
- The Scottish Government launched a [consultation on COVID recovery](#) on 17 August 2021 to seek the public’s views on legislative reform to support Scotland’s recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The consultation paper invites comments on the action required to support a fair, safe and secure recovery.

Progress against actions in theme 5: we will join up planning and resources to tackle homelessness

We have made some progress against the outstanding actions in this section but further improvement is required. We have completed one action; two actions are well underway; work has started on seven actions; and we will start work on the remaining two actions in the next 12 months.

We said we would **ensure the next National Performance Framework review includes explicit consideration of homelessness.**

Ending homelessness is already a national priority. The Scottish Government referenced its plans to review the national outcomes in the National Performance Framework in the [programme for government 2021/22](#). The review is expected to begin in 2022.

- The Scottish Government will ensure that the upcoming review of national outcomes in the National Performance Framework includes consideration of homelessness.

We said we would **work with Public Health Scotland to ensure that guidance on infection prevention and control remains fit for purpose and develop separate guidance for homelessness services in Scotland.**

- Public Health Scotland published separate [guidance](#) in December 2020 to support those working in homelessness settings to give advice to their staff and users of their services about how they can prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

We said we would **improve how we use Public Health Scotland data and intelligence capabilities to ensure improved outcomes.**

- Scottish Government, COSLA and Public Health Scotland officials continue to meet regularly to strengthen the links between health and homelessness and improve joint approaches to homelessness prevention.
- Public Health Scotland launched a new learning resource, [Making connections between health, housing and homelessness](#), in March 2021. It is aimed at primary care staff and others in frontline roles who may come into contact with people who are in unsuitable housing, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The course

has several benefits and learning outcomes, including supporting NHS frontline primary care staff to recognise the impact of unsuitable housing or homelessness on health.

We said we would learn from the crisis period to further improve drug and alcohol treatment and harm reduction services.

- The Scottish Government has provided £900,000 to Healthcare Improvement Scotland for a two-year improvement programme, [Reducing Harm, Improving Care](#). The programme runs until March 2022 and aims to build on learning during the pandemic to improve quality of care and health outcomes for people experiencing homelessness who require alcohol and drug services. The input of people with lived experience of homelessness and addictions services is an important part of this work.

We said we would embed homelessness as a public health priority.

- The existing links between health and homelessness policy were strengthened as a result of the collective response to the pandemic. The health of people experiencing the most acute forms of homelessness was treated as a public health priority. This was reflected in approaches to frontline service delivery and in the development of guidance.

- Scottish Government officials working in health and homelessness policy joined forces with frontline staff to ensure that people who were sleeping rough, in emergency accommodation and in supported accommodation were included in a priority group for the coronavirus vaccine. The decision was announced in the former [health secretary's statement](#) on 12 March 2021. We made sure that information on how to reach these groups was built into the guidance for health boards.

We said we would improve the join up between health, social care, housing and homelessness planning.

The Scottish Government's plan to create a National Care Service is one of the most significant public reforms for decades. The focus is on cross-government working across policy portfolios to deliver a major transformation in Scottish public services. A [consultation](#) on the proposals, including the scope and reach of the National Care Service, is currently underway. Views are being sought on inclusion of other social care related services¹⁶ within the National Care Service. While housing and homelessness are not proposed for inclusion in the National Care Service, the consultation seeks views on how to make clear the links to these services. The ambition is for much better join-up between advice, support and care services to enable people to easily move between different types of care and support. Local and national government will continue to work together to ensure a joined-up approach between services that impact on a person's health and wellbeing.

¹⁶ It is being proposed that social work and children's services, aspects of healthcare, nursing in social work, justice social work, social care in prisons, alcohol and drugs services and mental health services are included in the National Care Service. COSLA has set out its concerns about the proposals within the consultation.

The development of a new homelessness prevention duty will also help build understanding of how these sectors can plan and cooperate more effectively to prevent homelessness.

- The proposals for a National Care Service are viewed by Scottish ministers as a collaborative, cross-government opportunity to deliver transformation.
- The [consultation](#) on the National Care Service seeks views on how to make clear the links and join up between health, social care, housing and homelessness planning.

We said we would **ensure local authorities, housing providers and public bodies join up to prevent homelessness.**

The development and implementation of a new homelessness prevention duty will help improve the way local authorities, housing providers and public bodies join up to prevent homelessness. More details are provided [earlier in the document](#).

We said we would **produce a cross-government response to the points raised in the Hard Edges report.**

The decision to fund the [Reducing Harm, Improving Care](#) improvement programme referenced earlier in this section was informed by the lessons of the Hard Edges Scotland report.

- The two-year [Reducing Harm, Improving Care](#) improvement programme will build on the work of the Hard Edges Scotland report in four

health and social care partnership areas.

- The Scottish Government plans to set up a cross-government policy group on multiple and complex needs. The group will ensure new and existing policy initiatives are viewed through the lens of the Hard Edges Scotland report.

We said we would **update the code of guidance on homelessness and review the need for a code of practice in the code of guidance on homelessness.**

Due to the pandemic, there has been no update to the code of guidance on homelessness since the interim update in November 2019. We remain committed to review and overhaul the code, to consolidate legislative changes made during the pandemic and to establish a group of local authority and other experts to oversee this work. The first new version of the code is planned for 2022 as opposed to our original commitment of 2021, and the review of the need for a code of practice addendum to the code of guidance will be taken forward next year.

- The Scottish Government will establish a group to oversee the update to the code of guidance on homelessness. This work will start later in 2021 and the updated code will be published in 2022.
- We will review the need for a code of practice in the code of guidance on homelessness during 2022.

We said we would **join up housing, employment and employability support.**

The Scottish Government is working with local authorities, third sector partners and with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure employment and housing support is provided in a joined up way. No One Left Behind is the Scottish approach to employability provision. The Scottish Government and COSLA published the [No One Left Behind](#) delivery plan in November 2020 setting out the next phase of work to provide a person-centred, joined up employability system in Scotland.

- The Scottish Government is investing up to £20 million in 2021/22 to further the No One Left Behind ambitions and provide support to those facing long-term unemployment, including people experiencing homelessness.
- The quarterly monitoring tool developed to capture Housing First activity across Scotland includes an assessment of how employability support is offered to Housing First tenants.
- Scottish Government homelessness officials are working with employability policy colleagues and with counterparts in the Department for Work and Pensions to promote employability services in Scotland and ensure they are helping people with experience of homelessness to find and maintain employment.

We said we would **work with local authorities and delivery partners on effective implementation** of Ending Homelessness Together.

- We continue to support local authorities and partners to share good practice on implementation of the actions in our homelessness strategy through the regular housing options hubs meetings, national events and bilateral meetings. The Scottish Government hosted a second successful rapid rehousing transition plan coordinators' event in June 2021.

We said we would **support the homelessness system to respond more appropriately to the shared needs of mothers and children.**

We know that the majority of single parent households making a homelessness application are mothers and children¹⁷ and that lone mothers are overrepresented in poor housing circumstances. Our efforts to apply a gendered analysis to our actions is helping us to better understand the needs of mothers and children. We are also paying close attention to the numbers of children in temporary accommodation. The Scottish Government's [latest homelessness statistics](#) show that households with children spend longer, on average, in temporary accommodation. There were a total of 7,130 children in temporary accommodation at 31 March 2021. This is a decrease of 2 per cent from the previous year (7,280) but is still unacceptably high and the Scottish

17 Our [latest homelessness statistics](#) show that single parent homeless households are more likely to be female – 16% vs 5% male.

Government and COSLA are committed to taking action to reduce this number.

- The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government wrote to every Scottish local authority in July 2021 seeking clarity on the reasons some households with children are spending long periods in temporary accommodation¹⁸.
- Local authority rapid rehousing transition plans are supported by an equality impact assessment (EQIA). In 2021, the Scottish Government asked local authorities to review EQIAs through a gender lens, taking account of the [recommendations](#) from the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Scotland and Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) on how to improve housing outcomes for women and children experiencing domestic abuse.

¹⁸ For some councils it can take a long time to acquire a property of the right size and type for the household's particular needs. This can be exacerbated by limited turnover or stock availability, changes to a household's circumstances, or instances where families need to access other services such as health, justice or social work.

Other actions

We have made some progress against the other outstanding actions. Two actions are well underway and we will start work on the remaining action in the next 12 months.

We said we would **review the homelessness data collection (HL1) to improve our understanding of the causes of homelessness and the outcomes, improve homelessness data on protected characteristics and ensure Scottish Government data collections reflect the increased priority of tackling homelessness.**

The review of the homelessness data collections is a long-term piece of work that will determine the need for – and investigate the feasibility of – capturing a greater amount of high quality data to address gaps in the homelessness evidence base, including on protected characteristics. This should ensure the data collections reflect homelessness priorities. Other workstreams, including our plans to implement new homelessness prevention legislation, will inform this work.

- In late 2020, the Scottish Government consulted on the current and future content of the homelessness statistics data collections (HL1, HL2, HL3 and PREVENT1). The responses were analysed in early 2021 and working groups involving the Scottish Government, local authorities and the Scottish Housing Regulator were established to work through the findings and consider future data development.

- We will consult again on an updated version of all homelessness data collections to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to comment on the proposed changes before they are finalised.

We said we would **conduct equality impact assessments.**

The public sector equality duty requires Scottish public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. These requirements are critical in ensuring that we consider the needs and disadvantages faced by people with protected characteristics as we continue to respond to the pandemic. The Scottish Government and COSLA want homelessness policies and practices to be sensitive to different forms of inequality. The Scottish Government brought forward analysis of equality characteristics so that this information could be included in its main [homelessness statistics](#) publication in June 2021. While the pandemic has changed the way we work, we remain committed to providing services that meet the diverse needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

- The Scottish Government has carried out equality impact assessments on the recent amendments to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and to local connection legislation.

- Local authorities have undertaken equality impact assessments of their rapid rehousing transition plans.

We said we would **undertake analysis of the economic impacts of homelessness.**

The Scottish Government already undertakes a business and regulatory impact assessment (BRIA) of any proposed legislation or regulation. The BRIA analyses the cost and benefits to businesses and the third sector of the policy change. The aim is to use evidence to identify the proposal that best achieves policy objectives while minimising costs and burdens as much as possible.

- As part of the work to develop new homelessness prevention legislation, the Scottish Government will assess the evidence on the financial costs and benefits of taking action to prevent homelessness in Scotland.

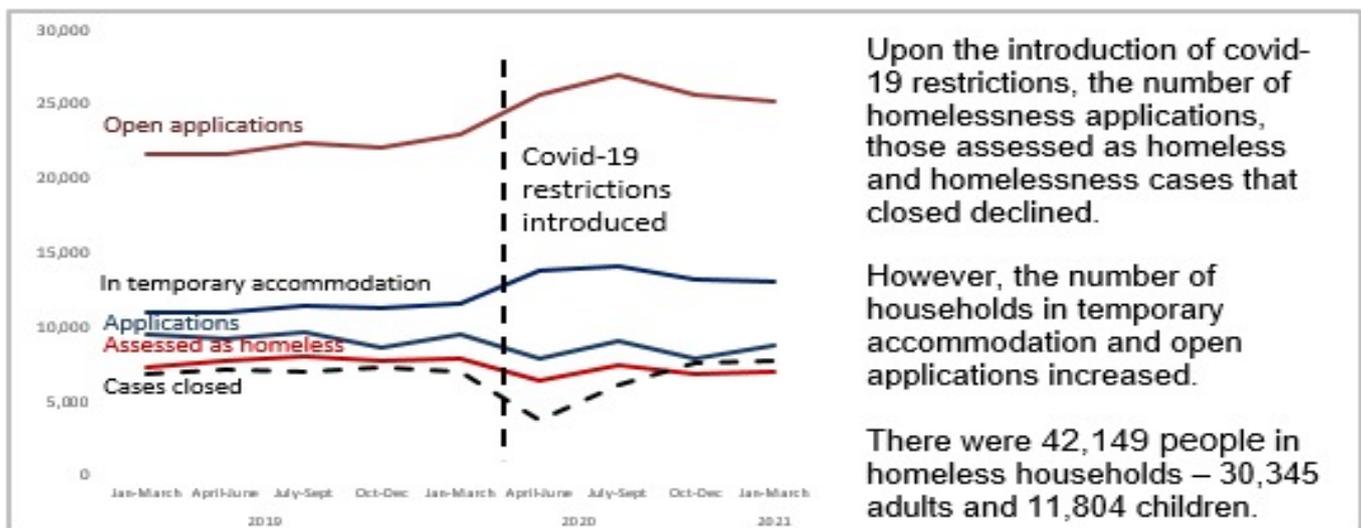
ANNEX 1: homelessness statistics

The Scottish Government’s latest homelessness statistics remind us why our commitment to end homelessness is so important.

The emergency measures we put in place to protect tenants from eviction has contributed to a 42 per cent reduction in homelessness applications from people in the private rented sector compared to 2019/20.

Throughout the pandemic, our priority has been to keep people safe from coronavirus. Although this has contributed to an increase in the numbers in temporary accommodation, we are starting to see reductions in number of open homeless cases and in the number of households in temporary accommodation since peaks in August 2020.

And while we do not collect and publish data on the number of people sleeping rough, the statistics show that a smaller proportion of those making homelessness applications reported sleeping rough in the three months prior to their application when compared with last year.

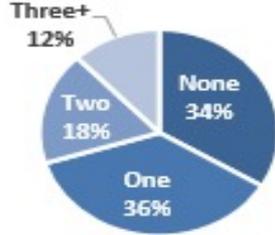


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reasons of asked to leave and household disputes • from friends / relatives 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reasons for loss of accommodation • from private rented tenancies 	<p>2,437 reported sleeping rough 3 months before and 1,471 the night before application</p>
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Temporary accommodation



Number of placements:



199 days on average spent
in temporary accommodation
– vs 187 last year

Proportion securing settled accommodation have decreased



2015-16 2016-17 2017-18 2018-19 2019-20 2020-21

Characteristics

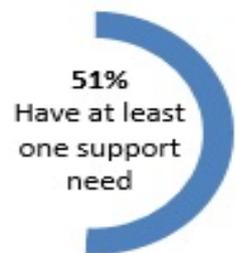
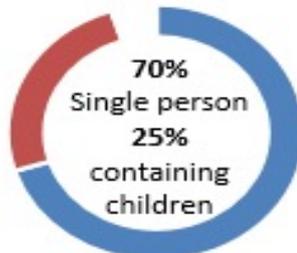
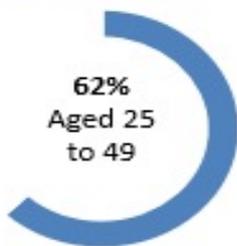


Figure 1: Number of applications and those assessed as homeless: 2002-03 to 2020-21

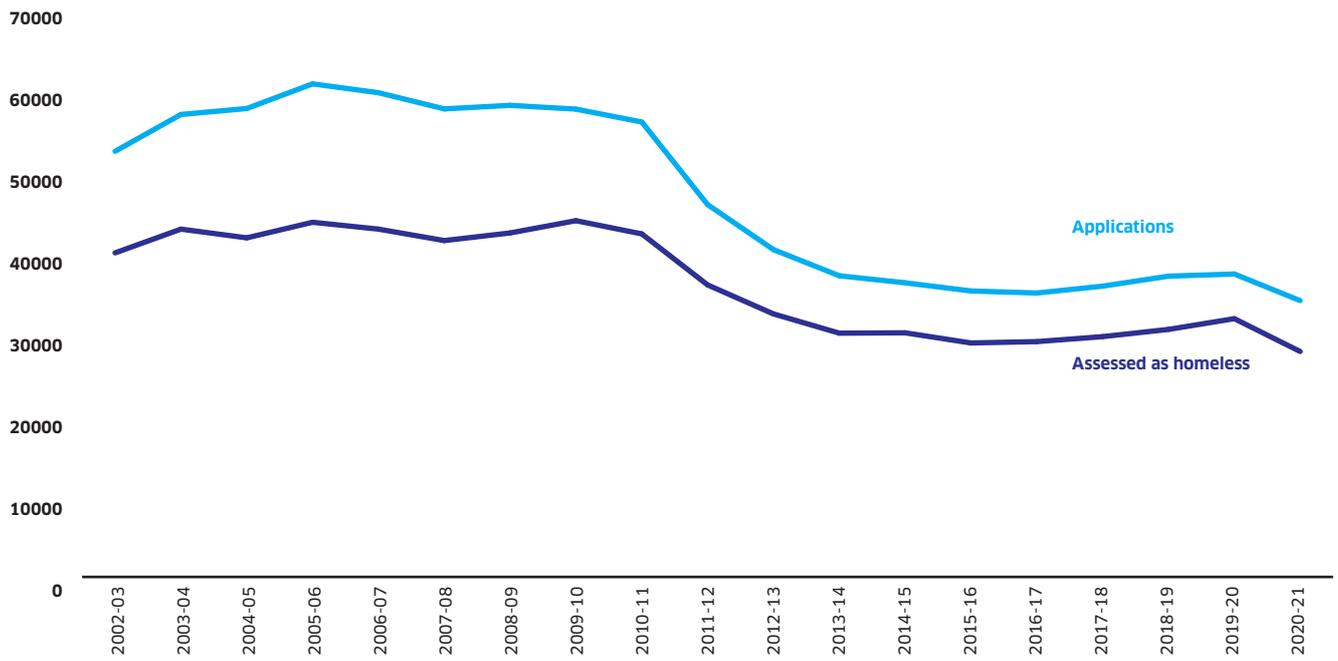


Figure 2: Households where at least one household member experienced rough sleeping the night before their application and in the three months prior to their application

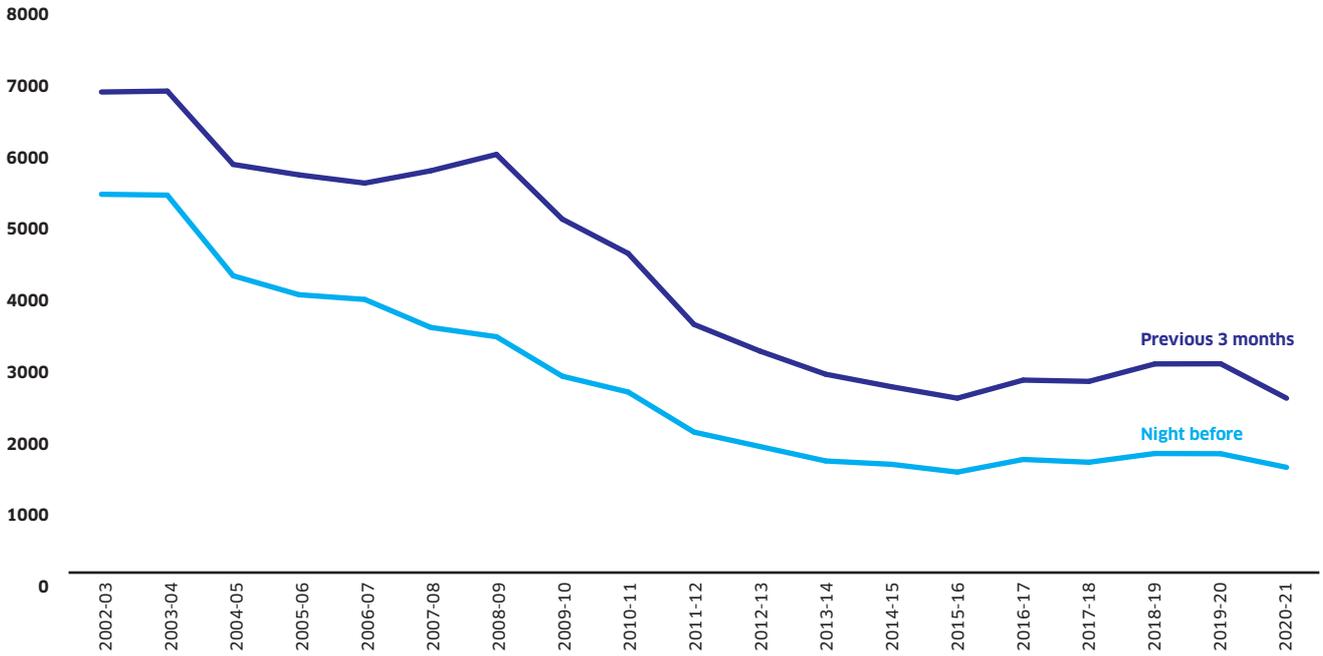


Figure 3: Rough sleeping the night before application: 2002-03 to 2020-21

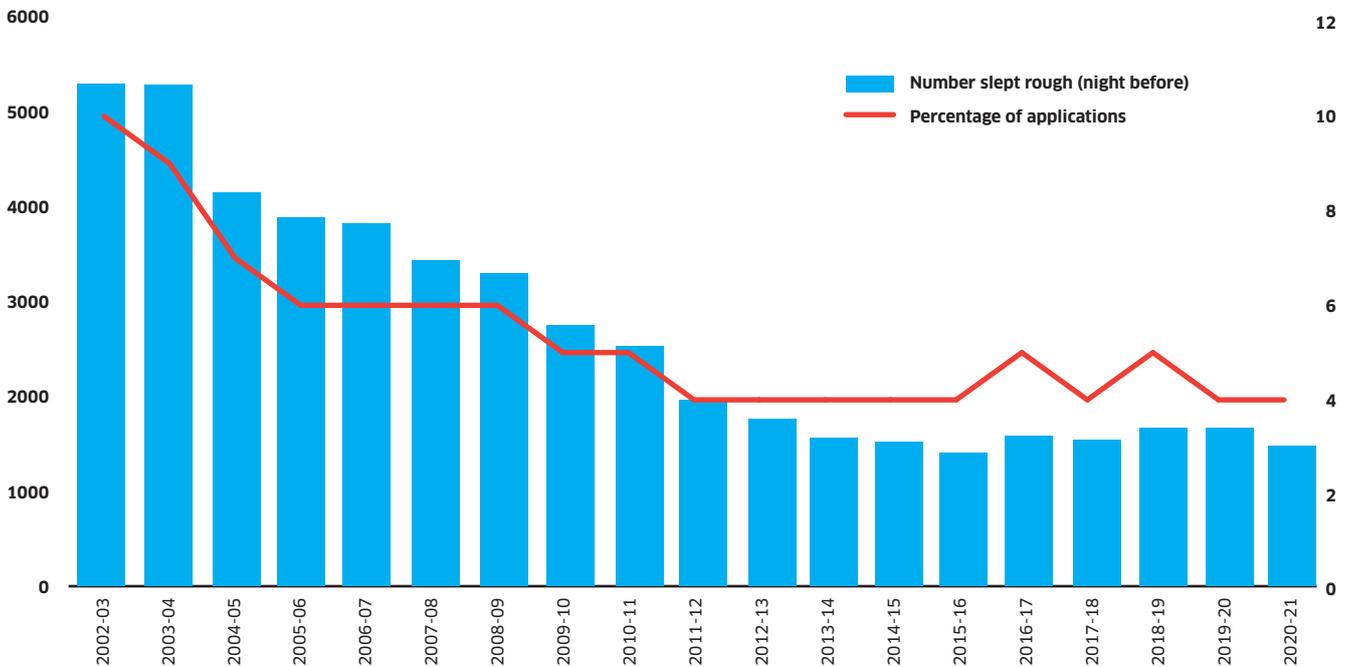


Figure 4: Main reason for making a homelessness application: 2020-21

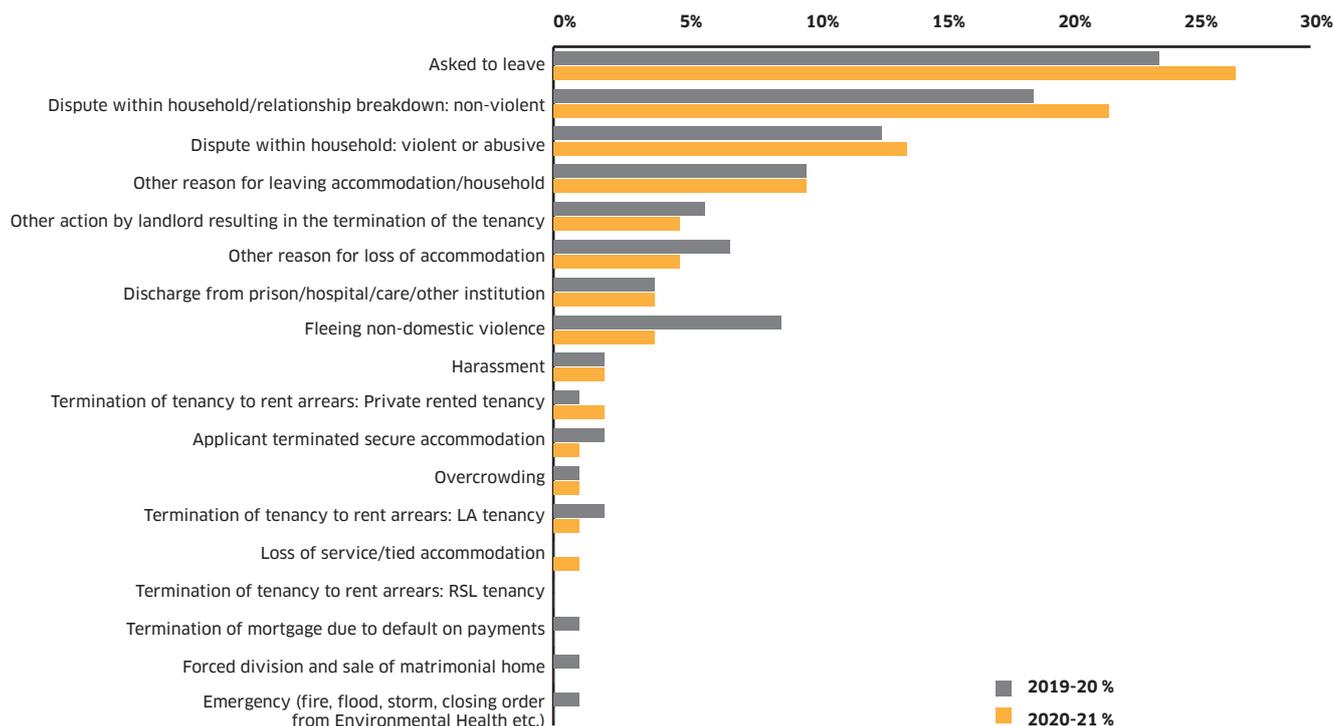


Figure 5: Reasons for failing to maintain accommodation, 2019-20 and 2020-21

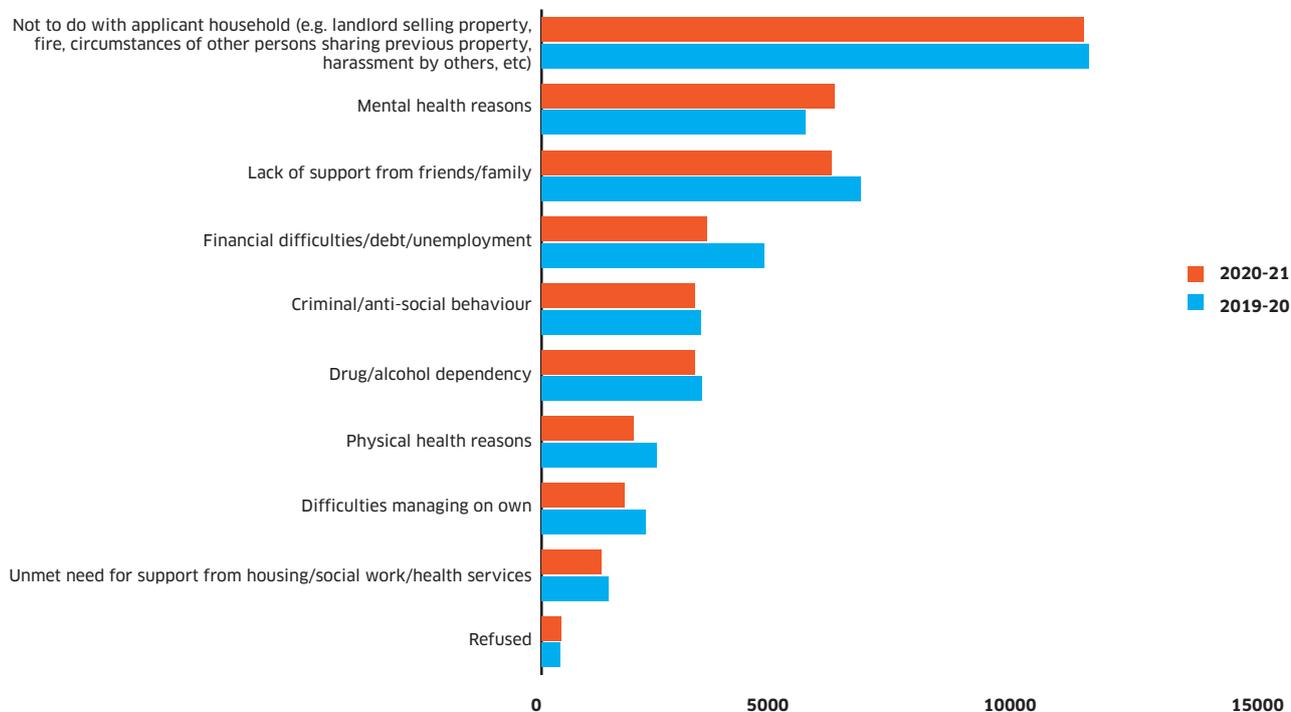


Table 1: Property type from which the household became homeless: 2019-20 to 2020-21

	2019-20	2020-21
All assessed as homeless	31,581	27,571
Own property - LA tenancy	2,877	2,600
Own property - RSL tenancy	1,541	1,490
Own property - private rented tenancy	5,145	2,984
Own property - tenancy secured through employment / tied house	218	229
Own property - owning / buying	1,096	929
Own property - Shared ownership / Shared equity / LCHO	26	22
Parental / family home / relatives	7,626	8,159
Friends / partners	5,601	5,929
Lodger	406	287
Armed services accommodation	47	30
Prison	1,756	1,574
Hospital	229	146
Childrens residential accommodation (looked after by the local authority)	41	40
Shared Property - Private Rented Sector	143	85
Shared Property - Local authority	40	32
Shared Property - RSL	47	51
Supported accommodation	1,456	746
Hostel (unsupported)	98	69
Bed & Breakfast	41	84
Caravan / mobile home	132	123
Long-term roofless	157	120
Long-term "sofa-surfing"	743	662
Other	861	682
Not known / refused	1,254	498

Table 2: Property type from which the household became homeless, as a proportion of all households assessed as homeless: 2019-20 to 2020-21

	2019-20	2020-21
All assessed as homeless	100%	100%
Own property - LA tenancy	9%	9%
Own property - RSL tenancy	5%	5%
Own property - private rented tenancy	16%	11%
Own property - tenancy secured through employment / tied house	1%	1%
Own property - owning / buying	3%	3%
Own property - Shared ownership / Shared equity / LCHO	0%	0%
Parental / family home / relatives	24%	30%
Friends / partners	18%	22%
Lodger	1%	1%
Armed services accommodation	0%	0%
Prison	6%	6%
Hospital	1%	1%
Childrens residential accommodation (looked after by the local authority)	0%	0%
Shared Property - Private Rented Sector	0%	0%
Shared Property - Local authority	0%	0%
Shared Property - RSL	0%	0%
Supported accommodation	5%	3%
Hostel (unsupported)	0%	0%
Bed & Breakfast	0%	0%
Caravan / mobile home	0%	0%
Long-term roofless	0%	0%
Long-term "sofa-surfing"	2%	2%
Other	3%	2%
Not known / refused	4%	2%

Table 3: Support needs of households assessed as homeless: 2019-20 and 2020-21

	2019-20	2020-21
Mental health problem	8,404	7,397
Learning disability	932	736
Physical disability	1,839	1,246
Medical condition	3,091	2,405
Drug or alcohol dependency	3,560	3,248
Basic housing management / independent living skills	7,395	7,113
At least one support need	16,204	14,106

Figure 6: Number of households in temporary accommodation as at 31 March, by local authority: 2002 to 2021

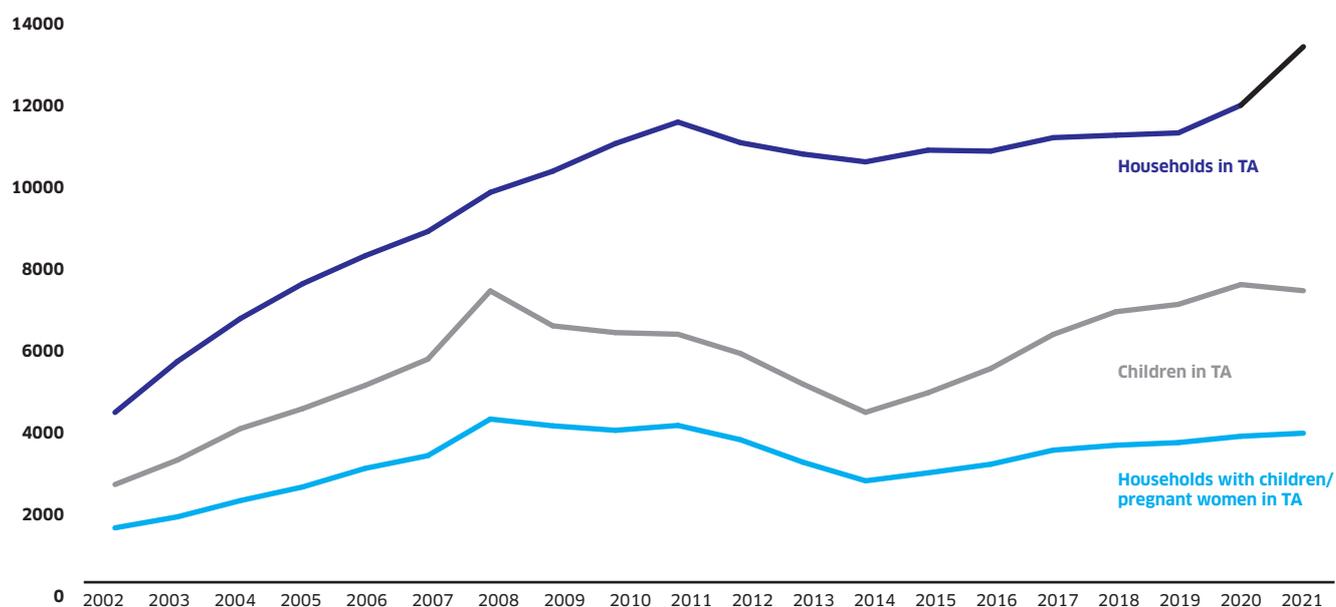


Table 4: Temporary accommodation type: 2020-21

All households

Social sector accommodation	Hostel	Bed & Breakfast	Other	Total
8,840	710	1,130	2,415	13,095

Households with pregnant women/children

Social sector accommodation	Hostel	Bed & Breakfast	Other	Total
2,795	0	20	830	3,645

Table 5: Number of temporary accommodation placements: 2020-21

	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five+	All
All	8,720	9,470	4,595	1,520	645	955	25,905

Figure 7: Average number of days in temporary accommodation, 2020-21

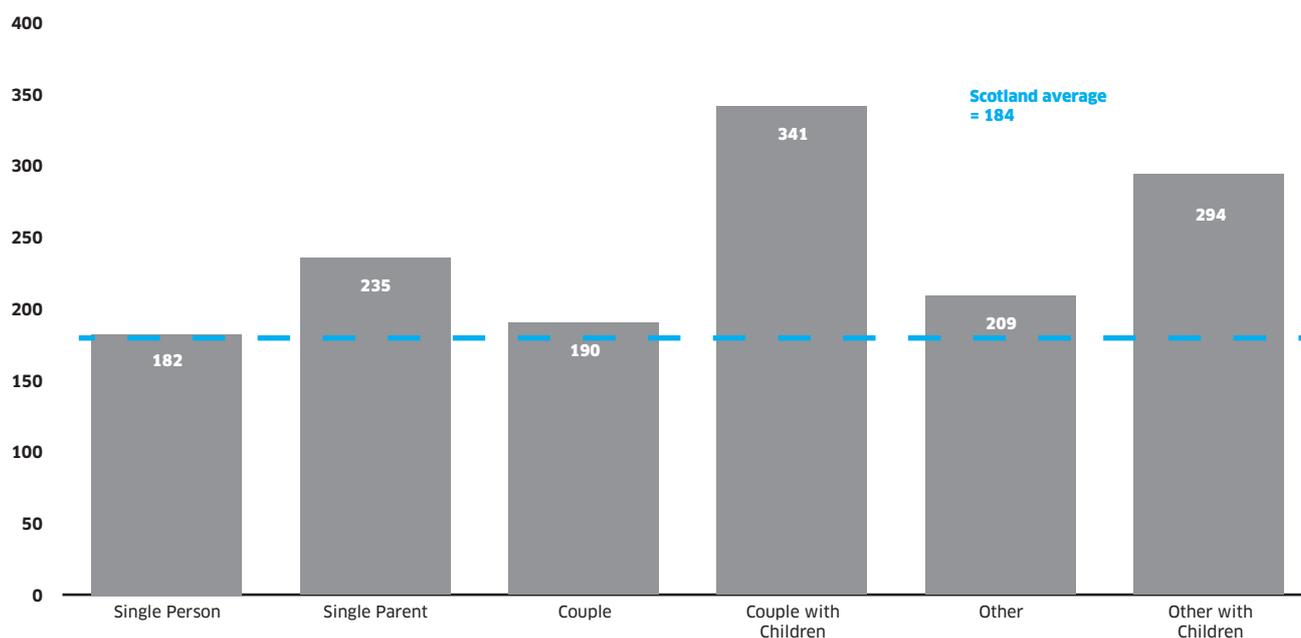


Table 6: Number of temporary accommodation placements that have been in breach of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order, by local authority: 2018-19 to 2020-2021

	2018-19				2019-20				2020-21			
	Apr-Jun	July-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	July-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	July-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar
Scotland	200	175	155	110	110	110	170	125	40	185	160	105

Figure 8: Proportion of unintentionally homeless households securing settled accommodation: 2002/03 to 2020/21

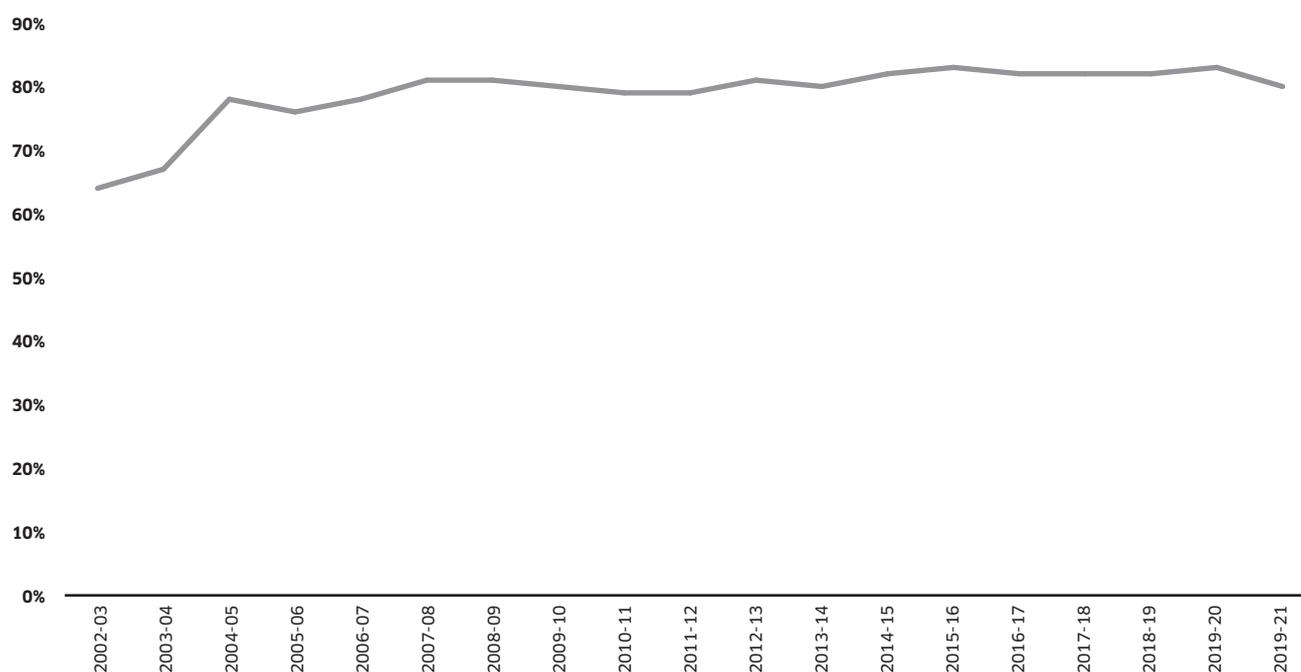
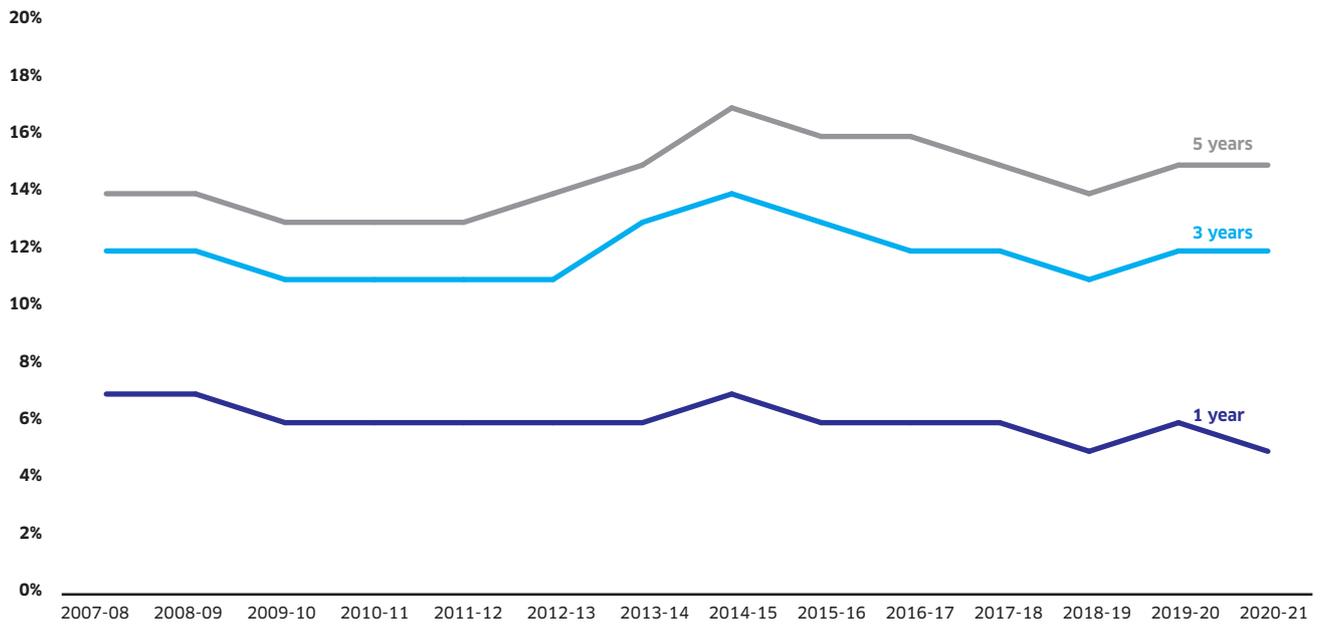


Figure 9: Households assessed as homeless that have previously been assessed as homeless in the previous one, three and five years





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