

# Housing, Regeneration and Planning



The Scottish  
Government

## Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2006 Public Attitudes to Homelessness



**SCOTTISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES SURVEY 2006  
PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO HOMELESSNESS**

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Responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report, and for all interpretation of the data, lies solely with the authors.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

This report presents findings from a module of questions in the 2006 *Scottish Social Attitudes* (SSA) survey on public attitudes towards people experiencing homelessness. The *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey is an independent survey that aims to provide high quality survey data on a wide range of social and political issues in order to inform public policy and facilitate the academic study of public opinion. The 2006 survey involved 1,594 interviews with a random probability sample of the Scottish population.

The 2006 Homelessness module explored a wide range of issues relating to public perceptions of homelessness, including:

- general attitudes towards people experiencing homelessness
- the extent of belief in various ‘myths’ about homelessness (for example, that most homeless people sleep rough or abuse drink and drugs)
- whether the public makes distinctions between people who have become homeless for different reasons, or between different kinds of homeless people, when thinking about who should receive help finding a new home
- beliefs about whether people who might be thought to have made themselves homeless ‘intentionally’ should get help with finding new accommodation or not, and
- attitudes to dealing with homelessness in the local area (including whether or not homeless people should get priority over others on the housing waiting list, and how people would feel about homeless people being re-housed near them).

This report explores how views vary between different groups of people in Scotland, and assesses how far public attitudes to homelessness are in tune with the direction of Scottish Government policy.

## Contact and Personal Experience of Homelessness

The majority (67%) of people have not had either any personal experience of homelessness, or known anyone else who has been homeless. Seven per cent have experienced homelessness themselves. A significant proportion of people come across someone they think is homeless on a regular basis – for example, 16% come across someone ‘most days’, 19% at least ‘once a week’ and 14% at least once a month’. However a sizeable minority (18%) of people say they ‘never’ come across someone they believe to be homeless.

## General Attitudes to Homeless People

The survey explored the extent to which people hold attitudes which could broadly be described as ‘sympathetic’ or which are more ‘critical’ or ‘unsympathetic’ towards people experiencing homelessness. Public attitudes to homelessness are complex and widely divided:

- 48% of people agree that ‘*most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives*’, but 28% disagree and 22% neither agree nor disagree.

- At the same time, 45% agree with the more ‘critical’ statement that *‘most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried’*, while 33% disagree
- 35% agree that *‘many people say they are homeless just to try and get a house from the council’*, while 29% disagree.

It appears possible to be ‘sympathetic’ in one respect (perhaps viewing someone becoming homeless as simply bad luck), while holding more ‘judgemental’ attitudes in others (for example, thinking they could get out of homelessness if they ‘really tried’).

Attitudes vary by sex, age, education level and the extent to which someone’s underlying beliefs and values are more libertarian or authoritarian:

- Women are generally more ‘sympathetic’ towards homeless people than men – for example, 53% of women, compared with 42% of men agree that *‘most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives’*.
- Attitudes also vary by age, with older people most likely (aged 65 and above) to agree that *‘many people say they are homeless just to try to get a house from the council’* (49%, compared with 27% of those aged 25-34). Both older (65+) and younger (18-24) people are more likely than the middle-aged to agree that *‘most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried’*.
- Education is strongly associated with holding less ‘judgemental’ attitudes towards the motives and behaviour of homeless people. For example, just 33% of those qualified to higher education level or above agree that *‘most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried’* compared with 58% of those with no qualifications. However, those with no qualifications are in fact *more* likely to agree that *‘homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives’* (61%, compared with 41% of those with degrees). One possible explanation of this apparent inconsistency is that some disagree with this statement because they believe homelessness has broader socio-economic causes and is therefore not simply a question of luck.
- People with more authoritarian beliefs and values are more likely to express attitudes that could be described as ‘unsympathetic’ or more ‘judgemental’. For example, 51% of ‘authoritarian’ respondents agree that many *‘say they are homeless just to try and get a house from the council’*, compared with just 18% of more libertarian respondents.

Attitudes towards homeless people do not vary by tenure after other factors like age, income and education are controlled for. Neither does ‘Low level’ awareness or contact with the ‘visibly’ homeless appear to have much impact on attitudes towards homeless people. Personal experience of homelessness appears to be associated with having more definite views in either a ‘sympathetic’ or ‘unsympathetic’ direction on whether people say they are homeless just to try and get a house from the council.

### **‘Myths’ About Homelessness**

The most recent figures indicate that the numbers of homeless people who sleep rough is actually relatively small. However, a majority of people (61%) believe that most homeless people sleep rough at some point. Belief in this myth does not vary particularly between

different socio-demographic groups. However, those who say they come across ‘homeless people’ most days are more likely than those who come across ‘homeless people’ less often to believe this.

Around 1 in 5 appear to believe that homeless is closely associated with drink or drug problems – 21% agree that ‘*most people end up being homeless simply because they drink too much*’ and 18% agree that ‘*most homeless people use hard drugs*’. However, half disagree with each of these statements. The groups most likely to believe that most homeless people drink too much or take hard drugs – men, the youngest and oldest age groups, people with no qualifications, those on low incomes and the more authoritarian – reflect the groups most likely to hold more critical or ‘unsympathetic’ attitudes towards the behaviour and motives of homeless people in general.

### **‘Deserving’ Homeless People?**

The Scottish Government has set a target date of 2012 for the complete abolition of the ‘priority need’ test. This will mean that the right to permanent accommodation will be extended to *all* people who find themselves unintentionally homeless<sup>1</sup>, not just those considered particularly vulnerable because of their individual characteristics or situation. The 2006 *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey explored the extent to which the Scottish Government’s desire to remove distinctions between different groups of people experiencing homelessness when allocating help and housing is shared by the general public.

Many people in Scotland do see some homeless people as more deserving of help than others. Around 6 in 10 say both that some who become homeless for different *reasons* are more deserving than others, and that some *kinds* of homeless people should get more help than others. The groups of people seen as most deserving of help broadly reflect the Scottish Government’s current categories of priority need – for example, victims of domestic abuse, people with mental health problems and young people leaving children’s homes. Similarly, between 3 in 10 and 4 in 10 people think that single parent families, married couples with children and older people should get more help than others in finding a new home. The groups people are most likely to think ‘*least* deserving’ also broadly reflect the current legal position – those who have just moved to Scotland, those with drug and alcohol problems and those who have been evicted for being noisy neighbours. None of these groups are covered by current ‘priority need’ categories unless they are also considered particularly vulnerable. Prison leavers are the only group currently covered by priority need guidance who are commonly considered among the least deserving of help.

The view that some should get more help than others appears widespread across different social groups. Even among respondents who are generally more libertarian in their outlook, the proportion who think some are more deserving than others outweighs the proportion who say all homeless people are equally deserving.

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<sup>1</sup> For discussion of ‘intentionality’, see Chapters One and Six in this report.

## **Attitudes towards ‘intentionally homeless’ people**

The 2003 Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act introduces new rights to a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy and to support for households assessed by local authorities to be ‘intentionally’ homeless – that is, households who have done, or failed to do, something that results in their losing the right to occupy a property available to them to live in. Respondents to the 2006 *SSA* were presented with a range of scenarios where a person could be considered to have become homeless ‘intentionally’ and were asked to say whether or not they should get help from their council with finding a new home.

We found that for many scenarios where a person might be considered ‘intentionally homeless’, a majority of people think the council should definitely or probably provide such help. The key exception is where someone has become homeless because they caused problems for their neighbours (anti social behaviour) – over 8 in 10 think this group should definitely or probably *not* get help finding a new home. The Scottish Government website highlights the need to challenge the belief that ‘People made homeless as a result of antisocial behaviour should not have any rights to social housing’<sup>2</sup>. These findings, in combination with the finding that a third of people think those evicted for being noisy neighbours are among those ‘least deserving’ of help, may suggest that further work is needed to challenge this belief.

Attitudes towards helping homeless people find a new home appear to vary somewhat depending on both the sex and age of the person in question – while there is no significant difference in the proportions who think a teenage boy and a teenage girl should get help, in relation to a 30 year-old who has experienced a marriage breakdown people are more inclined to think a woman than a man should get help. Views also vary significantly by socio-demographic factors like sex, age, education and area deprivation, as well as the extent to which people hold underlying beliefs that are libertarian or authoritarian. It appears that specific groups may need more convincing than others of the need to help particular ‘intentionally homeless’ people find new accommodation.

## **Homelessness in the local area**

The 2006 *SSA* explored various issues related to addressing homelessness in the local area, including:

- views about the relative priority that should be given to homeless people vs. other locals when allocating local housing,
- beliefs about whether homeless people cause trouble in people’s local areas, and
- attitudes to homeless people being re-housed nearby.

A majority of people (58%) think homeless people should ‘sometimes’ get homes before other local people on the housing waiting list. Only a minority (7% in each case) think homeless people should either ‘never’ or ‘always’ get homes first. Older people and those on low household incomes are more likely to think homeless people should ‘never’ or ‘hardly ever’ get homes before others, as are those who express more ‘critical’ attitudes towards homeless people in general.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Housing/homeless/facts>

Only 1 in 10 (11%) believes that homeless people cause problems in their local area, while over half (52%) disagree that this is the case. However, those who live in the most deprived areas of Scotland are more likely than those in the most affluent areas to think that homeless people cause problems locally (18% compared with 7%).

When asked to consider how comfortable or uncomfortable they would feel with homeless people being re-housed near them, people are relatively evenly divided – around a third say they would be comfortable, a third uncomfortable and a third neither comfortable nor uncomfortable. Older people, those living in the least deprived areas of Scotland and those on high incomes are most likely to say they would feel *uncomfortable*. While those who express generally more ‘sympathetic’ attitudes to homeless people are more likely to say they would feel comfortable, the association is not perfect. This suggests that attitudes to homelessness are complex and may vary when people are asked to consider homelessness being addressed in their own local area.

# CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

1.1 This report presents findings from a module of questions in the 2006 *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey on public attitudes towards people experiencing homelessness. The module was funded by the Scottish Executive<sup>3</sup> to inform the work of the *Awareness Raising and Best Practice subgroup* of the *Homelessness Monitoring Group*. This subgroup advises the Scottish Government on how best to raise awareness on the reality of being homeless and how to disseminate accurate information and dispel myths about homelessness.

1.2 The overall aim of the module was to establish a baseline picture of public attitudes towards homelessness in Scotland. In particular, it addresses the following key questions:

### Key questions

- How do people feel about homeless people and how do views vary between different groups?
- How far are public attitudes to homelessness in tune with the direction of Scottish Executive policy?

## Policy background

1.3 Homelessness in Scotland increased dramatically during the 1990s. The number of applications to Scottish local authorities under homelessness legislation rose from 29,068 in 1989-1990 to 46,023 in 1999-00 - a 58% increase (Homelessness Task Force, 2002). The Homelessness Task Force was established in August 1999 in response to this dramatic rise, to make recommendations on how homelessness in Scotland could be prevented and, where it occurred, how it could be tackled more effectively. Its final report was published in 2002 and made a total of 59 recommendations. The *Housing (Scotland) Act 2001* and the *Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003* implemented many of these recommendations. Key changes introduced by the Acts relate to:

- **‘Priority need’** – local authorities are currently entitled to make a distinction between homeless people assessed to be in ‘priority need’ and those not so assessed. People might be in ‘priority need’ if they are particularly vulnerable, for example because they have dependent children or a mental health problem. Prior to the 2001 Act, if a person was *not* assessed as in ‘priority need’ they would not automatically be entitled to help finding new accommodation. The 2001 Act extended the rights of homeless people not in ‘priority need’ by stating they should be entitled to at least temporary accommodation. It also ensured that unintentionally homeless people in priority need were entitled to permanent

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<sup>3</sup> NB this research was commissioned and conducted prior to the change in name from ‘Scottish Executive’ to ‘Scottish Government’ in September 2007.

accommodation. The 2003 Act went further, first by extending the definition of ‘priority need’ to include a number of groups not clearly covered by earlier legislation, and second by including a target to completely abolish the ‘priority need’ distinction by 2012. In 2005, the Communities Minister published a ministerial statement confirming the Executive’s intention to abolish priority need by 2012. In practice, this will mean that the right to *permanent* accommodation will be extended to *all* people who find themselves unintentionally homeless.

- **Intentionality** – prior to the 2003 Act, local authorities had a duty to investigate whether a person applying as homeless had become homeless ‘intentionally’ or not. A person might be considered ‘intentionally homeless’ if they deliberately do, or fail to do, anything that results in their losing the right to occupy a property available to them. Examples might include becoming homeless due to (avoidable) rent arrears or anti-social behaviour. Where a person is assessed as being ‘intentionally’ homeless, they are only entitled to temporary accommodation and advice. The 2003 Act increases the rights of ‘intentionally’ homeless households by:
  - changing the *duty* to investigate whether someone is ‘intentionally’ homeless to a *power* (so that local authorities are no longer required to investigate this at all), and
  - introducing new rights to a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) with appropriate support to address the cause of ‘intentionality’ for all ‘intentionally’ homeless households (those evicted for anti-social behaviour or with an Anti-Social Behaviour Order against them may be excluded from this provision, although they are still entitled to temporary accommodation and support). If the initial tenancy is successful, it will be converted to a full tenancy after 12 months.

At the time of writing, a timescale for implementing these changes was still to be confirmed.

- **Local connection** – the ‘local connection’ provision of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 allows a local authority to refer homeless applicants (who must be in priority need and unintentionally homeless) to another local authority. This provision applies where the local authority believes the applicant does not have a local connection with their authority area, but does have a local connection with another authority. To establish a local connection, a person would need to prove they had been normally resident of their own choosing in that area, that they worked in the area or that they had family associations or other special connection to the area. The 2003 Act introduced provision to modify the ‘local connection’ test. The Scottish Government is currently considering how to take forward any modifications via a public consultation.

### **Why study public attitudes to homelessness?**

1.4 The *Housing (Scotland) Act 2001* and the *Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003* have been widely welcomed by homeless charities as introducing some of the most

progressive homelessness legislation in Europe. For example, in their briefing on the 2003 Act, the Scottish Council for Single Homeless state:

*“The Act introduces a change of culture, concentrating available resources on re-housing homeless people successfully, rather than investigating whether they can be rationed out of the system”*

(Scottish Council for Single Homeless, 2006)

1.5 However, an earlier study commissioned for the *Awareness Raising and Best Practice subgroup* which explored the views of service providers towards homelessness found more mixed views towards some of the key provisions of the 2003 Act. For example, over half (55%) of providers did not feel that the abolition of priority need was fair, while 61% agreed that ‘homeless people who could have avoided becoming homeless should not expect the same degree of choice as others in need of re-housing’ (Jardine, L and Bilton, K., 2006). Moreover, nearly three-quarters (72%) of service providers felt that their job would be easier if the public had a better understanding of homelessness.

1.6 To date, there does not appear to have been any large-scale, UK-based research exploring public attitudes towards homelessness. It is thus not clear to what extent service providers’ concerns about public understanding of homelessness accurately reflect low levels of public sympathy towards people experiencing homelessness or poor understanding of homelessness as an issue. Given that a key aim of the *Awareness Raising and Best Practice subgroup* is to disseminate accurate information and dispel myths about homelessness, it is important that its future strategies are based on a clear understanding of how homelessness is currently viewed by people in Scotland. In this report, we explore general levels of ‘sympathy’ towards homeless people as well as the extent to which the Scottish public subscribe to popular ‘myths’ or misconceptions about homelessness in order to inform this work.

## **Report structure**

1.7 The report is structured as follows:

- **Introduction:** in the remainder of this introductory chapter, we discuss some difficulties associated with defining homelessness and talking about ‘homeless people’ and introduce our data set.
- **Chapter Two:** key findings on experience and awareness of homelessness are summarised, focusing on which groups of people are most likely to have come across people they *think* are homeless on a regular basis, as well as which groups are most likely to have more personal experience of homelessness.
- **Chapter Three:** explores general attitudes to homeless people and looks at which groups of people in Scotland are most likely to hold ‘sympathetic’ and ‘unsympathetic’ attitudes.
- **Chapter Four:** considers the extent of belief in various factual and ‘moral’ ‘myths’ about homeless people – for example, that most homeless people sleep rough outside, that most people end up being homeless simply because they drink too much, or that most homeless people use hard drugs.
- **Chapters Five and Six:** attitudes towards two of the cornerstones of the Scottish Government’s homelessness reforms – priority need and intentionality are



considered. The extent to which the public makes distinctions between different groups of homeless people based on their individual characteristics or the reasons they have become homeless when thinking about who ought to get help finding a new home are explored.

- **Chapter Seven:** explores respondents' attitudes to homelessness in their own local area, examining beliefs about whether homeless people cause problems, their reactions to the idea of homeless people being re-housed near to them, and their attitudes to homeless people being housed before other local people on the waiting list.
- **Chapter Eight:** the report conclusions are outlined and discussion of possible implications for policy and further research.

### **Defining homelessness and talking about 'homeless people'**

1.8 The detailed definition of 'homelessness' included in the Homelessness Task Force's final report is included as Annex A of this report. Their definition incorporates households living in unsuitable or insecure accommodation as well as those who are roofless (those without shelter of any kind) or houseless (those living in temporary or emergency accommodation). It is important to note in reading this report that respondents to our survey were not provided with this, or any other detailed definition of 'homelessness' at the outset<sup>4</sup>. This was in part because the definition is multi-faceted and would have been difficult to convey in the context of a survey interview. However, we are also primarily interested in people's opinions of homelessness, regardless of whether these opinions are informed by an accurate understanding of the kinds of situations this term can cover. As such, providing a definition at the start of the interview might have been leading and could have altered people's responses to the rest of the survey.

1.9 A key aim of this report is to explore the extent to which people hold negative views of people experiencing the types of severe housing need covered by the Homelessness Task Force's report. There is an argument that the terminology used to describe this group of people can itself add to the stigma they experience. On one view, the term 'homeless people' itself is potentially misleading: since individuals can move in and out of periods of homelessness at different points in their lives, it is argued that it is unhelpful to label an individual as 'a homeless person'. It is also suggested that other people might view people experiencing homelessness less negatively if they were simply described as another group in (severe) housing need. For these reasons, some suggest that the term 'people experiencing homelessness' is preferable to 'homeless people'.

1.10 In this report, however, we have decided to use the terms 'homeless people' and 'people experiencing homelessness' interchangeably to describe people affected by the types of severe housing need described in the Task Force's report. While we recognise that terminology does matter and can potentially influence people's perceptions of a group, we felt that the term 'people experiencing homelessness' was not likely to be clearly understood by the majority of the Scottish public. Our questionnaire, therefore, referred to 'homeless people' and as such, we do not feel it would be appropriate to avoid

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<sup>4</sup> We did, however, make the Homelessness Task Force's definition available when asking people if they, or someone they knew, had ever been homeless, in the event that they had queries about the precise situations this includes. This question was asked at the end of the module.

using this term altogether. In general, when we talk about our data, which is based on questions about ‘homeless people’, we use this term. However, in our broader discussions of homelessness we use the term ‘people experiencing homelessness’ in recognition of the fact that this may be a more appropriate and less stigmatising description of this group.

## **The data**

1.11 Our data come from the *Scottish Social Attitudes* (SSA) survey, conducted by the Scottish Centre for Social Research. SSA is an independent survey that aims to provide high quality survey data on a wide range of social and political attitudes in order both to inform public policy and to facilitate the academic study of public opinion. This report details the survey’s most recent findings based on interviews conducted in 2006. Between August 2006 and early January 2007, a random sample of 1,594 adults aged 18 plus resident in Scotland was interviewed, representing a response rate of between 56% and 58%<sup>5</sup>. Further technical details about the survey are included in Annex C.

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<sup>5</sup> The precise figure given for response rates depends on whether dwelling units whose eligibility to participate was unknown are included or excluded from the calculation. Dwelling units are coded as ‘unknown eligibility’ where the interviewer is unable to establish whether the property is occupied and residential. The higher response rate excludes dwelling units of unknown eligibility from the calculation, while the lower rate includes them. As some of the dwelling units whose eligibility was unknown are likely to be eligible and some ineligible, the true response rate probably lies somewhere between the two figures. For further details on response rate calculations, see the technical report.

## CHAPTER TWO CONTACT AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

2.1 Although the focus of the 2006 *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey module on homelessness was on public *attitudes* towards this issue, we also included two questions on people's awareness and experience of homelessness. The first of these questions was designed to measure personal experience of homelessness. The second was designed to tap exposure to 'visible homelessness' (e.g. Big Issue sellers, people begging on the street etc). We asked:

- Have you or anyone you know **ever** been homeless? By homeless, I mean not had somewhere suitable to live.<sup>6</sup>
- Generally speaking, how often do you come across someone you think is homeless?

2.2 One reason for asking how often people come across people they believe to be homeless is that people who have not had any personal experience of homelessness may form opinions of homeless people based on this kind of 'low-level contact'. Of course, the question does not take account of the fact that many people may have come across homeless people without realising they have done so, or the possibility that some people whom respondents believe to be homeless may not actually be. However, as our primary interest is in *perceptions*, however accurate or inaccurate, it was more important to measure respondents' 'perceived' rather than 'actual' exposure to people experiencing homelessness.

2.3 In addition to being interesting findings in themselves, we hoped to use data from these questions to help explain public attitudes – for example, do attitudes to people experiencing homelessness vary, either by 'low-level contact' with, or personal experience of homelessness, or both? However, the aim of this chapter is to provide a brief summary of respondents' personal experience of homelessness and their 'low-level contact' with 'homeless people'.

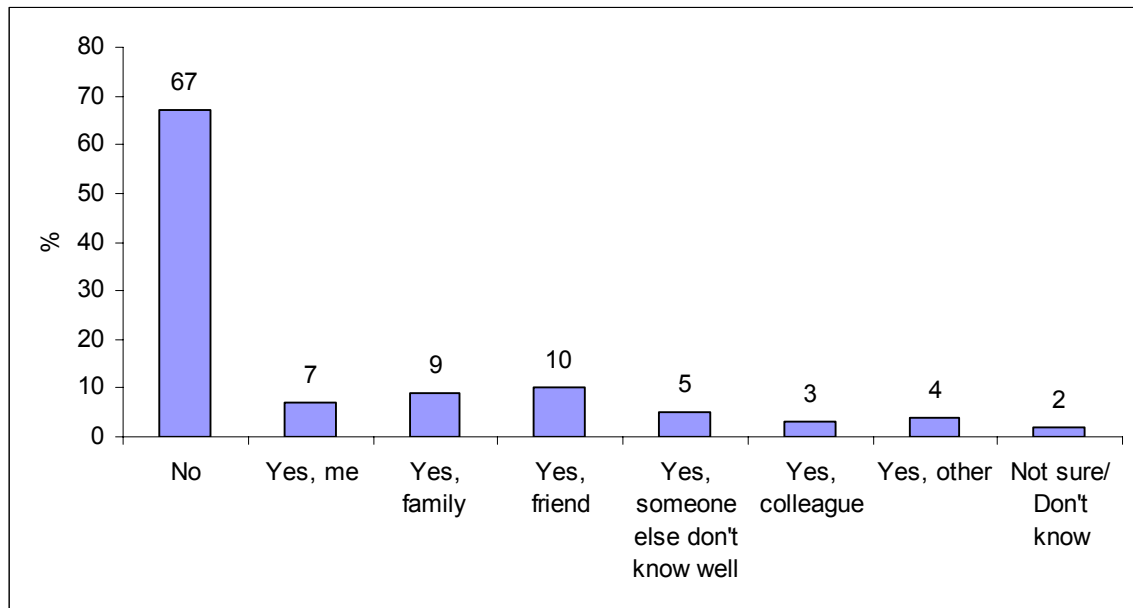
### Personal experience of homelessness

2.4 Figure 2.1 highlights that most people (67%) have not had either any personal experience of homelessness, or known anyone else who has been homeless. Around 3 in 10 do have experience of homelessness - 7% have experienced it themselves, 9% have family members who have been homeless and 10% have friends who have been homeless.

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<sup>6</sup> NB this question was asked at the end of the module, as we did not want people's answers to other questions to be affected by even this very broad definition of homelessness. As discussed in footnote 1, a showcard based on the Homelessness Task Force's definition of homelessness was available to respondents when answering this question if they had queries about whether a particular situation would be classed as being homeless.

**Figure 2.1 Personal experience of homelessness<sup>7</sup>**



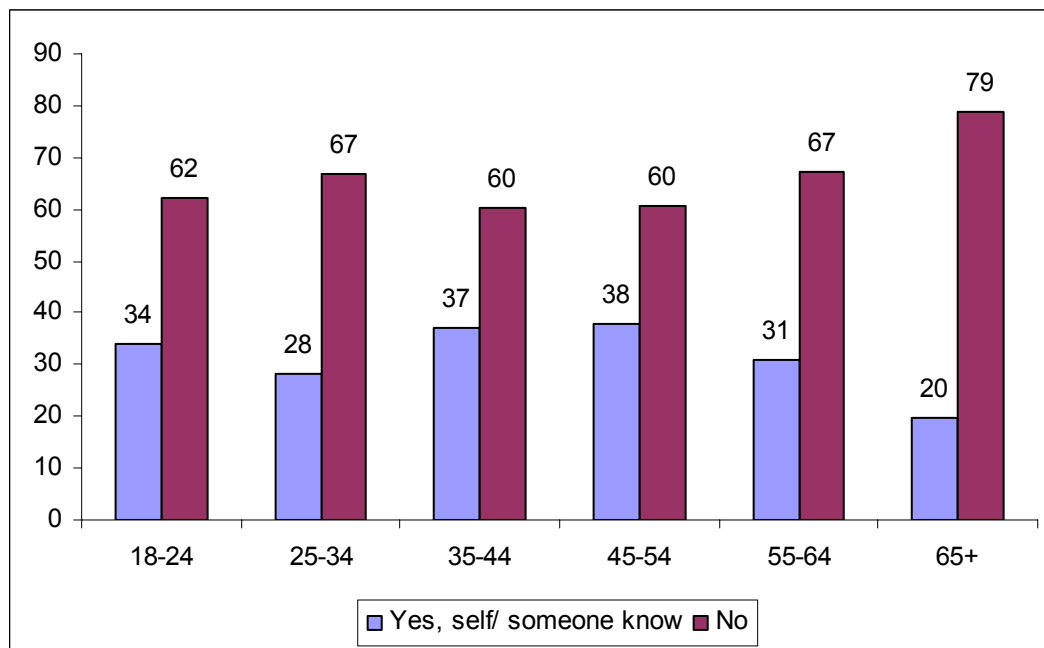
Base: all respondents (1,594)

2.5 In this survey we found that 7% of people had experienced homelessness themselves. This is just slightly higher than the 4% who said they had ever been homeless in the 2005 Scottish Household Survey.

2.5 While sex is not significantly associated with experience of homelessness, age is (Figure 2.2). Older people are *least* likely to have been homeless or know someone who has (20% of those aged 65+), while the middle-aged (35-54 year-olds) have most experience (just under four in ten of this group have either experienced homelessness themselves, or know someone who has).

<sup>7</sup> NB respondents who did know someone who had been homeless could choose more than one answer category (e.g. self and a friend), hence percentages total over 100%.

**Figure 2.2 Personal experience of homelessness BY age<sup>8</sup>**



Base: all respondents (1,594)

2.6 Personal experience of homelessness also varies by both the level of deprivation<sup>9</sup> in the area respondents live in, income level and by urbanity, as measured by the Scottish Government six-fold urban/rural classification (Table 2.1). As level of deprivation increases, so too does personal experience of homelessness – meaning that those living in the *least* deprived areas have *less* personal experience (24%) than those in the *most* deprived areas (37%). In line with this, and as might be expected, those with the lowest incomes (£11,999 and below) are most likely to have experienced homelessness themselves or to know someone who has (43% have), and those with the highest incomes (£44,000 and above) are least likely to have such personal experience (22% have). The relationship with urbanity is not so clear (Table 2.1 again). People in *remote rural* areas (74%) are more likely than those in *large urban* areas (69%) to have *no* personal experience of homelessness. However, it is people living in ‘other urban areas’ (36%) and ‘remote small towns’ (37%) that have most personal experience. It is not obvious why this is the case.

2.7 Given that social renters tend to be in lower socio-economic groups and that private renters may be in more insecure housing we might expect to find that it is these groups who are most likely to have either experienced homelessness themselves, or to know someone who has. Table 2.1 demonstrates that this is indeed the case. Personal experience of homelessness is significantly greater among social renters and private renters than among owner occupiers (40% for both, compared with 27% of owner occupiers).

<sup>8</sup> NB respondents who were unsure whether or not they knew anyone who had been homeless (2% in total) are not shown in this figure or the subsequent table (Table 2.1), hence the totals may sum to less than 100%.

<sup>9</sup> Deprivation was measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2006. For further details, see <http://www.scottishexecutive.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD/Overview>. The areas SSA respondents lived in were matched to SIMD quintiles, with 1 being the least deprived and 5 being the most deprived.

**Table 2.1 Personal experience of homelessness BY deprivation, income, urban/rural and housing tenure**

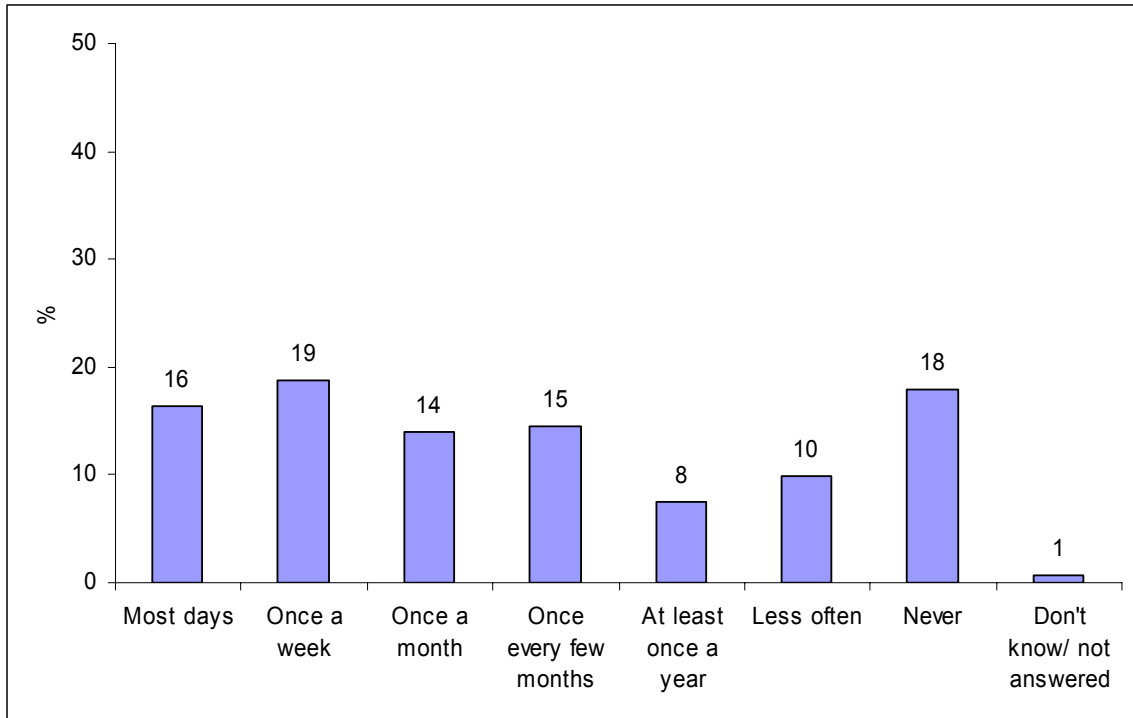
	<b>Yes, self/ someone I know</b>	<b>No</b>	<i>Sample size</i>
<b>Deprivation (SIMD quintiles)</b>			
1-Least deprived	24	75	319
2	27	69	364
3	30	69	274
4	36	60	330
5-Most deprived	37	60	307
<b>Income</b>			
£11,999 or less	43	54	399
£12-£22,999	30	68	314
£23-£43,999	34	64	357
£44,000+	22	75	236
<b>Urban/ rural</b>			
Large urban	29	69	508
Other urban	36	61	375
Accessible small towns	27	69	187
Remote small towns	37	60	113
Accessible rural	30	67	219
Remote rural	26	74	192
<b>Housing tenure</b>			
Owner occupier	27	71	1088
Social renter	40	58	373
Private renter	40	55	117

### **How often do people come across ‘homeless people’?**

2.8 A significant proportion of people come across someone they think is homeless on a regular basis (Figure 2.3). Sixteen per cent come across someone ‘most days’, 19% ‘at least once a week’ and 14% ‘at least once a month’. There is, however, a sizeable minority of people who say they ‘never’ come across someone they believe to be homeless (18%). Although we might expect that this proportion would have been smaller if the question had specified the much broader legal definition of ‘homelessness’<sup>10</sup>, the finding is still striking.

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter One for discussion of why we did not include this in the survey, and Annex A for the Homelessness Task Force’s definition of homelessness.

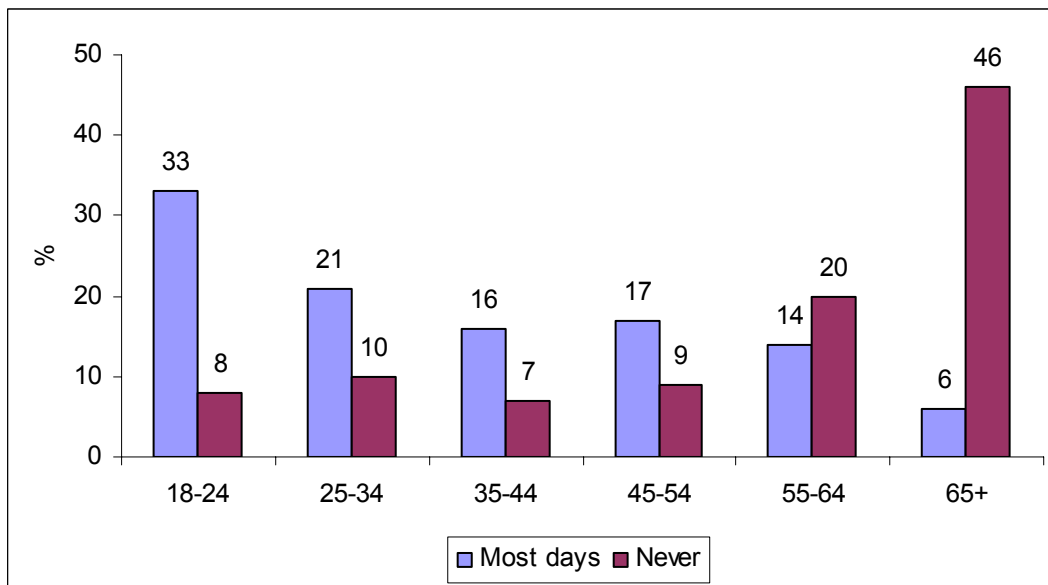
**Figure 2.3 How often do you come across someone you think is homeless?**



Base: all respondents (1,594)

2.9 There is no significant relationship between this kind of ‘low-level contact’ with ‘homeless people’ and the sex of the respondent. However, there is noticeable variation by age (Table 2.4), with frequency of exposure to ‘visible homelessness’ apparently declining as people get older. For example, a third of 18-24 year-olds come across someone they consider to be homeless ‘most days’, compared with only 6% of people aged 65 or over. Further, almost half (46%) of people aged 65 or over say they ‘never’ come across someone they think is homeless, significantly higher than for any other age group (for example, only 8% of 18-24 year-olds and 7% of 35-44 year olds say the same).

**Figure 2.4 How often come across ‘homeless people’ BY age**



Base: all respondents (1,594)

2.10 Given that the ‘visibly homeless’ (for example, Big Issue sellers and people begging on the streets) are more commonly found in large cities and towns we might expect that people in more urban areas will come across people they think are homeless more often than those living in remote areas. Further, given the association between deprivation and housing need, of which homelessness is one (severe) type, we might also expect that people in more deprived areas will have greater ‘low-level contact’ with ‘homeless people’ than people living in less deprived areas.

2.11 In line with these expectations, over a quarter (27%) of those in large urban areas say they come across someone ‘most days’ compared with only 11% of those living in accessible rural areas and 4% from remote rural areas (Table 2.2). ‘Low-level contact’ also varies by deprivation, from 26% of those living in the *most* deprived areas who say they come across someone they believe to be homeless ‘most days’, to 17% of those in the *least* deprived areas.

2.12 In terms of tenure, it is private renters who come across people they think are homeless most often. Nearly three in ten private renters (29%) come across someone they think is homeless ‘most days’, compared with 17% of social renters and 15% of owner occupiers. This is perhaps not surprising given that a large proportion of private renters live in urban areas (where there are more ‘visibly homeless’ people) and because they are more likely to be young people (who, as we have seen earlier, say they come across ‘homeless people’ most often).

**Table 2.2 How often come across ‘homeless people’ BY deprivation, urban/rural and housing tenure**

	Most days	Never	Sample size
<b>Deprivation (SIMD quintiles)</b>			
1-Least deprived	17	11	319
2	12	20	364
3	14	25	274
4	12	19	330
5-Most deprived	26	17	307
<b>Urban/ rural</b>			
Large urban	27	15	508
Other urban	13	19	375
Accessible small towns	4	18	187
Remote small towns	6	22	113
Accessible rural	11	17	219
Remote rural	4	30	192
<b>Tenure</b>			
Owner occupier	15	17	1088
Social renter	17	23	373
Private renter	29	13	117

### Key points

- Most people have not had any experience of homelessness, nor do they know anyone else who has (67%). Seven per cent have experienced homelessness themselves.



- People in the ‘middle-aged’ groups are most likely to have experienced homelessness themselves or know someone who has (37% of 35-44 year-olds and 38% of 45-54 year-olds compared with 20% of those aged 65 and over).
- People with low household incomes (£11,999 and less) are more likely than those on high incomes (£44,000 and over) to have experienced homelessness themselves or to know someone who has (43% compared with 22%).
- People living in socially rented and private rented accommodation are more likely than owner occupiers to have experienced homelessness or know someone who has (40% for both, compared with 27% of owner occupiers).
- People living in the *least* deprived areas have less personal experience of homelessness – three quarters of this group do not know anyone who has been homeless, compared with just 6 in 10 people in the most deprived areas.
- While 16% say they come across someone they think is homeless ‘most days’, a similar proportion (18%) say they ‘never’ come across they consider to be homeless.
- Younger people have the greatest frequency of ‘low-level contact’ with people they think are homeless. For example, 33% of 18-34 year-olds say they come across someone they think is homeless ‘most days’ while only 6% of those aged 65 and over say the same.
- Those living in large urban areas and those in the most deprived areas are most likely to come across someone they think is homeless most days (27% and 26% respectively), compared with 4% in remote rural areas and 17% in the least deprived areas).

## CHAPTER THREE GENERAL ATTITUDES TO HOMELESS PEOPLE

### Introduction and background

3.1 One of the key aims of the *Awareness Raising and Best Practice subgroup* is to advise on the measurement of attitudes towards people experiencing homelessness and any changes in these attitudes over time. To inform this aim, the 2006 *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey included a number of statements designed to explore the degree to which people hold attitudes which could broadly be described as ‘sympathetic’ or which are more ‘critical’ or ‘unsympathetic’ towards homeless people. We asked people how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- Most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives.
- Most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried.
- Many people say they are homeless just to try and get a house from the council.

3.2 Believing that homeless people have just been unlucky suggests that they are not viewed as completely responsible for the difficult situation in which they find themselves – thus agreement with the first statement can be seen as expressing a broadly ‘sympathetic’ attitude towards homeless people. Thinking that homeless people could find somewhere to live if they ‘really tried’ or that many ‘*say they are homeless just to try and get a house from the council*’, on the other hand, suggests a more judgemental attitude towards the behaviour and motives of people experiencing homelessness. Thus agreement with the second and third statements suggests a broadly ‘unsympathetic’ or more ‘critical’ view. This chapter uses data for these statements to address the following key questions:

#### Key questions

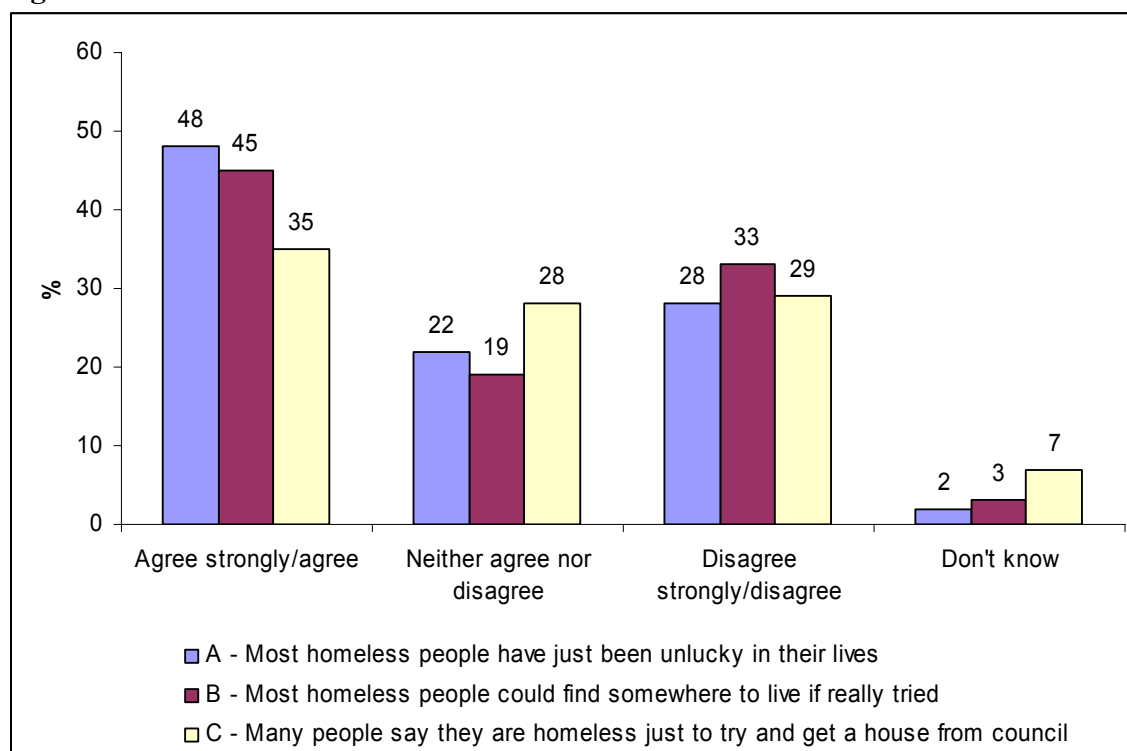
- How ‘sympathetic’ or ‘unsympathetic’ are public attitudes towards people experiencing homelessness in general?
- How do attitudes vary across different groups of people in Scotland?

### General levels of sympathy towards people experiencing homelessness

3.3 Figure 3.1, below, shows the extent of agreement or disagreement with each of the statements listed above. The findings suggest that the issue of homelessness divides people. For example, while half (48%) agree that ‘*most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives*’, over a quarter (28%) disagree while 2 in 10 (22%) neither agree nor disagree. Thus while half the population appear broadly sympathetic towards homeless people on this measure, half appear either unsympathetic or undecided in their views (although as discussed below, other interpretations of disagreement with this statement are possible).

3.4 In relation to the other two statements, views are similarly divided although arguably slightly more negative. For example, while 29% disagree that ‘many people say they are homeless just to try and get a house from the council’, 35% agree with this statement and 28% neither agree nor disagree. Thus around two thirds of people appear to be either suspicious or undecided about the motives of many people who present as homeless. Similarly, while 33% disagree that ‘most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried’, 45% agree with this statement, suggesting that many people may believe homeless people could do more to help themselves out of their situation.

**Figure 3.1 General attitudes to homelessness<sup>11</sup>**



Base: Statement A and B = 1,594 (all respondents), statement C = 1,437 (all respondents who completed the self-completion questionnaire)

3.5 The fact that the second two statements appear to attract more negative responses than the first raises the question of whether or not the three statements are all measuring broadly the same kind of ‘sympathy’ towards homeless people. One explanation of the difference in responses to the three statements may be that people are sympathetic in one respect but not in others. For example, people may be broadly sympathetic to the reasons people become homeless in the first instance, perhaps viewing homeless people as simply victims of circumstance (or ‘luck’). However, they may express less sympathetic attitudes when asked about how people behave once they are homeless – for example because they feel they are not trying hard enough to help themselves. The third statement, may be tapping somewhat different beliefs about whether or not people think that all homeless applicants are in fact ‘genuinely’ homeless, or whether some have other motivations for saying they are homeless. By implication, some people may reserve their

<sup>11</sup> NB respondents who gave ‘don’t know’ responses to these statements are not shown in this figure, hence the totals may add up to less than 100%.

sympathy for those they consider ‘genuinely’ homeless, and be more critical of people they believe not to be homeless at all.

3.6 Further, although individual responses to these questions are related, the relationship is far from perfect. It is perfectly possible to be sympathetic towards homeless people in one respect but not another. For example, among those who *agree* that ‘*most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried*’ (the *least* sympathetic position on this measure), 44% also agree that ‘*most homeless people have just been unlucky*’ (the *most* sympathetic position on that measure – see Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1 Belief that most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried BY Belief that most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives<sup>12</sup>**

	<i>Most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried</i>		
<b>Most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives</b> ↓	<b>Agree/ Agree strongly</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree/ disagree strongly</b>
Agree/ agree strongly	44	47	56
Neither agree nor disagree	24	29	15
Disagree/disagree strongly	31	24	28
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>720</i>	<i>297</i>	<i>521</i>

3.7 These findings suggest that people’s general attitudes towards homelessness and homeless people are complex. It is not possible to simply amalgamate ‘sympathetic’ views on one measure with ‘sympathetic’ views on another to provide an overall measure of attitudes to homeless people. Rather, people’s degree of sympathy may vary in relation to their differing beliefs about how people become homeless in the first place (and the role ‘luck’ which played in this), their beliefs about whether homeless people could help themselves out of their situation and their beliefs about whether all people who present as homeless are ‘genuinely’ homeless or not.

3.8 In the remainder of this chapter, we explore how attitudes vary across different groups in Scotland. We will examine whether differences in responses to our three attitudinal statements can be explained by any (or all) of the following:

- socio-demographic factors (for example, sex, age, class and education)
- experience of homelessness (either personal experience or someone the respondent knows having been homeless) and how often people come across someone they think is homeless<sup>13</sup>
- underlying social and political attitudes (in particular, how liberal or authoritarian a person is and how left-wing or right-wing their views are)

<sup>12</sup> NB respondents who gave ‘don’t know’ responses to these statements are not shown in the remaining tables and figures in this chapter, hence the totals may sum to less than 100%.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter Two for a discussion of this question, which was designed to tap ‘low level’ awareness of or contact with ‘homeless people’.

## Analysis techniques

3.9 Our discussion of the findings in this section is informed by logistic regression analysis. Logistic regression is a statistical technique used to summarise the relationship between a ‘dependent’ variable (in this case holding an ‘unsympathetic’ or more ‘critical’ attitude to people experiencing homelessness) and one or more ‘independent’ explanatory variables (for example, sex, age, personal experience of homelessness, etc). It is particularly useful when explanatory variables are likely to be related to each other (for example, education, income and class), since it takes the relationships between these into account in determining which are statistically significant. We identify those factors most strongly associated with holding ‘sympathetic’ or ‘unsympathetic’ attitudes on each of our measures (as identified by this regression analysis) in our discussion. Further details of these regression models are included in Annex C.

## Demographic factors

3.10 Socio-demographic factors, like sex, age, education and income, are often associated with considerable differences in attitudes. For example, in their chapter in the *17<sup>th</sup> British Social Attitudes Report* (Jowell et al (eds.), 2000) on ‘Begging as a challenge to the welfare state’, Adler, Bromley and Rosie found that views about begging varied by: sex (women were more sympathetic than men); age (younger people were more understanding than older people); income (those on higher incomes were more sympathetic than those on low incomes); and education (those educated to higher education level or above were more understanding than those with no qualifications).

### *Sex and Age*

3.11 Women give more ‘sympathetic’ responses than men on the first two of our three attitude statements – they are *more* likely to agree that ‘*most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives*’ (53%, compared with 42% of men) and *less* likely to agree that ‘*most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried*’ (41%, compared with 51% of men). However, they are no more or less likely than men to believe that ‘*many people say they are homeless just to try to get a house from the council*’ (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2 Attitudes to homeless people BY sex**

		Agree/ agree strongly	Neither	Disagree/ disagree strongly	Sample size
<b>Most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives</b>	Men	42	22	34	701
	Women	53	22	23	893
<b>Most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried</b>	Men	51	17	29	701
	Women	41	20	36	893
<b>Many people say they are homeless just to try to get a house from the council</b>	Men	35	29	30	623
	Women	36	27	28	814

3.12 Age is significantly related to the second of our three statements (Table 3.3). *Both* older people (aged 65 or above) and younger people (aged 18-24) are more likely than middle-aged groups to believe that *'most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried'*. However, older people are more likely than younger people to think that *'many people say they are homeless just to get a house from the council'* - 49% of those aged 65+ agree with this statement, compared with just 34% of those aged 18-24 and just 27% of those aged 25-34.<sup>14</sup> Thus it appears that young people are less likely than older people to question the *motives* of people who present as homeless, but equally likely to believe that people could find a way out of homelessness if they really tried.

**Table 3.3 Attitudes to homeless people BY age**

		Agree/ agree strongly	Neither	Disagree/ disagree strongly	Sample size
<b>Most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried</b>	18-24	55	19	25	108
	25-34	42	21	34	222
	35-44	35	19	44	325
	45-54	41	20	37	270
	55-64	50	17	31	270
	65+	53	16	23	396
<b>Many people say they are homeless just to try to get a house from the council</b>	18-24	34	24	36	93
	25-34	27	34	33	193
	35-44	28	32	36	299
	45-54	33	32	32	246
	55-64	39	24	26	250
	65+	49	21	16	353

### **Education**

3.13 Attitudes to each of our three statements vary significantly depending on the respondents' educational qualifications (Table 3.4). Those qualified to degree or higher education level are *least* likely to agree that *'most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried'* (33%, compared with 58% of those with no qualifications) and that *'many people say they are homeless just to try and get a house from the council'* (22%, compared with 51% of those with no qualifications). Broadly speaking then, those with higher educational qualifications are more likely than those with no qualifications to be 'sympathetic' in relation to these two measures. However, in relation to our first statement, that *'most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives'*, those with higher education or degree level qualifications on the face of it appear to be the *least* 'sympathetic' group – 41% agree with this statement, compared with 61% of those with no qualifications.

<sup>14</sup> Although age is not independently related to the belief that *'many people say they are homeless just to get a house from the council'* after other factors, like education, are taken into account in multivariate analysis, there is still a clear bivariate relationship between responses to this question and age.

**Table 3.4 Attitudes to homeless people BY highest educational qualification**

		Agree/ agree strongly	Neither	Disagree/ disagree strongly	Sample size
<b>Most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives</b>	Degree/HE	41	23	34	479
	Highers/A-levels	41	28	30	280
	Standard Grades/ GCSEs	51	19	29	432
	None	61	18	18	394
<b>Most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried</b>	Degree/HE	33	23	42	479
	Highers/A-levels	40	22	35	280
	Standard Grades/ GCSEs	53	14	30	432
	None	58	17	22	394
<b>Many people say they are homeless just to try to get a house from the council</b>	Degree/HE	22	32	42	434
	Highers/A-levels	35	28	34	251
	Standard Grades/ GCSEs	38	29	25	397
	None	51	23	13	351

3.14 The data does not present us with an obvious explanation for this apparent inconsistency in the views of more highly qualified respondents. However, one possible interpretation might be that when thinking about the statement ‘*most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives*’, some respondents are considering the broader causes of homelessness. They may not think homeless people have ‘just’ been unlucky because they may believe homelessness has wider social and economic causes - for example, structural factors such as a lack of affordable housing and/or there being inadequate care provided by society for vulnerable people. On this interpretation, disagreeing with the statement does not necessarily imply *lack* of sympathy with homeless people (although agreeing with it does still imply a broadly sympathetic view).

### ***Tenure***

3.15 Our analysis suggests that whether a person lives in socially rented, private rented or owner-occupied accommodation is less strongly associated with attitudes towards homeless people than other factors, like education, sex and age. There is no significant variation by tenure in responses to any of our three statements. For example, 38% of social renters agree that ‘*many people say they are homeless just to try to get a house from the council*’, as do 35% of owner-occupiers. The fact that those who present as homeless are likely to be applying for social rented housing does not appear to make social renters any more or less suspicious than others about people’s motives for saying they are homeless.

### ***Other socio-demographic factors***

3.16 Other socio-demographic factors included in our analysis of responses to these statements were: area deprivation, socio-economic class (as measured by NS-SEC<sup>15</sup>),

<sup>15</sup> See Annex C for details.

Scottish Government urban-rural classification<sup>16</sup>, newspaper readership, self-assessed hardship and household income. None of these are significantly and independently associated with the belief that *'most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried'* or that *'many people say they are homeless just to try to get a house from the council'* after other factors, like education and age, are taken into account.

3.17 However, there are some variations in the belief that *'most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives'* by socio-economic class, household income and newspaper readership. In summary, employers managers and professionals and those on higher incomes are *more* likely than those in routine and semi-routine occupations and those on low incomes to *disagree* that *'most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives'*. These differences are apparent even after the relationships between education, class and income are taken into account. One possible interpretation of this is that those who are in socio-economically privileged positions find it difficult to believe that others lack control over their socio-economic status. An alternative interpretation would be that (as suggested above in relation to education) these groups reject the notion that homelessness is 'just' a result of luck, instead considering there to be broader societal causes at play.

3.18 While there is no difference in the attitudes of broadsheet and tabloid readers, those who do *not* read any newspaper are somewhat less likely to disagree with this statement.

### **Contact with homeless people and experience of homelessness**

3.19 A third of our sample (35%) come across people they consider to be homeless at least once a week, while around 3 in 10 (28%) either never come across people they think are homeless, or do so less than once a year. As discussed in Chapter Two, we included this question to enable us to explore what, if any, impact 'low level contact' with visibly 'homeless people' has on attitudes towards homelessness. Three different possibilities present themselves here. On the one hand, people who regularly come across people they believe to be homeless may have a heightened awareness of homelessness as an issue and be *more* sympathetic as a result. On the other, routine but low-level exposure to 'visible' homelessness may *lessen* people's sympathy. A third possibility is that it has no particular impact – that people's attitudes are shaped by demographic and other factors rather than this 'low level' contact with 'homeless people'.

3.20 Bi-variate analysis<sup>17</sup>, where responses to our three statements are cross-tabulated by level of 'contact' with homeless people, provides some support for the first of our three hypotheses. Those who say they *never* come across anyone they consider to be homeless are most likely to agree both that *'homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried'* (57%, compared with 43% of people who say they come across homeless people most days) and that *'many people say they are homeless just to try and get a house from the council'* (44%, compared with 36%). However, regression analysis<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Again, see Annex C for details

<sup>17</sup> Where one variable is cross-tabulated by another – for example, showing the proportion of people who agree that homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried, broken down by sex or age.

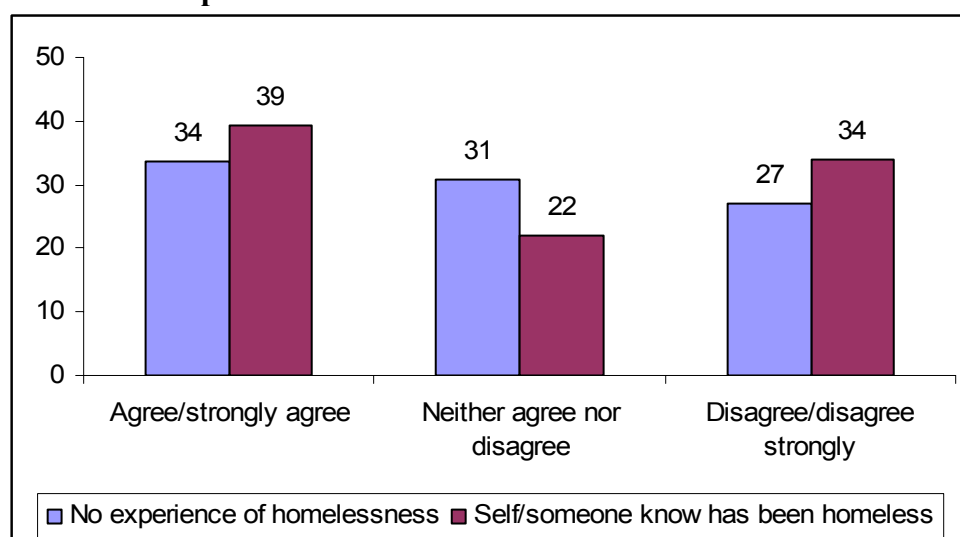
<sup>18</sup> See paragraph 3.9 for an explanation of this technique.



suggests that our third hypothesis is in fact the more plausible – how often respondents come across someone they believe to be homeless does not appear to be significantly related to attitudes once other factors like age, sex and education are taken into account.

3.21 As discussed in Chapter Two, three in ten people in our sample had either experienced homelessness themselves or knew someone who had been homeless. One might expect that personal experience or knowing someone who has experienced homelessness would incline people to be more sympathetic towards people experiencing homelessness generally. However, our regression analysis suggests that those with this kind of personal experience of homelessness are actually *more* likely than those without such experience to agree that ‘many people say they are homeless just to try to get a house from the council’. However, they are also more likely than those without such experience to *disagree* with this statement (Figure 3.2). Thus it appears that experience of homelessness is simply associated with having more *definite* views on this issue, in either a ‘sympathetic’ or ‘unsympathetic’ direction.

**Figure 3.2** ‘Many people say they are homeless just to try to get a house from the council’ BY experience of homelessness



Base: 1,437 (all respondents who completed the self-completion questionnaire)

### Underlying social and political attitudes

3.22 A third possible set of explanations for people’s attitudes towards homeless people relates to their underlying beliefs. The *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey includes two sets of questions which aim to measure respondents’ wider ideological values. The first set measures attitudes towards issues such as freedom of expression, law, discipline and tradition, while the second measures views on the distribution of resources in society, whether government should redistribute income and attitudes to ‘big business’. Responses to each set of questions can be combined to form an ‘index’ which indicates (a) how libertarian or authoritarian and (b) how politically left or right-wing a respondent’s beliefs are.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The full set of questions included in each of these indices is given in Annex B

3.23 In their analysis of public attitudes to begging, Adler et al found that having more libertarian views was a key predictor of being more sympathetic or understanding towards people who beg (in Jowell et al (eds.), 2000). Although homelessness is clearly not equivalent to begging, we might expect to find similar patterns here. In relation to the second two of our three statements, such a relationship clearly exists (Table 3.5). Respondents at the more authoritarian end of the scale are much more likely to agree that *'many people say they are homeless just to try and get a house from the council'* (51%, compared with just 18% of those at the more libertarian end). Similarly, 55% of those who are more authoritarian in their underlying beliefs agree that *'most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried'*, compared with just 35% of those who are more libertarian. This pattern of association is confirmed by logistic regression analysis.

**Table 3.5 Attitudes to homelessness BY underlying libertarian/authoritarian beliefs**

		Agree/ agree strongly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/ Disagree Strongly	Sample size
<b>Most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried</b>	Libertarian	35	23	40	397
	Centre	43	21	32	498
	Authoritarian	55	14	30	525
<b>Many people say they are homeless just to get a house from the council</b>	Libertarian	18	33	42	397
	Centre	34	31	28	498
	Authoritarian	51	22	21	525

3.24 The belief that the distribution of income in society is unfair might be expected to be an important predictor of a sympathetic attitude towards the position of homeless people. One might also, therefore, expect that those who are politically more left-wing would be more sympathetic towards homeless people. In fact, position on the left-right scale is only significantly related to one of our three statements – *'Many people say they are homeless just to try and get a house from the council'*. Moreover, the relationship between being left or right wing and responses to this statement ran in the *opposite* direction from what one might expect. Those who are relatively more left-wing in their underlying values are *more* likely than those who are right-wing to agree with this statement (45%, compared with 31%), suggesting that they are in fact somewhat more suspicious of the motives of people presenting as homeless (Table 3.6).

**Table 3.6 Attitudes to homelessness BY underlying political left/right beliefs**

		Agree/ agree strongly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/ Disagree Strongly	Sample size
<b>Many people say they are homeless just to get a house from the council</b>	Left	45	24	23	515
	Centre	30	30	36	400
	Right	31	32	30	494

3.25 This finding is perhaps less surprising, however, when we take account of the relationship between being left-wing and two factors that are strongly associated with holding less 'sympathetic' attitudes on this measure – being more authoritarian and having no educational qualifications. Those who are politically more left-wing are more likely than those who are right-wing to hold authoritarian views (48%, compared with

29%). They are also more likely to have no qualifications – 34%, compared with 14% of more right-wing respondents. In fact, when we take these other factors into account, the difference in attitudes between those who are left-wing and those who are right-wing disappears<sup>20</sup>.

### ***Discrimination towards homeless people and other groups***

3.26 In addition to questions about homelessness, the 2006 Scottish Social Attitudes survey also included a module of questions on attitudes towards different groups of people living in Scotland. This was intended to explore the extent and nature of discriminatory attitudes in Scotland, focusing particularly on gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, religion and age, and will be reported in full in a forthcoming report for the Scottish Government. In order to explore whether holding a ‘critical’ or ‘unsympathetic’ attitude towards homeless people is associated with holding attitudes that could be described as more discriminatory towards other groups of people in Scotland, we cross-tabulated responses to the three statements discussed in this chapter by responses to questions intended to measure discrimination towards gay men and lesbians, minority ethnic groups and Eastern European.

3.27 Although the associations are far from perfect, we did find some evidence that those who are more likely to hold attitudes that could be characterised as discriminatory towards these other groups are also more likely to hold ‘critical’ views about homeless people. For example, among those who agree that *‘people from ethnic minorities take jobs from other people in Scotland’*, 55% also agree that *‘most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried’*. This compares with just 38% of those who disagree that people from ethnic minorities take away jobs. Similarly, those who think *‘sometimes there is good reason for people to be prejudiced against certain groups’* are more likely than those who think *‘Scotland should do everything it can to get rid of all kinds of prejudice’* to agree that *‘most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried’* (55% compared with 41%).

### **Key points**

- Public attitudes to homelessness are complex.
  - 48% of people agree that *‘most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives’*, but 28% disagree and 22% neither agree nor disagree.
  - At the same time, 45% agree with the more ‘critical’ statement that *‘most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried’*, while 33% disagree
  - 35% agree that *‘many people say they are homeless just to try and get a house from the council’*, while 29% disagree.
- Thus not only are public responses to homeless people widely divided, but it appears possible to be ‘sympathetic’ in one respect (perhaps viewing someone becoming

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<sup>20</sup> Although those who are in the centre of the political spectrum remain somewhat less likely than those on the left to agree with this statement – see Annex C, regression model 3.

homeless as simply bad luck), while holding more ‘judgemental’ attitudes in others (for example, thinking they could get out of homelessness if they ‘really tried’).

- Women are generally more ‘sympathetic’ towards homeless people than men – for example, 53% of women, compared with 42% of men agree that *‘most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives’*.
- Attitudes also vary by age, with older people most likely (aged 65 and above) to agree that *‘many people say they are homeless just to try to get a house from the council’* (49%, compared with 27% of those aged 25-34). Both older (65+) and younger (18-24) people are more likely than the middle-aged to agree that *‘most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried’*.
- Education is strongly associated with holding less ‘judgemental’ attitudes towards the motives and behaviour of homeless people. For example, just 33% of those qualified to higher education level or above agree that *‘most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried’* compared with 58% of those with no qualifications.
- However, those with no qualifications are in fact *more* likely to agree that *‘homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives’* (61%, compared with 41% of those with degrees). One possible explanation for this apparent inconsistency is that some disagree with this statement because they believe homelessness has broader socio-economic causes – for example, structural factors such as a lack of affordable housing and/or there being inadequate care provided by society for vulnerable people - and is therefore not just a question of luck.
- There is little difference in attitudes towards homeless people by tenure, after other factors like age; income and education are controlled for.
- ‘Low level’ awareness or contact with the ‘visibly’ homeless does not appear to have much impact on attitudes towards homeless people.
- Personal experience of homelessness appears to be associated with having more definite views in either direction on whether people say they are homeless just to try and get a house from the council.
- The extent to which someone’s underlying beliefs and values are more libertarian or authoritarian is strongly related to attitudes to homelessness. Respondents at the more authoritarian end are much more likely than libertarians to express attitudes that could be described as ‘unsympathetic’ or more ‘judgemental’. For example, 51% of ‘authoritarian’ respondents agree that many *‘say they are homeless just to try and get a house from the council’*, compared with just 18% of more libertarian respondents.

## CHAPTER FOUR ‘MYTHS’ ABOUT HOMELESSNESS

### Introduction and background

4.1 Another key aim of the *Awareness Raising and Best Practice subgroup* is to disseminate accurate information on the reality of being homeless and to dispel myths about homelessness. On their website, the Scottish Government list several ‘myths’ about homelessness. The first of these is that ‘Homeless people sleep in the street’. In fact, as they state, ‘Only a tiny proportion of homeless people are on the street. Most stay on friends’ floors or with family, sometimes in precarious arrangements that can go wrong’. In addition to such ‘factual’ myths about homelessness, the Scottish Government also wishes to challenge beliefs that could be described as ‘moral myths’ about people experiencing homelessness. These might include the belief that homeless people are anti-social or otherwise undesirable and should not have any rights to social housing, or the belief that all or most people experience homelessness as a result of problems with drink or hard drugs.

4.2 Attitudes towards people made homeless as a result of anti-social behaviour are discussed in Chapters Five and Six. In this Chapter, we consider the extent to which the public subscribes to other ‘factual’ and ‘moral myths’ about homelessness. We asked people how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the following:

- Most homeless people sleep rough outside at some point
- Most people end up being homeless simply because they drink too much
- Most homeless people use hard drugs

4.3 These questions were included in the self-completion section of the 2006 *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey.

#### Key question

- To what extent does the general public believe in various ‘factual’ and ‘moral myths’ about homelessness?
- Are some groups more or less likely to believe these myths than others?

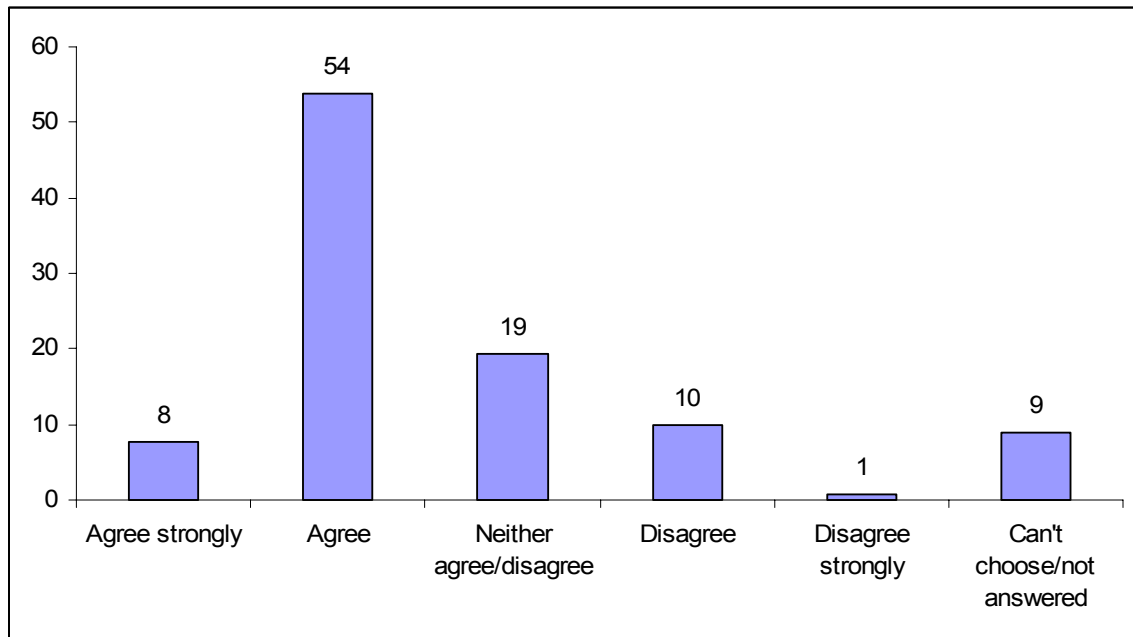
### Belief in ‘myths’

4.4 The misconception that most homeless people have slept rough outside at some point appears to be very widespread. The most recent figures indicate that the numbers of homeless people who sleep rough is actually relatively small. In 2005-2006, just 1 in 10 of applicants to Local Authorities under the Homeless Persons Legislation said they had slept rough in the three months prior to applying for assistance<sup>21</sup>. Around 6 in 10 (61%)

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/03/12095510/2>

agree that this is the case, while around 3 in 10 appear to be unsure, saying either that they ‘neither agree nor disagree’ or that they cannot choose (Figure 4.1).

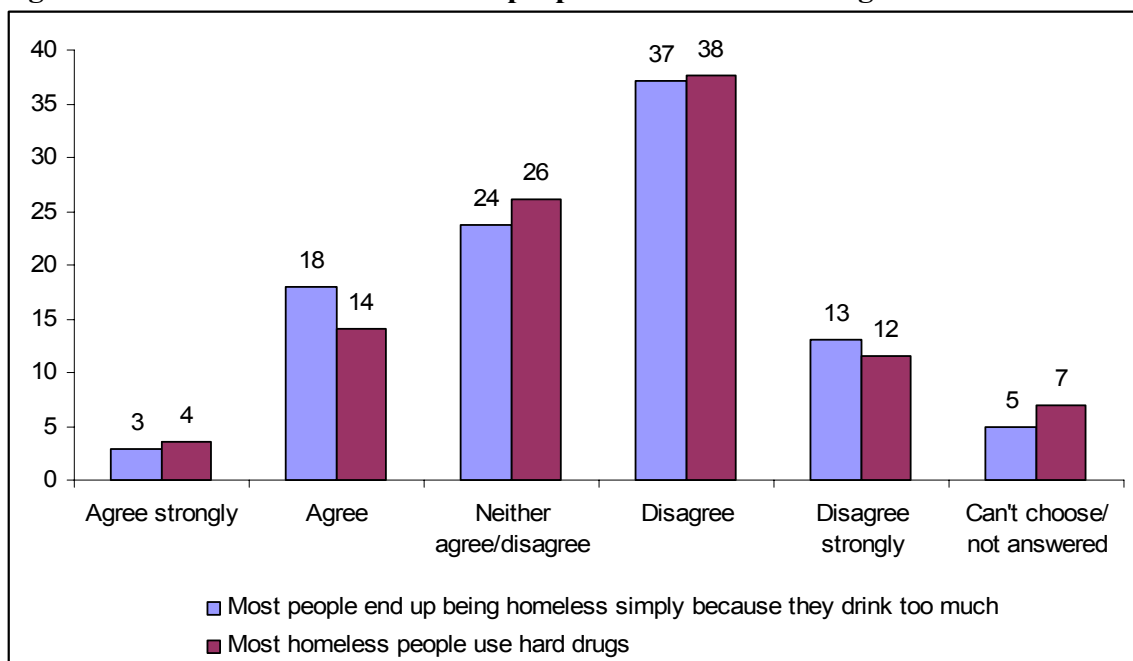
**Figure 4.1** ‘Most homeless people sleep rough outside at some point’



Base: 1,437 (all respondents who completed the self-completion questionnaire)

4.5 Beliefs about the two ‘moral myths’ are more divided. Although half *disagree* that ‘most people end up being homeless simply because they drink too much’ and that ‘most homeless people use hard drugs’, around 1 in 5 agree with each of these statements (Figure 4.2).

**Figure 4.2** Beliefs about homeless people and drink and drugs



Base: 1,437 (all respondents who completed the self-completion questionnaire)

### **Who is most likely to believe most homeless people sleep rough at some point?**

4.6 In contrast with general attitudes towards homeless people, the belief that '*most homeless people sleep rough outside sometimes*' does not vary by either sex or education (Table 4.1). Women are no more likely than men to believe this, and those with no qualifications are no more likely than those qualified to higher education level to believe it. Beliefs do vary by age however – 18-24 year-olds are most likely to agree that most homeless people sleep rough sometimes (77%, falling to 55% of those aged 65 or older). However, it is not the case that older people are clear that most homeless people do *not* sleep rough. Rather, they are more likely to express uncertainty, saying they neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

4.7 Those who say they come across people they believe to be homeless 'most days' are more likely than those who say they see them less often to agree that most homeless people sleep outside at some point. This possibly reflects the fact that rough sleepers are one of the more 'visibly homeless' groups they come across.

**Table 4.1 ‘Most homeless people sleep rough outside at some point’ BY key demographic and other factors<sup>22</sup>**

	<b>Agree/ agree strongly</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree/ disagree strongly</b>	<i>Sample size</i>
<b>Sex</b>				
Men	61	19	10	701
Women	62	19	10	893
<b>Age</b>				
18-24	77	8	4	108
25-34	67	19	10	222
35-44	63	21	9	325
45-54	56	24	15	270
55-64	59	17	13	270
65+	55	22	10	396
<b>Education</b>				
Degree/HE	58	21	14	479
None	62	16	9	394
<b>Income</b>				
£11,999 or less	61	15	12	366
£44,000+	58	22	12	213
<b>How often come across ‘homeless’</b>				
Most days	69	13	12	211
At least once a week	64	18	14	275
Once a month/once every few	63	19	8	456
At least once a year/less often	52	28	10	313
Never	60	18	10	327

### **Who is most likely to associate homelessness with drink and drug problems?**

4.8 The groups most likely to agree both that ‘*most people end up being homeless simply because they drink too much*’ (Table 4.2) and that ‘*most homeless people use hard drugs*’ (Table 4.3) are very similar to the groups most likely to hold more critical or ‘unsympathetic’ attitudes towards the behaviour and motives of homeless people, as described in Chapter Three. These include:

- Men – for example, 24% of men compared with 18% of women agree that ‘most people end up being homeless simply because they drink too much’
- The youngest and the oldest age groups – as with the belief that ‘*most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried*’, those aged 18-24 and

<sup>22</sup> NB respondents who either could not choose or did not answer are not shown in the remaining tables in this chapter. Thus in some cases the totals may sum to less than 100%.



those aged 65 or older are more likely than ‘middle-aged’ respondents to associate homelessness with drink and drug problems.

- Those with no qualifications – for example, 31% of those with no qualifications agree that ‘*most homeless people use hard drugs*’, compared with just 8% of those qualified to higher education level.
- Those on lower incomes – 36% of those with household incomes of less than £12,000 a year compared with 10% of those on incomes of £44,000 or more agree that most homeless people have become so because of a drink problem.
- Those who are more authoritarian in their general beliefs – 26% of ‘authoritarian’ respondents agree that ‘*most homeless people use hard drugs*’, compared with just 8% of more libertarian respondents.

4.9 Agreement with these statements also varied by how often people come across people they believe to be homeless. However, the pattern is not linear – for example, 25% of those who say they see homeless people most days think ‘*most homeless people use hard drugs*’, as do 23% of those who say they *never* see homeless people. This suggests that beliefs about the association between homelessness and drink and drugs may have different sources. On the one hand, people who say they come across homeless people regularly may believe that most homeless are like some of the more ‘visible’ groups they come across (for example, street drinkers). Of course, ‘street homelessness’ is only a small part of the problem of homelessness. Moreover, ‘street drinkers’ and other visible groups are not necessarily composed solely or mainly of homeless people. On the other hand, among people who say they never see homeless people, such beliefs may stem from a complete lack of exposure to or awareness of homelessness as an issue.

**Table 4.2 ‘Most people end up being homeless simply because they drink too much’ BY key demographic and other factors**

	<b>Agree/ agree strongly</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree/ disagree strongly</b>	<i>Sample size</i>
<b>Sex</b>				
Men	24	24	47	701
Women	18	23	53	893
<b>Age</b>				
18-24	28	30	35	93
25-34	15	21	62	193
35-44	9	23	65	299
45-54	17	22	59	246
55-64	24	19	48	250
65+	33	29	28	353
<b>Education</b>				
Degree/HE	9	20	69	479
None	39	22	29	394
<b>Income</b>				
£11,999 or less	36	22	34	366
£44K +	10	22	67	213
<b>How often come across ‘homeless’</b>				
Most days	20	21	55	211
At least once a week	15	21	59	275
Once a month/once every few	16	26	53	456
At least once a year/less often	21	23	49	313
Never	36	24	32	327
<b>Underlying lib/auth beliefs</b>				
Libertarian	9	22	65	397
Centre	21	26	48	498
Authoritarian	30	24	41	525

**Table 4.3 ‘Most homeless people use hard drugs’ BY key demographic and other factors**

	<b>Agree/ agree strongly</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree/ disagree strongly</b>	<i>Sample size</i>
<b>Sex</b>				
Men	20	27	46	701
Women	15	25	52	893
<b>Age</b>				
18-24	28	32	33	93
25-34	17	28	53	193
35-44	8	24	64	299
45-54	9	26	60	246
55-64	20	19	49	250
65+	27	30	31	353
<b>Education</b>				
Degree/HE	8	24	64	434
None	31	24	35	351
<b>Income</b>				
£11,999 or less	29	21	40	366
£44K +	7	26	65	213
<b>How often come across ‘homeless’</b>				
Most days	25	15	54	211
At least once a week	11	26	57	275
Once a month/once every few	16	28	51	456
At least once a year/less often	17	30	45	313
Never	23	27	37	327
<b>Underlying lib/auth beliefs</b>				
Libertarian	8	23	64	397
Centre	16	28	47	498
Authoritarian	26	27	40	525

### **Key points**

- There is a widespread misconception that most homeless people sleep rough at some point – 61% agree that this is the case.
- The belief that most homeless people sleep rough does not vary particularly between different socio-demographic groups. However, those who say they come across ‘homeless people’ most days are more likely than those who come across ‘homeless people’ less often to believe this.
- Around 1 in 5 appear to believe that homeless is closely associated with drink or drug problems – 21% agree that *‘most people end up being homeless simply because they*

*drink too much*' and 18% agree that *'most homeless people use hard drugs'*. However, half disagree with each of these statements.

- The groups most likely to agree with these statements – men, the youngest and oldest age groups, people with no qualifications, those on low incomes and the more authoritarian – reflect the groups most likely to hold more critical or 'unsympathetic' attitudes towards the behaviour and motives of homeless people in general.

## CHAPTER FIVE 'DESERVING' HOMELESS PEOPLE?

### Introduction and background

5.1 The current law on homelessness entitles all homeless people to advice and assistance and provides temporary accommodation. The Scottish local authorities are able to make distinctions between different groups of people experiencing homelessness when deciding who is entitled to permanent accommodation. Particular groups are considered to be more vulnerable because of their individual characteristics or circumstances and are therefore treated as in 'priority need' of local authority help. People deemed to be in priority need will have a right to permanent accommodation (if found to be unintentionally homeless), while those not considered to be in 'priority need', or in priority need and intentionally homeless, are only entitled to temporary accommodation.

5.2 As discussed in Chapter One, one of the key provisions of the 2003 Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act was the expansion of the category of 'priority need'. Prior to the 2003 Act, 'priority need' groups included:

- pregnant women (or people who live with a pregnant woman)
- individuals with dependent children
- people homeless due to disaster or emergency (e.g. flood or fire), and
- those who are vulnerable because of old age, chronic ill health mental illness, learning or physical disability, or any other reason.

5.3 Following the 2003 Act, 'priority need' was expanded to include:

- 16 and 17 year-olds
- 18-20 year-olds who (a) run the risk of sexual or financial exploitation or involvement in the serious misuse of drug or alcohol or (b) have been looked after by a local authority
- individuals who are at risk of violence or harassment because of their religion, sexual orientation, race, colour or ethnic or national origin
- individuals at risk of domestic abuse
- anyone who is vulnerable as a result of a personality disorder, leaving hospital, prison or the armed forces or other special reasons, or having had a miscarriage or abortion.<sup>23</sup>

5.4 However, the Scottish Government has gone even further by setting a target date of 2012 for the complete abolition of the 'priority need' test. The abolition of the priority need category will mean that the right to permanent accommodation will be extended to *all* people who find themselves unintentionally homeless<sup>24</sup>, not just those considered particularly vulnerable because of their individual characteristics or situation. In the

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<sup>23</sup> For more detailed definitions of each category currently included under 'priority need', see Scottish Executive (2005) *Code of Guidance on Homelessness: guidance on legislation, policies and practices to prevent and resolve homelessness*, available online at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/53814/0012265.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> For discussion of 'intentionality', see Chapters One and Six.

statement on the abolition of priority need given by the then Communities Minister, Malcolm Chisholm, said:

“We believe it is no longer right to assume that homelessness should be responded to on the basis of the characteristics of the household. All homeless people should have the same opportunity to access accommodation (...) Rather than bureaucratically categorising and labelling applicants, we want to move to a system where decision-making and outcomes are firmly focussed on applicants’ needs.”

(Scottish Executive, 2005)

5.5 In this chapter, we explore the extent to which the Scottish Government’s desire to remove distinctions between different groups of people experiencing homelessness when allocating help and housing is shared by the general public. The key questions we will address are as follows:

#### **Key questions**

- Do people see some homeless people as more deserving of help than others?
- Who thinks some people should get more help than others?
- Who is seen as most and least deserving of help?

#### **Exploring attitudes to priority need**

5.6 The list of people considered to be in ‘priority need’ includes both categories that relate to a person’s *circumstances* and categories relating to their *personal characteristics*. We explored attitudes towards both types of reasons for ‘priority need’ in our survey. We asked people, first of all whether they thought that people who become homeless for different reasons are all equally deserving of help, or whether some are more deserving than others. Those who said some were more deserving than others were then presented with a showcard with various reasons why a person might become homeless, including:

- Family break up\*
- Leaving prison +
- Drug or alcohol problems
- Leaving hospital +
- Mental health problems\*
- Financial problems
- Leaving over-crowded accommodation
- Young person leaving a children’s home+
- Evicted for being a noisy neighbour
- Victim of domestic abuse+
- Have just moved to Scotland
- Other (respondents were asked to say what).

5.7 They were asked which of these they thought were **most** and **least** ‘deserving of help’. We also presented respondents with a list of different kinds of people, including:

- Young single woman
- Young single man
- Young single parent with children\*
- Married couple with children\*
- Middle-aged person who has just got divorced
- Someone aged over 65\*

They were asked to say whether they thought some of these people should get more help finding a new home than others, or whether they should all get the same amount of help.

5.8 The two questions include: categories which definitely or probably would fall under the definition of priority need prior to the 2003 Act (indicated by a \* in the list above);<sup>25</sup> categories which fall under the expanded definition of priority need introduced by the 2003 Act (indicated by a + in the list above); and other categories which would not currently be considered to be ‘priority need’ unless the applicant was considered to be vulnerable.

5.9 We suspected that people’s attitudes to different reasons for considering people in ‘priority need’ might differ. For example, some (though not all) reasons associated with an individual’s *circumstances*, like the fact they have just left prison, may be viewed as something the individual is responsible for. However, categories associated with their individual *characteristics*, like age, may be viewed differently because they are outwith the individual’s control. We therefore attempted to separate these two categories of reasons as far as possible, dealing with reasons associated with *circumstances* in the first question and reasons associated with individual *characteristics* in the second. In practice though, the two types of reasons are not completely discrete. For example, young people who have just left care are considered in priority need both because of their individual characteristics (age) and their circumstances (having been looked after). Moreover, individuals clearly cannot always be viewed as ‘responsible’ for the circumstances they find themselves in – for example leaving care or leaving hospital.

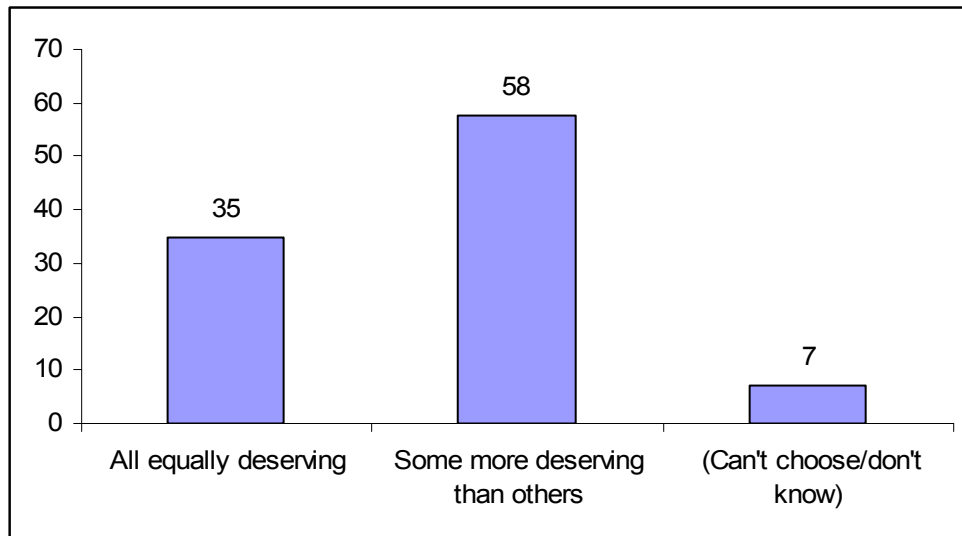
### **Do people think some homeless people should get more help than others?**

5.10 As shown in figures 5.1 and 5.2, people in Scotland do appear to make distinctions between different groups of homeless people when thinking about who should or should not receive help. Six in ten think that some people who become homeless for different reasons are more deserving than others. A similar proportion believes that some *kinds* of homeless people should get more help than others. Thus it appears that public opinion is not currently in tune with the ultimate direction of Scottish Government policy which seeks to abolish such distinctions.

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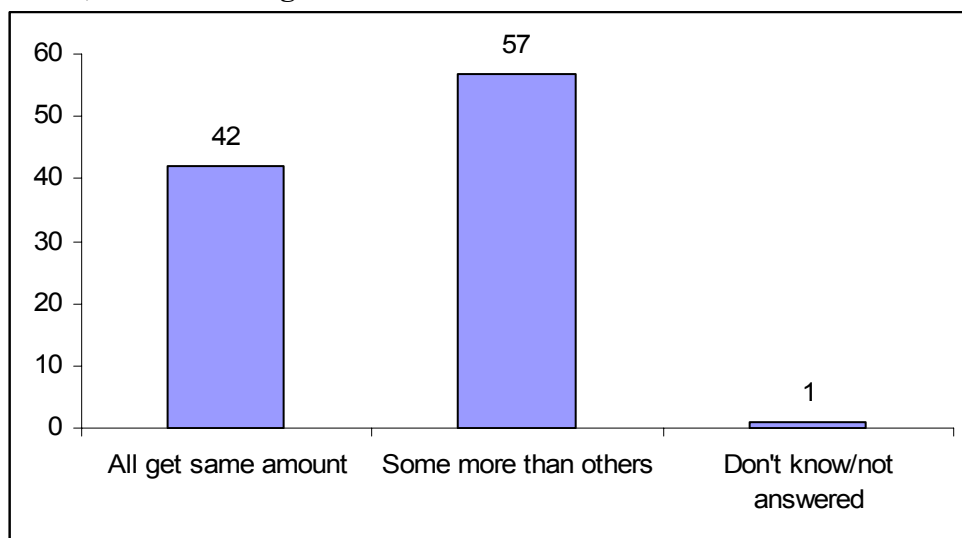
<sup>25</sup> Caveats are required with respect to ‘Family break up’ and ‘someone aged over 65’, however. ‘Family break up’ is not a category of priority need *unless* children are involved and ‘someone aged over 65’ is not automatically deemed in priority need just because of age unless they are also considered “vulnerable” as a result of their age.

**Figure 5.1** People who become homeless for different reasons all equally deserving of help, or some more deserving than others?



Base: all respondents (1,594)

**Figure 5.2** Some kinds of people should get more help finding a new home than others, or should all get same amount?



Base: all respondents (1,594)

### Who thinks some people should get more help than others?

5.11 In order to explore who is most likely to make distinctions between different groups of homeless people, we carried out logistic regression analysis. As described in Chapter Three, logistic regression allows us to explore the relationship between a number of different factors, including demographics, underlying beliefs and contact with homeless people<sup>26</sup>, and the belief that some groups are more deserving or should get more help. Usefully, it allows us to see which factors are most strongly associated with these beliefs after the relationships between these factors are taken into account. We

<sup>26</sup> For a full list of variables included in this analysis, see Appendix C.



analysed factors associated with thinking (a) some people who become homeless for different *reasons* are more deserving of help than others and (b) that some *kinds* of homeless people should get more help than others. Unless otherwise stated in the text, the tables in this chapter only include factors that are significantly and independently associated with these beliefs in our regression analysis.

### ***People who have become homeless for different reasons***

5.12 Taking attitudes towards people who have become homeless for different reasons first, we find that those in the youngest *and* those in the oldest age group are more likely to discriminate between different groups (Table 5.1). Sixty-four per cent of 18-24 year-olds and 63% of those aged 65 or older think some groups are more deserving than others, compared with 54% of those in the 25-34 age group and 53% of those aged 55-64. This may reflect the finding in Chapter Three that the youngest and oldest age groups are the most likely to believe that homeless people could find a way out of homelessness if they really tried – perhaps they think some should get less help because they believe they are not trying hard enough to find a route out of homelessness.

5.13 Aside from age, there are relatively few significant variations between different demographic groups. There are no clear or consistent differences by sex, class<sup>27</sup> or income in beliefs about whether people who become homeless for different reasons are equally deserving of help or not. Similarly, variations by tenure and education did not appear to be significant after the relationships between these and other factors are taken into account in regression. Regression analysis does suggest that area deprivation may be significant, but the difference in attitudes between those in the most and least deprived areas of Scotland are still not very large (33% of those in the least deprived, compared with 38% in the most deprived, believe that some people who have become homeless for different reasons are more deserving than others).

5.14 In fact, the factor most strongly related to responses to this question is the extent to which the respondent is more libertarian or more authoritarian in their underlying beliefs and values (Table 5.1 again). Respondents who are generally more liberal are much *less* likely to think that some groups of homeless people are more deserving than others (48%, compared with 63% of those who are more authoritarian).

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<sup>27</sup> Although class did appear to be significant in the regression model, the pattern was slightly strange- it was those in intermediate occupations who were less likely than those in routine and semi-routine occupations to discriminate in this way between people who have become homeless for different reasons.

**Table 5.1 Equally deserving or some more deserving than others BY significant demographic and other factors<sup>28</sup>**

	All equally deserving	Some more deserving than others	Sample size
<b>Age</b>			
18-24	27	64	108
25-34	37	54	222
35-44	40	54	325
45-54	38	57	270
55-64	40	53	270
65+	26	63	396
<b>Underlying libertarian /authoritarian beliefs</b>			
Libertarian	46	48	397
Centre	32	62	498
Authoritarian	30	63	525

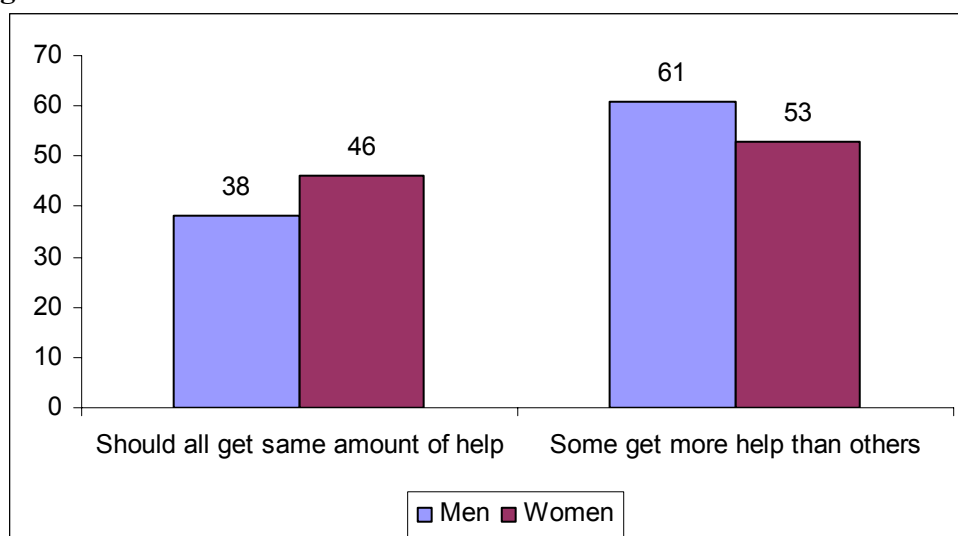
5.15 Thus it appears that it is not specific demographic groups (e.g. men, owner-occupiers, specific socio-economic groups etc.), but rather those with particular underlying values who are most out of step with the direction of Scottish Government policy on abolishing priority need. That said, it is worth noting that even among the most libertarian respondents, more people think some homeless people are more deserving than others (48%) than think them all equally deserving (46%).

### ***Different kinds of homeless people***

5.16 In relation to our second question, whether some kinds of homeless people, such as single parents with children, older people etc., should get more help finding a new home than others, we found relatively little variation in responses by either demographic or attitudinal factors. Only sex and class are statistically significant. Women are more likely than men to feel that all kinds of people are equally deserving of help (46% compared with 38% - see Figure 5.3), perhaps reflecting the fact that women appear more sympathetic towards homeless people in general (as noted in Chapter Three). The relationship with class is more difficult to interpret – it appears that small employers and own account workers (which includes the self-employed) are the group most likely to say that all kinds of people are equally deserving of help. The reasons for this are unclear, however.

<sup>28</sup> NB respondents who could not choose are not shown in this table or in figure 5.3. Thus in the totals may sum to less than 100%.

**Figure 5.3** Some kinds of people should get more help finding a new home or all get same amount BY sex



Base: Men (701), women (893)

5.17 In contrast with attitudes to people who have become homeless for different *reasons*, those who are more libertarian and those who are more authoritarian display little difference in their attitudes to different *kinds* of homeless people. This offers some support to our suggestion that different considerations may affect responses to the two questions. Perhaps those who are more authoritarian are more inclined to make distinctions between different groups of homeless people on ‘moral’ lines – if they believe a homeless person is partly responsible for their circumstances, they may feel they are less deserving of help. This theory is explored in more detail below, where we consider who is seen as most and least deserving of help.

5.18 In summary then, we found relatively little variation along socio-demographic or other lines on either of our two questions about who should get most help. This suggests that many people across social and demographic ‘divides’ may need convincing of the arguments for abolishing distinctions between different groups of homeless people.

### **Who is seen as most and least deserving of help?**

5.19 We have seen that around 6 in 10 people think some groups of homeless people should get more help than others. As discussed in the introduction, although the Scottish Government plans to phase out priority need by 2012, current guidance does still allow for such distinctions. In this section, we examine the extent to which public attitudes appear to match the current legal position – do the groups the public consider to be most deserving reflect current categories of priority need?

5.20 Broadly speaking, our findings suggest that public attitudes are in line with current definitions of priority need (Table 5.2). Three of the four groups of homeless people most commonly identified as being ‘most deserving’ of help (victims of domestic abuse, people with mental health problems and young people leaving children’s homes) are all clearly defined as in ‘priority need’ by current guidance. The fourth group, people who have become homeless as a result of family break-up, are also likely to be

considered in ‘priority need’ if they have dependent children. Moreover, of the four groups considered most likely to be considered ‘least deserving’ of help, only one (those who are homeless after leaving prison) is currently included in definitions of priority need. The other three (those evicted for being noisy neighbours, those who have just moved to Scotland and those with drug or alcohol problems) would not at present be considered in priority need unless there were additional extenuating circumstances (for example, if they were also young, or also at risk of domestic abuse), or if they were considered vulnerable.

**Table 5.2 Who is seen as most and least deserving of help?<sup>29</sup>**

	Most deserving	Least deserving
	%	%
Victim of domestic abuse+	40	1
Family break up*	30	1
Mental health problems*	29	*
Young person leaving a children’s homes+	26	*
Drug or alcohol problems	12	17
Leaving hospital+	10	1
Financial problems	10	4
Leaving overcrowded accommodation	5	5
Leaving prison+	4	14
Have just moved to Scotland	2	14
Evicted for being a noisy neighbour	1	35
Other	1	1
(All equally deserving)	(35)	(35)
(Can’t choose/don’t know/not answered)	(8)	(8)

Base: all respondents (1,594)

Key to table:

- \* indicates categories which fall under the definition of priority need prior to the 2003 Act,
- + indicates categories which fall under the expanded definition of priority need introduced by the 2003 Act;
- and unmarked indicates other categories which would not currently be considered to be ‘priority need’ unless the applicant was considered to be vulnerable.

5.21 Beliefs about the *kinds* of people who should get most help also appear to be in line with current policy on ‘priority need’. The top three groups people think should get most help finding a new home are: single parent families; married couples with children; and people aged over 65 (Table 5.3). All of these are covered by current definitions of priority need.

<sup>29</sup> NB respondents who thought some more deserving than others could choose as many or as few categories as they wished. Hence the totals sum to more than 100%.

**Table 5.3 Which kinds of people should get most help finding a new home?**<sup>30</sup>

	%
Young single parent with children	39
Married couple with children	31
Someone aged over 65	30
Middle-aged person who has just got divorced	5
Young single woman	3
Young single man	1
Other	1
Should all get the same amount of help	42
(Don't know/not answered)	1

Base: all respondents (1,594)

### Who thinks particular groups are less deserving?

5.22 In terms of the future direction of Scottish Government policy, it seems worth looking in more detail at who believes specific groups are *less* deserving of help than others. The four groups considered 'least deserving' by the highest proportion of respondents are:

- those who have been evicted for being a noisy neighbour (35% of all respondents);
- those who are homeless because of drug and alcohol problems (17%);
- those who are homeless after leaving prison (14%)
- and people who have just moved to Scotland (14%).

5.23 It is important to bear in mind in interpreting these findings that some people who fall into these groups (particularly 'noisy neighbours' but also potentially those who are homeless because of drug and alcohol problems) may more likely to be found 'intentionally homeless'. 'Intentionally homeless' households will not be automatically eligible for permanent accommodation, even after the 2012 target date for abolishing distinctions based on 'priority need' (see Chapter Six for a more detailed discussion of 'intentionality'). In one sense then, people who think 'noisy neighbours' and those with drug and alcohol problems less deserving of help are not necessarily out of step with the direction of government policy, since these groups may still be entitled to less help in future.

5.24 However, prison leavers cannot be classed as 'intentionally homeless', and there is no obvious reason why those who have just moved to Scotland would be considered to be so. Further, potential considerations about 'intentionality' aside, we would still argue that those who think any of these groups 'least deserving' are the people whose views are furthest away from the aspiration underlying the abolition of priority need that 'All homeless people should have the same opportunity to access accommodation' (Scottish Executive, 2005).

5.25 The factors most commonly and clearly associated with believing any of these four groups are among those 'least deserving' are tenure and respondents underlying

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<sup>30</sup> NB respondents who thought some should get more help than others could choose as many or as few categories as they wished. Hence the total sums to more than 100%.

libertarian/authoritarian beliefs (Table 5.4). Owner occupiers are more likely than private renters to think that ‘noisy neighbours’ and people who have just moved to Scotland are among the groups ‘least deserving’ of help. For example, 38% of owner occupiers placed ‘noisy neighbours’ in this category, compared with 27% of private renters<sup>31</sup>. Differences by tenure in attitudes to those with drug and alcohol problems and those leaving prison are not significant, however.

5.26 Given the finding that those who hold more libertarian views are much more likely than those who are more authoritarian to consider all homeless people *equally* deserving of help, it is unsurprising that they are also less likely to identify any of these groups as ‘least deserving’. However, it is perhaps worth noting that the gap between libertarian and authoritarian attitudes is particularly pronounced in relation to people with drug and alcohol problems and those who have just left prison. For example, those who hold more authoritarian views are more than twice as likely as those who hold more libertarian views to think that people who are homeless after leaving prison are ‘least deserving’ of help (18%, compared with 7%). Again, this suggests that attitudes towards people who have become homeless for different reasons may in part be shaped by ‘moral’ judgements about whether or not they are responsible for their circumstances.

**Table 5.4 Proportion who think each group ‘least deserving’ of help (%) BY tenure and underlying libertarian/authoritarian beliefs**

	Noisy neighbours	Drug & alcohol problems	Leaving prison	Just moved to Scotland	Sample size
<b>Tenure</b>					
Owner-occupier	38	17	15	16	1088
Social renter	31	22	14	11	373
Private renter	27	12	10	7	117
<b>Underlying libertarian/authoritarian beliefs</b>					
Libertarian	30	11	7	14	397
Centre	42	18	17	13	498
Authoritarian	37	23	18	16	525

### Key points

- People in Scotland do appear to make distinctions between different groups of homeless people when asked to think about who should get help. Around six in ten think both that some who become homeless for different *reasons* are more deserving than others, and that some *kinds* of homeless people should get more help than others.
- The view that some should get more help than others appears widespread across different social groups. Even among respondents who are generally more libertarian in their outlook, the proportion who think some are more deserving than others outweighs the proportion who say all homeless people are equally deserving.

<sup>31</sup> Although owners were also more likely than social renters to say these groups were ‘least deserving’, regression analysis suggests that the difference here is too small to be significant.

- The groups of people seen as most deserving of help broadly reflect the Scottish Government's current categories of priority need – for example, victims of domestic abuse, people with mental health problems and young people leaving children's homes. Similarly, between 3 in 10 and 4 in 10 people think that single parent families, married couples with children and older people should get more help than others in finding a new home.
- The groups people are most likely to think '*least* deserving' also reflect the current legal position – those who have just moved to Scotland, those with drug and alcohol problems and those who have been evicted for being noisy neighbours. None of these groups are covered by current 'priority need' categories unless they are vulnerable. Prison leavers are the only group currently covered by priority need guidance who are commonly considered among the least deserving of help.
- Owner-occupiers are more likely than private renters to think that 'noisy neighbours' are among those least deserving of help (38%, compared with 27%).
- Those with more libertarian attitudes are much less likely than those with more authoritarian beliefs to consider people who are homeless after leaving prison among those 'least deserving' (7%, compared with 18%). This may suggest that attitudes to some groups of homeless people are shaped by 'moral' judgements about whether or not they are responsible for their own circumstances.

## CHAPTER SIX      ATTITUDES TOWARDS ‘INTENTIONALLY HOMELESS’ PEOPLE

### Introduction and background

6.1 As discussed in Chapter One, local authorities currently have a duty to investigate whether people presenting as homeless have become so ‘intentionally’. In the context of homelessness, ‘intentionality’ means a person either did, or omitted to do, something that results in them losing the right to occupy a property that was available to them to live in. Examples might include being evicted for anti-social behaviour, being evicted for rent arrears when the council considers you could afford to pay your rent, or leaving a property that you could have continued to stay in for no good reason.

6.2 When a local authority has decided that an applicant has become homeless (or threatened with homelessness) ‘intentionally’, at present they are only obliged to provide them with temporary accommodation, advice and assistance. However, the 2003 Homelessness etc (Scotland Act) introduced several provisions which, when brought into force in the future, will enhance the rights of this group of homeless people. First, through section 4 of the Act, the *duty* on local authorities to investigate intentionality will be changed to a *discretionary power* to do so. Second, sections 5 and 6 of the Act will improve the rights of ‘intentionally’ homeless people to housing by:

- creating a duty on local authorities to provide all ‘intentionally’ homeless people (with the exception of those evicted for anti-social behaviour in the past 3 years or subject to an ASBO) with a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (short SST)<sup>32</sup>
- providing that, if the tenant is able to sustain this tenancy for a year, they are entitled to have their lease converted to a full Scottish Secure Tenancy.

6.3 If a tenant fails to sustain a short SST the local authority will still have a duty to provide temporary accommodation and support, but will not be obliged to provide a tenancy (although it may do if it wishes). The 2003 Act also states that ‘intentionally’ homeless households will be entitled to support to address the cause of ‘intentionality’ - for example, someone who is found to be ‘intentionally homeless’ due to rent arrears might be offered financial advice and support. Where an intentionally homeless applicant is subject to an ASBO, or has been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the last 3 years, the local authority must still provide non-tenancy accommodation and appropriate support.

6.4 A report published by the Scottish Executive found that those deemed ‘intentionally homeless’ constitute a small and declining proportion of the overall numbers of homeless people - from 11% in 2000-2001 to 3.8% in 2003-2004 (Rosengard et al, 2006). In 2005-06, just 930 of 55,215 applicants were assessed as ‘intentionally

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<sup>32</sup> The short SST is a version of a Scottish secure tenancy (SST), with various additional conditions attached. For example, those who hold short SSTs do not have the right to buy their home and may be evicted more easily if they breach the terms of their tenancy agreement.



homeless’ and in priority need (Scottish Executive, 2006).<sup>33</sup> However, although the ‘intentionally homeless’ are a relatively small group, it is possible that people will have fairly strong views about whether or not they should receive the kinds of help the 2003 Act allows for. In Chapter Five of this report, we saw that many people do make distinctions between different groups of homeless people based on their personal characteristics and/or the reasons they became homeless. Given that those who are considered ‘intentionally homeless’ may be seen as responsible for their own situation, it seems likely that some people may question whether or not they should receive help from their local council with finding a new home.

6.5 In this chapter, we address the following key questions:

#### **Key questions**

- Do people think that homeless people who might be viewed as ‘intentionally homeless’ deserve help from their local council with finding a new home or not?
- Do people have different views towards ‘intentionally homeless’ men and women?
- How do attitudes vary between different groups of people living in Scotland?
- Are public attitudes in tune with the direction of Scottish Executive policy on intentionality?

#### **Challenges in designing survey questions on ‘intentionality’**

6.6 In their study on intentionally homeless households in Scotland, Rosengard et al (2006) found wide variation by local authority in the proportion of applicants assessed as ‘intentionally homeless’ in 2003-04, from 16.6% to zero. Previous research suggests a high degree of discretion in how the ‘intentionality test’ is applied by different local authorities. For example, Scott et al (2000) report that while 5 local authorities in their sample would ‘always’ treat an ex-local authority tenant with rent arrears as ‘intentionally homeless’, 2 would ‘never’ do so.

6.7 Given this variation in how local authorities interpret and apply the ‘intentionality test’, designing survey questions to explore public attitudes towards the ‘intentionally homeless’ was somewhat challenging. Rosengard et al (2006) found the principle reason for assessed intentionality was that households had previously given up their property, either formally or through abandonment. The main reasons why households gave up properties were: first, household or family circumstances such as family breakdown, and second, external influences including experiencing vandalism, harassment or violence before abandoning their accommodation. Other reasons for assessed intentionality were being evicted for anti social behaviour (in only a few cases) and being subject to eviction proceedings.

6.8 Rent arrears and anti-social behaviour are other possible reasons for an ‘intentionality’ decision, as discussed above. We presented respondents with a variety of scenarios which could fall into one or more of these categories. In each case, respondents

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<sup>33</sup> Although some of the 3,994 assessed as ‘potentially homeless’ and in priority need may also have been allocated to the ‘intentionally homeless’ category.

were asked to say whether they thought the person (definitely or probably) should or should not receive help from their local council to find a new home. The scenarios included were:

- A 17 year old boy/girl who has left home after a serious argument with his/her parents<sup>34</sup>
- A 30 year old man/women who has moved out of his/her home after splitting up with his/her wife/husband<sup>35</sup>
- A person who says they can longer live in their flat because their neighbours are too noisy
- A 16 year old girl who currently lives with her parents but has a one year old child and wants to move out
- A person who has lost their home because they could not keep up with their rent payments
- A person who has lost their home because they were causing problems for their neighbours.

### **Attitudes towards different groups who are ‘intentionally homeless’**

6.9 For most of our scenarios where people might be considered ‘intentionally homeless’, a majority of people think they should get help finding a new home (Table 6.1). The scenario which appears to attract most sympathy is people who lose their home because they can’t keep up with rent payments – over two-thirds (69%) think someone in this situation should probably or definitely get help finding a new home. Similarly, around 6 in 10 think that someone who has moves out of their home after a marriage breakdown and someone who says they cannot stay in their accommodation because of noisy neighbours should get help finding somewhere else to live. There appears to be relatively more support for helping a young mother who wishes to move out of her parents home (62% think she should definitely or probably get help) than for helping a teenager who has left home after a dispute with their parents (51%). Perhaps the former is considered a better reason for a young person to wish to leave the parental home than the latter.

6.10 However, although half to two-thirds of respondents believe each of these 5 groups probably or definitely should get help, a substantial minority in each case believe they probably or definitely should not receive such help – from 26% with respect to people who have lost their home due to rent arrears to 47% with respect to a teenager who has left home after an argument with their parents. Moreover, in relation to our final scenario, someone who has lost their home because they were causing problems for their neighbours, an overwhelming majority (82%) believe they should not get help from their council to find a new home. This reflects the finding in Chapter Five that those who have been evicted for being noisy neighbours are the group considered ‘least deserving’ of help by the highest proportion of people.

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<sup>34</sup> We conducted a split-sample experiment on this question, whereby half the sample were asked about a 17 year-old girl and half a 17 year-old boy.

<sup>35</sup> As above, half the sample were asked about a 30 year-old man splitting up with his wife and half about a 30 year-old woman splitting up with her husband.

**Table 6.1 Beliefs about whether or not different groups should get help from their council with finding a new home (%)**

	Definitely should	Probably should	Probably should NOT	Definitely should NOT	Don't know
A 17 year old boy/girl who has left home after a serious argument with his/her parents	10	40	32	15	2
A 30 year old man/women who has moved out of his/her home after splitting up with his/her wife/husband	11	52	27	7	3
A person who says they can longer live in their flat because their neighbours are too noisy	14	49	26	9	2
A 16 year old girl who currently lives with her parents but has a one year old child and wants to move out	16	47	25	11	2
A person who has lost their home because they could not keep up with their rent payments	13	56	20	6	5
A person who has lost their home because they were causing problems for their neighbours	3	13	43	39	2

Base: all respondents (1,594)

### Do people have different attitudes to ‘intentionally homeless’ men and women?

6.11 To explore whether people’s attitudes towards people experiencing homelessness vary depending on the sex of the homeless person, we conducted a split sample experiment with two of our questions about ‘intentionally homeless’ people. For the scenario about the 17 year-old who has left home after an argument with their parents, half the sample was asked about a 17 year-old girl and half about a 17 year-old boy. Similarly, for the scenario about the 30 year-old who has moved out of their home after a marriage breakdown, half the sample was asked about a man and half a woman.

6.12 Our findings suggest that attitudes to people experiencing homelessness may vary depending on both the age and sex of the person in question (Table 6.2). While slightly more people think that a 17 year-old boy should get help finding a new home than think a 17 year-old girl should receive such help (53% compared with 48%), in fact this difference is not statistically significant.<sup>36</sup> With respect to a 30 year-old who has left home after their marriage breaks down the pattern of attitudes by sex is reversed – 69% think the 30 year-old woman should definitely or probably get help compared with just 55% who think this about the 30 year-old man. The reasons for this difference in attitudes are not clear. Perhaps people view middle-aged women as more vulnerable than middle-aged men, but feel that 17 year-olds are equally vulnerable regardless of sex (or even that

<sup>36</sup> The probability that we would have found such a difference just by chance was 10%. Results are commonly considered to be statistically significant if the probability you would have found such a difference by chance (i.e. due to the fact that your results are based on a sample rather than a census) is 5% or less.

boys are slightly more vulnerable than girls). Or perhaps people make different assumptions about the underlying causes, or about who is at fault in the two scenarios depending on the sex of the person involved. These findings are something that could perhaps be explored further in qualitative research.

**Table 6.2 Beliefs about whether or not 17 year-old boy/girl and 30 year-old man/woman should get help from their council with finding a new home (%)<sup>37</sup>**

	<b>Definitely/ probably should</b>	<b>Definitely/ probably should NOT</b>	<i>Sample size</i>
A 17 year old who has left home after a serious argument with their parents			
<b>17 year-old boy</b>	53	45	770
<b>17 year-old girl</b>	48	49	824
A 30 year old who has moved out of their home after splitting up with their wife/husband			
<b>30 year-old man</b>	55	42	770
<b>30 year-old woman</b>	69	27	824

### **How do attitudes vary between different groups?**

6.13 In earlier chapters in this report, we have seen that attitudes to homeless people vary fairly widely depending on demographic factors, like sex, age, education and the level of deprivation in the area people live in, as well as with their underlying socio-political beliefs, in particular how libertarian or authoritarian they are. In the remainder of this chapter we consider whether attitudes towards whether or not different groups who might be viewed as ‘intentionally homeless’ should get help finding a new home or not vary by these demographic and attitudinal factors.

#### ***Sex and age***

6.14 Sex is significantly related to attitudes towards 2 of our 6 ‘intentionally homeless’ groups (Table 6.3). Women are slightly more likely than men to say that both a 17 year-old who has left home after an argument with their parents and a person who says they can no longer live in their flat because of noisy neighbours should get help from the council with finding a new home. Interestingly, female respondents who were asked about a 17 year-old boy are more likely than male respondents to say they should get help (58% compared with 47%), while differences in attitudes to the 17 year-old girl scenario by respondent sex are not significant.

<sup>37</sup> NB respondents who gave ‘don’t know’ responses are not shown in the remaining tables in this chapter. Thus in some cases the totals may not sum to 100%.

**Table 6.3 Attitudes to whether various groups who might be classed as ‘intentionally homeless’ should get help finding a new home BY sex**

		<b>Definitely/ probably should get help</b>	<b>Definitely/ probably should NOT get help</b>	<i>Sample size</i>
A 17 year old boy/girl who has left home after a serious argument with his/her parents	Men	47	51	701
	Women	54	43	893
A person who says they can longer live in their flat because their neighbours are too noisy	Men	58	39	701
	Women	67	30	893

6.15 Attitudes varied more widely by age than sex, although in many cases the pattern by age is not linear (Table 6.4). For example, the proportion who believes that the 17 year-old should probably or definitely get help ranges from 46% of 35-44 year-olds to 60% of 18-24 year-olds. Those in the youngest age group are also the group most likely to believe the following should get help:

- a 30 year-old who has moved out of their home after marital break-up (72%, compared with 58% of those aged 65+)
- a 16 year-old with a child (80%, compared with 50% of those aged 65+)
- a person who has lost their home because they caused problems for their neighbours (23%, compared with 11% of those aged 55-64).

6.16 In contrast, older people aged 65 and above, are most likely to think that someone who says they cannot live in their flat because of noisy neighbours should get help (69%, compared with 61% of those aged 18-24 and 58% of those aged 45-54). Middle-aged respondents are most sympathetic to helping those who are homeless because of rent arrears – 76% of those aged 35-44 think they definitely or probably should get help finding a new home, compared with 63% of those aged 65 or older.

**Table 6.4 Attitudes to whether various groups who might be classed as ‘intentionally homeless’ should get help finding a new home BY age**

		<b>Definitely/ probably should get help</b>	<b>Definitely/ probably should NOT get help</b>	<i>Sample size</i>
A 17 year old boy/girl who has left home after a serious argument with his/her parents	18-24	60	39	108
	25-34	50	46	222
	35-44	46	52	325
	45-54	53	45	270
	55-64	48	51	270
	65+	51	46	396
A 30 year old man/women who has moved out of his/her home after splitting up with his/her wife/husband	18-24	72	27	108
	25-34	58	40	222
	35-44	68	30	325
	45-54	65	31	270
	55-64	59	40	270
	65+	58	36	396
A person who says they can longer live in their flat because their neighbours are too noisy	18-24	61	36	108
	25-34	61	38	222
	35-44	63	36	325
	45-54	58	40	270
	55-64	65	35	270
	65+	69	26	396
A 16 year old girl who currently lives with her parents but has a one year old child and wants to move out	18-24	80	19	108
	25-34	68	30	222
	35-44	67	31	325
	45-54	62	36	270
	55-64	55	44	270
	65+	50	46	396
A person who has lost their home because they could not keep up with their rent payments	18-24	67	31	108
	25-34	70	25	222
	35-44	76	19	325
	45-54	73	23	270
	55-64	68	27	270
	65+	63	30	396
A person who has lost their home because they were causing problems for their neighbours	18-24	23	77	108
	25-34	15	82	222
	35-44	20	77	325
	45-54	12	87	270
	55-64	11	87	270
	65+	14	81	396

## Education

6.17 Attitudes towards 3 of our 6 groups vary significantly by respondents' highest level of educational qualification (Table 6.5):

- Those with no qualifications are more likely than those qualified to higher education or degree level to say that someone who says they cannot live in their flat because of noisy neighbours should get help finding a new home (71%, compared with 57%)
- Conversely, those qualified to degree or higher education level are more likely than those with no qualifications to think the council should provide help finding a new home to someone who is homeless due to rent arrears (76%, compared with 63%) or someone who has caused problems for their neighbours (21%, compared with 12%).

**Table 6.5 Attitudes to whether various groups who might be classed as 'intentionally homeless' should get help finding a new home BY highest educational qualification**

		Definitely/ probably should get help	Definitely/ probably should NOT get help	Sample size
A person who says they can longer live in their flat because their neighbours are too noisy	Degree/HE	57	42	479
	None	71	25	394
A person who has lost their home because they could not keep up with their rent payments	Degree/HE	76	20	479
	None	63	30	394
A person who has lost their home because they were causing problems for their neighbours	Degree/HE	21	77	479
	None	12	85	394

## Underlying libertarian-authoritarian beliefs

6.18 In previous chapters, we have seen that those who are generally more libertarian in their attitudes are much *less* likely than those who are more authoritarian to hold critical views about homeless people and much *more* likely to believe all homeless people are equally deserving of help. This trend is continued with respect to help for 'intentionally homeless' people – those who are more libertarian are generally more likely than more authoritarian respondents to say they should get help finding a new home (Table 6.6). The gap in attitudes is particularly striking with respect to groups which might potentially attract greater 'moral disapproval' from more authoritarian respondents. For example, 70% of more libertarian respondents compared with just 55% of more authoritarian respondents think a young mother should get help finding a new home.

**Table 6.6 Attitudes to whether various groups who might be classed as ‘intentionally homeless’ should get help finding a new home BY underlying libertarian/authoritarian beliefs**

		Definitely/ probably should get help	Definitely/ probably should NOT get help	Sample size
A 17 year old boy/girl who has left home after a serious argument with his/her parents	Libertarian	60	37	397
	Authoritarian	44	55	525
A 16 year old girl who currently lives with her parents but has a one year old child and wants to move out	Libertarian	70	28	397
	Authoritarian	55	43	525
A person who has lost their home because they could not keep up with their rent payments	Libertarian	77	20	397
	Authoritarian	64	32	525
A person who has lost their home because they were causing problems for their neighbours	Libertarian	26	70	397
	Authoritarian	10	90	525

### *Area deprivation*

6.19 Those living in the *most* deprived areas of Scotland are significantly more likely than those in the *least* deprived areas to think that the following should get help (Table 6.7):

- a 17 year-old who has left home after an argument with their parents
- a 30 year-old who has left home after a marriage breakdown
- a person who leaves their flat because of noisy neighbours, and
- a 16 year-old with a young child

6.20 The findings about attitudes to teenagers and young mothers are particularly striking when you consider that people living in the most deprived areas of Scotland are more likely than those in more affluent areas to hold authoritarian values and beliefs. Forty-five per cent of those in the most deprived quintile, compared with 25% in the least deprived, are in the most authoritarian third of our sample. Given that there is a strong relationships between having more libertarian values and believing that a 16 year-old girl with a young child and a 17 year-old who has left home after an argument with their parents should get help finding a new home, one might expect that those in the most deprived areas would be *less* likely to think this. However, in fact we find that *authoritarian* respondents in the *most* deprived areas are just as likely as *libertarian* respondents in the *least* deprived areas to think a 16 year-old girl with a young child should get help finding a new home (65% in each case). *Libertarian* respondents living in *deprived* areas are even more likely to think this (83%).

6.21 Attitudes to people who have lost their home due to rent arrears or anti-social behaviour did not vary significantly by area deprivation.



**Table 6.7 Attitudes to whether various groups who might be classed as ‘intentionally homeless’ should get help finding a new home BY area deprivation (SIMD quintiles)**

		<b>Definitely/ probably should get help</b>	<b>Definitely/ probably should NOT get help</b>	<i>Sample size</i>
A 17 year old boy/girl who has left home after a serious argument with his/her parents	Least deprived quintile	48	50	319
	Most deprived quintile	57	41	307
A 30 year old man/women who has moved out of his/her home after splitting up with his/her wife/husband	Least deprived quintile	54	42	319
	Most deprived quintile	76	21	307
A person who says they can longer live in their flat because their neighbours are too noisy	Least deprived quintile	59	38	319
	Most deprived quintile	75	23	307
A 16 year old girl who currently lives with her parents but has a one year old child and wants to move out	Least deprived quintile	54	43	319
	Most deprived quintile	72	26	307

**Are public attitudes in tune with the direction of Scottish Executive policy on intentionality?**

6.22 In future, all people who are considered ‘intentionally homeless’, with the exception of those who have an ASBO, have been evicted for anti-social behaviour or have already broken the terms of short Scottish Secure Tenancy, will be entitled to housing (via a short Scottish Secure Tenancy) and support from their local council. Our findings on attitudes towards councils helping various groups who could be considered ‘intentionally homeless’ find a new home suggest that public attitudes are broadly in tune with this policy. A majority believe that 4 of our 6 groups who might be considered ‘intentionally’ homeless should get help finding a new home. In relation to teenagers who leave home after a dispute with their parents views are somewhat more divided (particularly with respect to young girls), with half thinking they should get such help and half that they should not.

6.23 In relation to people who lose their homes because of anti-social behaviour, we found that those who have caused problems for their neighbours are the one group where a majority believe they probably or definitely should not get help. In one sense, this can be seen as tying in with the direction of Scottish Government policy, since this group will not be guaranteed the same level of housing rights as other ‘intentionally homeless’ households. However, the fact that such low levels of people (just 15%) think that those who have lost their home because they caused problems for their neighbours should receive help finding a new home could mean that the fact they will continue to receive even temporary accommodation and support could potentially be controversial. The Scottish Government website highlights the need to challenge the belief that ‘People made homeless as a result of antisocial behaviour should not have any rights to social

housing'<sup>38</sup>. These findings, in combination with the finding reported in Chapter Five that a third of people think those evicted for being noisy neighbours are among those 'least deserving' of help, may suggest that further work is needed to challenge this belief. That said, it is also important to note that the proportion of homeless applicants who applied as a result of eviction for anti-social behaviour was just 0.4% in 2005/6<sup>39</sup>. Thus work to challenge the belief that those evicted for anti-social behaviour do not deserve help may need to be balanced with the fact that in practice eviction for anti-social behaviour is not a common cause of homelessness in Scotland.

6.24 Attitudes towards groups of people who might be deemed 'intentionally homeless' also vary widely by both demographic factors and underlying attitudes. It appears that specific groups may need more convincing than others of the need to help particular 'intentionally homeless' people find new accommodation. We found that:

- Men, people aged 25 and over, people with more authoritarian views and people who live in more affluent areas are all less likely to think that a 17 year-old who has left home after a serious argument with their parents should get help with finding a new home
- Older people (as well as those aged 25-34) and those living in more affluent areas are less likely than younger people and those in more deprived areas to see marital breakdown as a reason people should get help from the council finding a new home.
- Men, the highly qualified and those living in affluent areas are all less sympathetic towards the idea that someone who says they cannot live in their flat because of noisy neighbours should get help finding somewhere else to live.
- Older people, those living in more affluent areas and those who are more authoritarian in their beliefs are all less likely to think a 16 year-old with a young child who wants to move out of her parental home should receive help from her council with being re-housed.
- Those with no qualifications and those who are more authoritarian are less likely than those with higher level qualifications and more libertarian respondents to think someone who is homeless because of rent arrears should receive help.
- While no groups are particularly sympathetic to the idea that people who cause problems for their neighbours should get help finding a new home, older people, those with no qualifications and more authoritarian respondents are among the least likely to agree with this proposition.

### Key points

- For many scenarios where a person might be considered 'intentionally homeless', a majority of people think the council should definitely or probably provide help with finding a new home.
- A key exception is where someone has become homeless because they caused problems for their neighbours – over 8 in 10 think they should definitely or probably *not* get help finding a new home.

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Housing/homeless/facts>

<sup>39</sup> Scottish Executive (2006) Statistical Bulletin: Operation of the Homeless Person legislation in Scotland: national and local authority analyses 2005-06. Supplementary Table A.

- People are also somewhat more divided in their attitudes towards re-housing a teenager who has had a serious argument with their parents – around half think they should get such help, while the other half think they should not.
- Attitudes towards helping homeless people find a new home appear to vary depending on both the sex and age of the person in question – while there is no significant difference in the proportions who think a teenage boy and a teenage girl should get help, in relation to a 30 year-old who has experienced a marriage breakdown people are more inclined to think a woman than a man should get help.
- Views about whether different groups who might be deemed ‘intentionally homeless’ should get help finding a new home or not vary significantly by socio-demographic factors like sex, age, education and area deprivation, as well as the extent to which people hold underlying beliefs that are libertarian or authoritarian. For example:
  - Women are more likely than men to think a 17 year-old who has left home after an argument with parents and a person who says they are no longer able to live in their flat because their neighbours are too noisy should get help
  - Younger people (aged 18-24) are more likely than older people to think teenagers who have fallen out with their parents and teenage mothers should get help. Those in the oldest age group (aged 65 or above) are most likely to think people who have noisy neighbours should get help with finding somewhere else to live.
  - People qualified to higher education level are more likely than those without qualifications to think someone who is homeless due to rent arrears or anti-social behaviour should get help, but less likely to think someone who cannot live in their flat because of noisy neighbours should receive assistance from the council with finding a new home.
  - Those who are more libertarian in their underlying values and beliefs are more likely than those who are more authoritarian to think that various groups should get help, notably young mothers and people who have caused problems for their neighbours.
  - Those living in the most deprived areas are more likely than those in the most affluent areas of Scotland to believe that various groups should receive help, including young mothers and teenagers who have left home after an argument with their parents. This difference is apparent in spite of the fact that those living in the most deprived areas tend to be more authoritarian in their underlying values than those in the least deprived areas.

## CHAPTER SEVEN HOMELESSNESS IN THE LOCAL AREA

### Introduction and background

7.1 This chapter moves beyond general attitudes to homeless people to examine views on homelessness in the context of the local area. As referred to throughout this report, local authorities have a range of accommodation duties towards people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The Code of Guidance on Homelessness<sup>40</sup> states that local authorities have a duty under section 20 of the 1987 Act to give 'reasonable preference' in the selection of tenants to people assessed as being homeless (regardless of the outcome of further assessment into priority need or intentionality). This duty to give reasonable preference also extends to those occupying houses which are overcrowded, below the tolerable standard, or provide unsatisfactory housing conditions, and to large families. The code states that:

*What degree of preference is 'reasonable' is a matter of judgement but, at the very least, homeless people should not be given lesser preference than the other specified groups. These reasonable preference requirements do not prevent priority being given to other groups of applicants besides those listed in section 20, and local authorities still have to consider applications from homeless or other people on their individual merits.*

7.2 Alongside the 'reasonable preference' guidance, the code also outlines that homeless people should not be placed in temporary accommodation unnecessarily, and that their time there should be as short as possible before being moved into permanent accommodation. However whilst this is the ideal situation, the code recognises that homeless people may sometimes need to be accommodated in temporary accommodation. Therefore local authorities have to make judgements about how and when to move a homeless household into permanent accommodation in the context of limited housing availability,

7.3 The 2006 *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey asked three questions that explore the issue of local authorities giving housing preference to homeless people and as well as people's attitudes towards having homeless people in their local area. The three questions asked were:

- Councils find homes **both** for homeless people and for **other** local people who need housing, but are on a waiting list. How often, if ever, should homeless people get homes **before** other local people on the waiting list?
- How strongly would you agree or disagree that .... Homeless people often cause problems in this area?
- How comfortable or uncomfortable do you think you would feel if you heard that houses or flats very near to you were going to be used to house people who had been homeless?

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<sup>40</sup> Scottish Executive (2005) *Guidance on legislation, policies and practices to prevent and resolve homelessness*, available online at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/05/31133334/33366>

We address each of these questions in turn. In addition to exploring how views vary by the type of area people live in and other factors, we also briefly examine whether people's attitudes to homeless people in their local area are different from their attitudes to homelessness more generally. Do some of those who believe that all homeless people should get help nonetheless express discomfort at the idea of homeless people being rehoused near them?

### **Key questions**

- What are people's attitudes to homeless people in their local area?
- How do views vary by the type of area people live in and other factors?
- Do people's attitudes to homeless people in the local area differ from their attitudes to homeless people more generally?

### **Should homeless people get priority above other local people on the waiting list?**

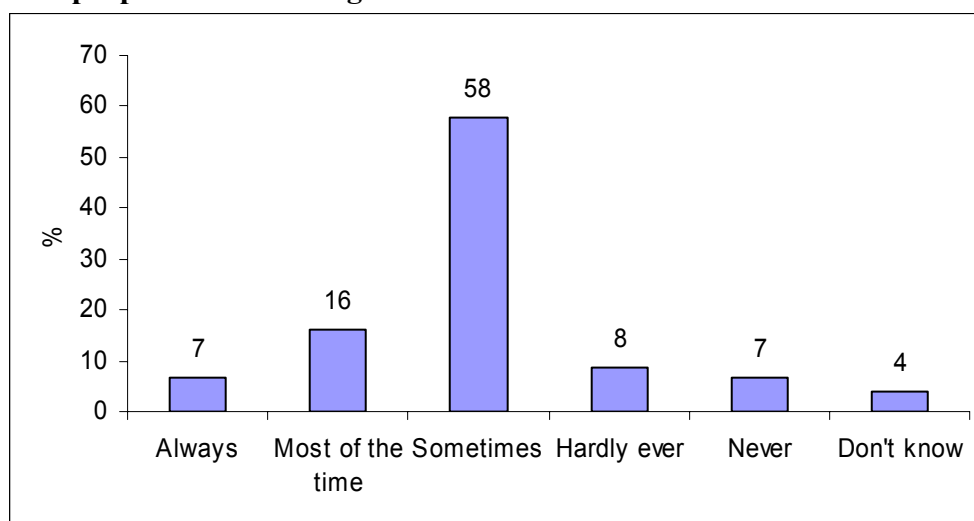
7.2 Earlier in the report we established that public opinion appears to be somewhat out of sync with the Scottish Government's policy of abolishing 'priority need' by 2012<sup>41</sup>. Many people believe that some groups and kinds of homeless people are more deserving and should get more help finding a home than others. In addition to exploring whether the public believes different groups of *homeless people* should get more priority than others, the survey also examined whether or not people believe homeless people should get priority for homes over *other local people*, who are not homeless but are in housing need.

7.3 A majority of people (58%) believe that homeless people should 'sometimes' get homes before other local people on the waiting list (Figure 7.1). Just 7% say that they should 'never' get homes before other local people and the same proportion that they should 'always' get homes before them. A further 16% say homeless people should get homes first 'most of the time'. So while it is clear that for many people there are occasions when homeless people should get priority over other local people on the waiting list, only around a quarter are prepared to say this should happen as a matter of routine (most of the time or always). Moreover, a significant minority (15%) appear to believe that homeless people should get priority over other local people in housing need only rarely or never.

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<sup>41</sup> See Chapter Five for further discussion of public attitudes and priority need.

**Figure 7.1 How often, if ever, should homeless people get homes before other local people on the waiting list?**



Base: all respondents (1,594)

7.4 Although the most common responses across all social groups is that homeless people should ‘sometimes’ get homes before other local people on the waiting list, views on how often homeless people should get help to find homes over others do vary significantly by age and household income (Table 7.1):

- Younger people (aged under 45) are more likely than older people to say that homeless people should get homes before other local people on the waiting list ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’ (for example, 29% of 18-24 year-olds say this, compared with 15% of those aged 65 and over).
- The oldest age-groups (55+) are most likely to say that homeless people should ‘hardly ever’ or ‘never’ get homes before local people (for example, 24% of those aged 65+ say so, compared with 9% of those aged 18-24).
- People with the lowest household incomes (who are perhaps more likely to have experienced housing need themselves) are *more* likely than those on high incomes to say that homeless people should ‘never’ or ‘hardly ever’ be given priority over other local people on the waiting list (20% of those with household incomes of £11,999 a year or less, compared with 10% of those on £44,000 or more a year). One possible explanation for this could be that those with the lowest household incomes, who may be on/have been on social housing lists, may believe that they are pushed down these lists by homeless people.

7.5 There is also an association between people’s general attitudes to homeless people and their views on how often homeless people should get priority over other local people on the waiting list. Those who hold more ‘sympathetic’<sup>42</sup> attitudes to homeless people are more likely than those who are more ‘critical’ to say that homeless people should get homes before other local people on the waiting list ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’. For example, a third of those who *disagree* that ‘many people say they are homeless just to get a house from the council’ also say that homeless people should get homes before others ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’, while just 19% of those who *agree* with this

<sup>42</sup> See Chapter Three for further discussion of ‘sympathetic’ and ‘critical’ or ‘judgemental’ attitudes towards homeless people.

statement say the same. Similarly, those who are more ‘critical’ of homeless people are most likely to say that they should ‘never’ get priority over other local people on the waiting list - two in ten (21%) who *agree* that ‘*most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried*’, say that homeless people should ‘never’ or ‘hardly ever’ get priority while only one in ten of those who *disagree* with this statement say the same.

**Table 7.1 How often, if ever, should homeless people get homes before other local people on the waiting list BY age, household income and general attitudes to homeless people<sup>43</sup>**

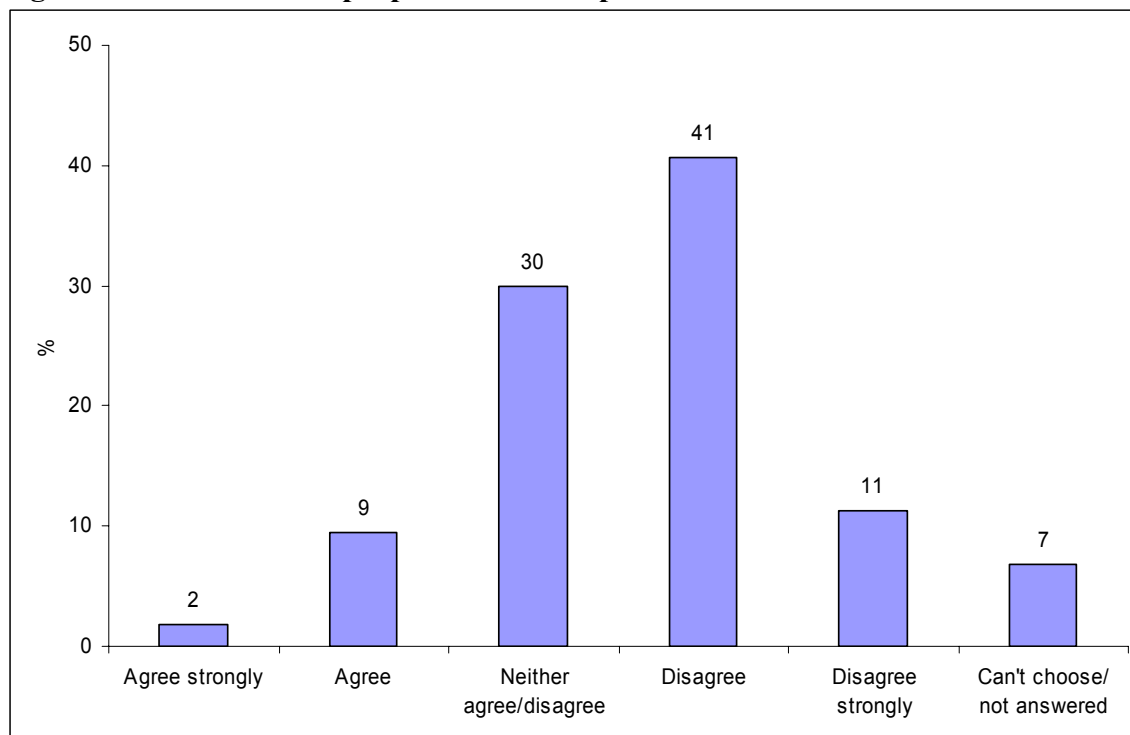
	Always/ most of the time	Sometimes	Hardly ever/ never	Sample size
<b>Age</b>				
18-24	29	57	9	108
25-34	27	60	10	222
35-44	31	58	9	325
45-54	19	64	14	270
55-64	21	54	23	270
65+	15	55	24	396
<b>Household Income</b>				
£11,999 or less	22	56	20	399
£44K +	29	58	10	236
<b>Many say homeless to get house from council</b>				
Agree/ agree strongly	19	59	20	528
Disagree/ disagree strongly	33	51	13	401
<b>Most homeless find somewhere to live if really tried</b>				
Agree/ agree strongly	19	56	21	720
Disagree/ disagree strongly	30	58	10	521

### **Beliefs about homeless people causing problems in the local area**

7.6 The self-completion section of SSA 2006 included a question which asked how strongly people agree or disagree that ‘*Homeless people often cause problems in this area*’. We found that very few people (11%) *agree* that this is the case while more than half (52%) *disagree* (Figure 7.2). A relatively high proportion of (around three in ten) feel unable to choose one way or the other, saying they ‘neither agree nor disagree’ with this statement.

<sup>43</sup> NB respondents who gave ‘don’t know’, ‘can’t choose’ or ‘it depends’ responses are not shown in any of the tables in this chapter. Thus in some cases the totals may not add up to 100%.

**Figure 7.2 ‘Homeless people often cause problems in this area’**



Base: all respondents who completed the self-completion questionnaire (1,437)

7.7 We explored whether views about homeless people causing problems in people’s local area are associated with the characteristics of the area they live in – for example, level of deprivation and urbanity. We also looked at views by tenure. Only level of deprivation is significant. People living in the *most* deprived areas are much more likely than those in the *least* deprived areas to *agree* that homeless people cause problems in their area (18% compared with 7% in the least deprived areas - Table 7.2).

**Table 7.2 ‘Homeless people often cause problems in this area’ BY deprivation**

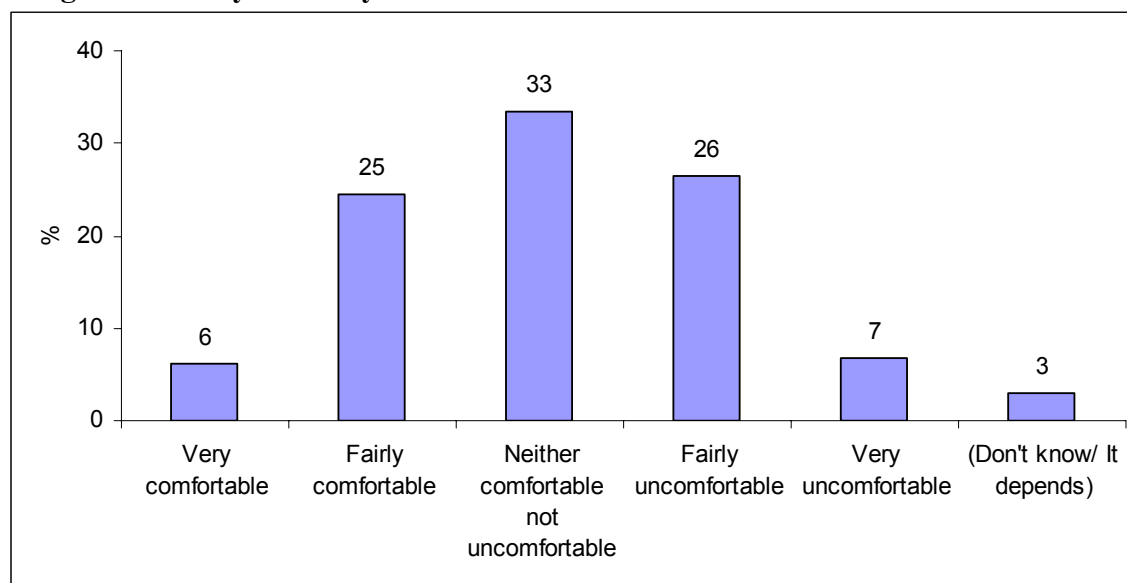
	Agree/ agree strongly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/ disagree strongly	Sample size
<b>Deprivation (SIMD quintiles)</b>				
Least deprived - 1	7	29	59	319
2	10	31	52	364
3	9	36	49	274
4	13	28	54	330
Most deprived -5	18	28	45	307



## How comfortable are people with homeless people being re-housed near to them?

7.8 We asked people how comfortable or uncomfortable they would be if they heard that houses or flats near to them were to be used to house people who had been homeless. As Figure 7.3 highlights, views are fairly evenly split – around 3 in 10 (31%) say they would feel comfortable with this, while a third (33%) say they would feel uncomfortable and a further a third say they would be neither comfortable nor uncomfortable.

**Figure 7.3 How comfortable/uncomfortable with people who have been homeless being housed very near to you?**



Base: all respondents (1,594)

7.9 Attitudes vary significantly by age, level of deprivation and household income (Table 7.3).

- 18-24 year-olds are most likely to say that they would be *comfortable* with people who have been homeless being housed near to them (43% compared with 24% of those aged 55-64)
- the oldest age groups (55 and above) are most likely to say that they would be *uncomfortable* with this (45% of those aged 55-64, compared with 18% of 18-24 year-olds).
- those living in the *least* deprived areas of Scotland are most *uncomfortable* with the prospect of homeless people being housed near them (40% say they would be uncomfortable compared with 28% of those living in the *most* deprived areas).
- those with the *lowest* household income (£11,999 a year or less) are most *comfortable* with homeless people living near to them (40%, compared with 26% of those with annual incomes of £44,000 or more).

**Table 7.3 How comfortable/uncomfortable with homeless people being housed nearby BY age, deprivation and household income**

	Very/fairly comfortable	Neither	Very/fairly uncomfortable	Sample size
<b>Age</b>				
18-24	43	36	18	108
25-34	33	32	32	222
35-44	32	37	29	325
45-54	25	45	28	270
55-64	24	28	45	270
65+	31	24	41	396
<b>Deprivation</b>				
Least deprived	25	33	40	319
Most deprived	32	37	28	307
<b>Income</b>				
£11,999K or less	40	31	27	399
£44K or more	26	34	37	236

7.10 We might expect to find that those people who hold more ‘sympathetic’ attitudes towards homeless people in general will be more comfortable with the idea of people who have been homeless being housed near to them than those who express more ‘critical’ or ‘judgemental’ attitudes towards homeless people generally. Our results tend to confirm these expectations, at least in part (Table 7.4). For example, 41% of those who disagree that ‘many people say they are homeless just to try to get a house from the council’ say they would be ‘very’ or ‘fairly comfortable’ with homeless people being re-housed near them, compared with only 24% of those who agree with this statement. Similarly, those who believe that all homeless people are equally deserving of help are more comfortable with people who have been homeless living near to them than people who believe that some are more deserving of help than others (39%, compared with 26%).

7.11 However, the association between generally ‘sympathetic’ attitudes and feeling ‘comfortable’ with homes near you being used to re-house homeless people is not perfect. For example, around a quarter (27%) of those who disagree that ‘most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried’ (a more ‘sympathetic’ viewpoint) also say they would be ‘uncomfortable’ if accommodation near them was used to house people who had been homeless. Similarly, 27% of those who say that different kinds of homeless people should all get the same amount of help (arguably a more sympathetic point of view) also say they would be uncomfortable with homeless people living nearby. So there is some evidence of that people’s attitudes to homelessness may differ when the issue is being addressed within their own locality.

**Table 7.4 How comfortable with homeless people being housed nearby BY general attitudes to homeless people**

	Very/fairly comfortable	Neither	Very/fairly un-comfortable	Sample size
<b>Deserving of help</b>				
Some more deserving than others	26	33	39	913
All equally deserving	39	34	24	563
<b>Should different kinds of homeless people get</b>				
Should all get same amount of help	35	35	27	680
Or not	28	33	38	891
<b>Many say homeless to get house from council</b>				
Agree/ agree strongly	24	29	45	528
Disagree/disagree strongly	41	36	21	401
<b>Most homeless find somewhere to live if really tried</b>				
Agree/ agree strongly	27	31	39	720
Disagree/disagree strongly	37	35	27	521

### Key points

- A majority of people (58%) think homeless people should ‘sometimes’ get homes before other local people on the housing waiting list. Only a minority (7% in each case) think homeless people should either ‘never’ or ‘always’ get homes first.
- Older people and those on low household incomes are more likely to think homeless people should ‘never’ or ‘hardly ever’ get homes before others, as are those who express more ‘critical’ attitudes towards homeless people in general.
- Only 1 in 10 (11%) believes that homeless people cause problems in their local area, while over half (52%) disagree that this is the case.
- However, those who live in the most deprived areas of Scotland are more likely than those in the most affluent areas to think that homeless people cause problems locally (18% compared with 7%).

- When asked to consider how comfortable or uncomfortable they would feel with homeless people being re-housed near them, people are relatively evenly divided – around a third say they would be comfortable, a third uncomfortable and a third neither comfortable nor uncomfortable.
- Older people, those living in the least deprived areas of Scotland and those on high incomes are most likely to say they would feel *uncomfortable*.
- While those who express generally more ‘sympathetic’ attitudes to homeless people are more likely to say they would feel comfortable, the association is not perfect. This suggests that attitudes to homelessness are complex and may vary when people are asked to consider the issue being addressed in their own local area.

## CHAPTER EIGHT CONCLUSIONS

### **How do people feel about homeless people and how do views vary between groups?**

8.1 Public attitudes to homeless people appear to be widely divided. For example, while half think most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives, around 3 in 10 disagree that this is the case. Moreover, significant proportions appear to hold critical attitudes towards the motives and behaviour of people who say they are homeless, with 45% believing that they could find somewhere to live if they ‘really tried’ and 35% that many people say they are homeless just to try and get a house from the council.

8.2 Individual responses to homeless people are also complex. For example, it is perfectly possible for people to express apparently ‘sympathetic’ views in one respect (for instance, believing that most homeless people have just been unlucky) and also hold other, more ‘critical’ views (for example, that homeless people could find somewhere to live if they ‘really tried’). Further, people may hold ‘sympathetic’ views about homeless people ‘in general’, while still feeling uncomfortable about the prospect of homeless households being re-housed near them.

8.3 Misconceptions about homelessness appear to be widespread. In particular, 6 in 10 people believe (incorrectly) that most homeless people sleep rough outside sometimes. However, around 1 in 5 also believe what might be described as negative ‘stereotypes’ of homeless people – that most homeless people use hard drugs, or that most end up being homeless because of drink problems.

8.4 The belief that most homeless people sleep rough at some point was widespread across all social groups in Scotland. However, groups that stand out as generally more likely to hold more ‘critical’ or negative views about homeless people include:

- men (compared with women)
- people in the oldest (aged 65 or above) and youngest (18-24) age groups
- those with no qualifications, and
- those who are more authoritarian in their general values and beliefs.

8.5 While income and area deprivation are less strongly associated than other factors with most of the attitudes we explored, being more affluent and living in less deprived areas of Scotland is strongly associated with feeling uncomfortable with the idea of homeless people being re-housed very near to where you live. In spite of the fact that those in the most deprived areas are more likely to feel that homeless people cause problems in their areas, they are less likely to say they would feel uncomfortable with the prospect of homeless people moving near to them.

### ***Policy implications***

8.6 The remit of the *Awareness Raising and Best Practice subgroup* is to advise on how best to challenge myths and disseminate accurate information on the reality of

being homeless. Our findings suggest that a key myth which the Scottish Government may wish to challenge in their future work is the belief that most homeless people sleep rough. Although our survey did not explore understandings of 'homelessness' directly, the finding that a majority of people believe most homeless people sleep rough suggests that it may commonly be equated with 'rooflessness'. If the Scottish Government wants to increase understanding of homelessness as a severe form of housing need, which is not necessarily or usually equivalent to 'rooflessness', then it needs to challenge this widely held misconception.

8.7 Future work could also highlight the background and situation of different homeless people, to challenge more 'critical' views of the motives and behaviour of homeless people, as well as the belief that homelessness is usually associated with drink and drugs. Although significant minorities across all social groups hold these views, campaigns may wish to target those identified as holding particularly negative or 'unsympathetic' views (as described above).

8.8 It is also worth noting that any future work which aims to challenge stereotypes about homelessness will need to think carefully about the sex and age of the homeless people they present, as our findings suggest that attitudes to individual homeless people may vary depending on their age and sex.

### **How far are public attitudes to homelessness in tune with the direction of Scottish Executive policy?**

8.9 The Scottish Government plans to abolish distinctions between homeless people based on whether or not they are in 'priority need' by 2012. Our findings suggest that public opinion may have some way to go before it is line with this decision. Six in ten people believe that some homeless people are more deserving of help than others and that some kinds of homeless people should get more help than others.

8.10 The groups people consider most and least deserving of help generally reflect current guidance. Those with children, victims of domestic abuse and people with mental health problems are all commonly seen as among those who should get the most help. On the other hand, those who have just moved to Scotland, have drug or alcohol problems or have been evicted for being a noisy neighbour (none of whom would automatically be classed as 'priority need' under current guidelines unless they were vulnerable) are among those most commonly identified as 'least deserving'.

8.11 Taken together, these findings clearly suggest that people in Scotland may require some persuading of the rationale for dropping the priority currently given to some groups of homeless people over others. However, in interpreting findings on which groups are commonly considered 'less deserving' is important to note that some of these (particularly 'noisy neighbours', but also potentially those who are homeless because of drug and alcohol problems) may more likely than other groups to be found 'intentionally homeless'. Thus in one sense, people who consider these groups less deserving of help are not necessarily out of step with the direction of government policy, since these groups may still be entitled to less help in future (as a result of being judged 'intentionally homeless').

8.12 ‘Problem neighbours’ also stand out as the group most people agree should not receive any help from the council with finding a new home – 8 out of 10 people think this. Again, in one sense, this is broadly in tune with the direction of Scottish Government policies - those evicted for anti-social behaviour will still have fewer rights than other groups of homeless people, even after the 2003 Act has been fully implemented. However, it may also suggest that the view that people made homeless as a result of anti-social behaviour should not have *any* rights to social housing is more prevalent than the Scottish Government might wish.

8.13 In relation to other groups of people who might be considered ‘intentionally homeless’ under current guidance, public opinion appears to be more favourable. A majority think that:

- a 30 year-old who has moved out of their home after splitting up with their husband or wife
- a person who says they can no longer live in their flat because their neighbours are too noisy
- a 16 year-old girl who currently lives with her parents, but has a one year-old child and wants to move out, and
- a person who has lost their home because they could not keep up with their rent payments

should ‘definitely’ or ‘probably’ get help finding a new home. Although local councils currently exercise a degree of discretion in interpreting ‘intentionality’ (as described in Rosengard et al, 2006), all these situations could potentially be cited as reasons for deeming someone ‘intentionally homeless’.

8.14 At present, ‘intentionally homeless’ households are entitled to only temporary accommodation and advice and assistance. The 2003 Act will improve their rights by changing the ‘duty’ on local authorities to investigate intentionality to a ‘power’. Our findings suggest that public opinion is broadly in tune with the notion that at least some sorts of ‘intentionality’ are irrelevant to whether or not someone experiencing homelessness should be entitled to help, and is thus likely to be supportive of this change. The 2003 Act also expands the rights of those still found to be ‘intentionally homeless’ by entitling them to Short Scottish Secure Tenancies with appropriate support (provided they are not homeless as a result of anti social behaviour). In general, our findings suggest public opinion is broadly in tune with such moves to provide these groups with more help finding a new home. However, attitudes are somewhat more divided with respect to whether a 17 year-old who has left home after a serious argument with their parents should get such help or not. Thus it is possible that there may be some circumstances where the new rights of ‘intentionally homeless’ households to a Short Secured Tenancy may prove slightly more controversial.

### ***Policy implications***

8.15 Our findings suggest that some work may be needed to convey the rationale and desirability of abolishing distinctions between different homeless people if the Scottish Government wishes to ensure public support for the abolition of priority need by 2012. The Scottish Government may also wish to increase understanding of the circumstances

and needs of particular groups of homeless people who appear to be commonly considered ‘less deserving’ of help. These include:

- those evicted for anti-social behaviour, who are the group most likely to be viewed as least deserving of help (especially by older people, owner occupiers and those who are more authoritarian in their values)
- those with drug and alcohol problems and prison leavers (again, especially among the more authoritarian), and
- those who have just moved to Scotland.

### **Future research**

8.16 As discussed in Chapter One, this is the first time public attitudes to homelessness have been explored in detail in a large-scale, Scotland-wide survey. As such, it is worth reflecting on what future research these findings might suggest. First, given a fixed number of questions and a desire to avoid contaminating responses to later items, it was not possible in our survey to explore public understandings of the term ‘homelessness’ and the kinds of situations people believe this covers in any detail. Given the interest in challenging stereotypes of people experiencing homelessness, it would seem worth pursuing this issue further. Initially, this could be explored in qualitative research which could be used to map and understand the range of different understandings of homelessness that people hold. However, if the Scottish Government is interested in mapping the extent of (changing) understandings of homelessness in Scotland, this could be followed up with a larger-scale survey.

8.17 Second, we found that around a third of people would feel uncomfortable if they heard that houses or flats very near them were to be used to re-house homeless people. This concern was particularly high among those living in more affluent areas. Given the Scottish Government’s desire to promote socially-mixed communities in Scotland, as well as to challenge negative stereotypes about homeless people, it seems worth exploring the reasons for people feeling uncomfortable at this prospect in more detail. Again, qualitative research may be a useful tool for mapping and understanding the range of views and concerns about this issue.

8.18 Finally, our findings suggest that attitudes to people experiencing homelessness may vary depending on both the sex and the age of the individual homeless person concerned. Again, this is something that might usefully be explored further, particularly if the Scottish Government wishes to design future public campaigns to challenge negative views about homeless people. A clearer understanding of how the individual characteristics of homeless people, as well as their background and circumstances, impact on attitudes (and why) seems desirable inform the design of any such campaign.



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## **ANNEX A – HOMELESSNESS TASK FORCE DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS**

The following definition of homelessness is suggested by the Homelessness Task Force in their final report (2002).

Persons defined in current legislation as homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness — i.e. those:-

- without any accommodation in which they can live with their families.
- who can't gain access to their accommodation or would risk domestic violence by living there.
- whose accommodation is "unreasonable"; or is overcrowded and a danger to health.
- whose accommodation is a caravan or boat and they have nowhere to park it.

Those persons experiencing one or more of the following situations, even if these situations are not covered by the legislation:-

- **Roofless:** Those persons without shelter of any kind. This includes people who are sleeping rough, victims of fire and flood, and newly-arrived immigrants<sup>2</sup>.
- **Houseless:** Those persons living in emergency and temporary accommodation provided for homeless people. Examples of such accommodation are night shelters, hostels and refuges.
- **Households residing in accommodation, such as Bed & Breakfast premises, which is unsuitable as long-stay accommodation because they have no where else to stay.**
- **Those persons staying in institutions only because they have nowhere else to stay.**
- **Insecure accommodation:** Those persons in accommodation that is insecure in reality rather than simply, or necessarily, held on an impermanent tenure. This group includes:-
  - tenants or owner-occupiers likely to be evicted (whether lawfully or unlawfully).
  - persons with no legal rights or permission to remain in accommodation, such as squatters or young people asked to leave the family home.
  - persons with only a short-term permission to stay, such as those moving around friends' and relatives' houses with no stable base.
- **Involuntary Sharing of Housing in Unreasonable Circumstances:** Those persons who are involuntarily sharing accommodation with another household on a long-term basis in housing circumstances deemed to be unreasonable.

A very similar definition of homelessness was made available to respondents to the 2006 Scottish Social Attitudes survey if they queried what we meant when we asked if they, or anyone they knew, had ever been 'homeless'. However, as discussed in Chapter One, this question was asked at the end of the module. We did not attempt to define homelessness at the outset, since we were interested in respondents perceptions regardless of whether these were based on accurate understandings of the term 'homelessness'.

## **ANNEX B –LIBERTARIAN-AUTHORITARIAN AND LEFT-RIGHT SCALES**

Every year since 1999, the *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey has included two attitude scales which aim to measure where respondents stand on certain underlying value dimensions – left–right and libertarian–authoritarian. A useful way of summarising the information from a number of questions of this sort is to construct an additive index. This approach rests on the assumption that there is an underlying – ‘latent’ –attitudinal dimension which characterises the answers to all the questions within each scale. If so, scores on the index are likely to be a more reliable indication of the underlying attitude than the answers to any one question.

Each of these scales consists of a number of statements to which the respondent is invited to “agree strongly”, “agree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “disagree” or “disagree strongly”. The items (with the variable names used in the SPSS dataset in square brackets) are:

### ***Left–right scale***

- Government should redistribute income from the better off to those who are less well off. [*Redistrb*]
- Big business benefits owners at the expense of workers. [*BigBusnN*]
- Ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation’s wealth. [*Wealth*]<sup>7</sup>
- There is one law for the rich and one for the poor. [*RichLaw*]
- Management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance. [*Indust4*]

### ***Libertarian–authoritarian scale***

- Young people today don’t have enough respect for traditional British values. [*TradVals*]
- People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences. [*StifSent*]
- For some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence. [*DeathApp*]
- Schools should teach children to obey authority. [*Obey*]
- The law should always be obeyed, even if a particular law is wrong. [*WrongLaw*]
- Censorship of films and magazines is necessary to uphold moral standards. [*Censor*]

The indices for the three scales are formed by scoring the leftmost or most libertarian position as 1 and the rightmost or most authoritarian position as 5. The ‘neither agree nor disagree’ option is scored as 3. The scores to all the questions in each scale are added and then divided by the number of items in the scale, giving indices ranging from 1 (leftmost, most libertarian) to 5 (rightmost, most authoritarian). The scores on the three indices have been placed on the dataset.

The scales have been tested for reliability (as measured by Cronbach’s alpha). The Cronbach’s alpha (unstandardised items) for the scales in 2006 are 0.88 for the left–right

scale, 0.81 for the libertarian–authoritarian scale. This level of reliability can be considered ‘very good’ for both scales (DeVellis, 1991: 85).

## ANNEX C –TECHNICAL DETAILS OF THE SURVEY

### The Scottish Social Attitudes series

1. The *Scottish Social Attitudes* (SSA) survey was launched by the Scottish Centre for Social Research<sup>44</sup> (part of the National Centre for Social Research) in 1999, following the advent of devolution. Based on annual rounds of interviews with 1,500-1,600 people drawn using random probability sampling, its aims are to facilitate the study of public opinion and inform the development of public policy in Scotland. In this it has similar objectives to the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey, which was launched by the National Centre in 1983. While BSA interviews people in Scotland, these are usually too few in any one year to permit separate analysis of public opinion in Scotland (see Park, et al, 2004 for more details of the BSA survey).

2. SSA is conducted annually and has a modular structure. In any one year it will typically contain four or five modules, each containing 40 questions. Funding for its first two years came from the Economic and Social Research Council, while from 2001 onwards different bodies have funded each year's individual modules. These bodies have included the Economic and Social Research Council, the Scottish Government and various charitable and grant awarding bodies, such as the Nuffield and Leverhulme Foundations.

### The 2006 survey

3. The 2006 survey contained modules of questions on:
- attitudes to government and public services in post-devolution Scotland (funded by the Scottish Executive's Office of Chief Researcher from 2004-2007)
  - discrimination in Scotland (funded by the Scottish Executive and Department for Trade and Industry)
  - attitudes towards young people and youth crime (funded by the then Scottish Executive)
  - views about national identity (in collaboration with David McCrone and Frank Bechhofer at the University of Edinburgh, funded by the Leverhulme Foundation)
  - and, attitudes towards homelessness (funded by the Scottish Executive).
4. Findings from the 2006 modules are reported in separate publications produced by ScotCen and their collaborators. This technical annex accompanies ScotCen-authored reports for the Scottish Government. It covers the methodological details of the 2006 survey as well as further discussion of the analysis techniques used in the reports.

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<sup>44</sup> The Scottish Centre for Social Research was formed in February 2004 as the result of a merger between The National Centre's existing organisation within Scotland and Scottish Health Feedback, an independent research consultancy.

## *Technical details of the survey*

5. The *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey involves a face-to-face interview with respondents and a self-completion questionnaire, completed by nine in ten of these people (90% in 2006). The numbers completing each stage in 2006 are shown in Table 1. See Bromley, Curtice and Given (2005) for technical details of the 1999-2004 surveys and Given and Ormston (2006) for technical details of the 2005 survey.

**Table 1: 2006 Scottish Social Attitudes survey response**

	Lower		Upper	
	No.	%		%
Addresses issued	3162		3162	
Vacant, derelict and other out of scope 1	323	10.2	323	10.2
Unknown eligibility 2	89	3.2	89	3.2
In scope	2839		2750	
Interview achieved	1594	56.1	1594	58.0
Self-completion returned	1437	50.6	1437	52.3
Interview not achieved	1245	43.9	1245	42.0
<i>Refused 3</i>	916	32.3	916	33.3
<i>Non-contacted 4</i>	100	3.5	100	3.6
<i>Other non-response 5</i>	140	4.9	140	5.1

Notes to table

The table shows a 'lower' and an 'upper' response rate. The former is calculated on the assumption that all addresses whose eligibility to participate was unknown were in fact eligible to take part. The latter is calculated on the assumption that they were all ineligible (because they were empty/derelict, non-residential, etc). The 'true' response is likely to lie somewhere between the two, since some addresses whose eligibility was unknown are likely to have been 'deadwood' while others may have been eligible. See Lynn et al (2001)<sup>45</sup> for a discussion of treatment of unknown eligibility in calculating response rates.

1 This includes empty / derelict addresses, holiday homes, businesses and institutions.

2 'Unknown eligibility' includes cases where the address could not be located, where it could not be determined if an address was a residence and where it could not be determined if an address was occupied or not.

3 Refusals include refusals prior to selection of an individual, refusals to the office, refusal by the selected person, 'proxy' refusals made by someone on behalf of the respondent and broken appointments after which a respondent could not be re-contacted.

4 Non-contacts comprise households where no one was contacted after at least 4 calls and those where the selected person could not be contacted.

5 'Other non-response' includes people who were ill at home or in hospital during the survey period, people who were physically or mentally unable to participate and people who with insufficient English to participate.

## *Sample design*

6. The survey is designed to yield a representative sample of adults aged 18 or over living in Scotland. The sample frame is the Postcode Address File (PAF), a list of postal delivery points compiled by the Post Office. The detailed procedure for selecting the 2006 sample was as follows:

- I. 88 postcode sectors were selected from a list of all postal sectors in Scotland, with probability proportional to the number of addresses in each sector. Prior to selection the sectors were stratified by region, population density, and percentage of

<sup>45</sup> Lynn, Peter, et al (2001) *Recommended standard final outcome categories and standard definitions of response rates for social surveys*, Institute for Social and Economic Research

household heads recorded as being in non-manual occupations (SEG 1-6 and 13, taken from the 2001 Census). The list was also stratified using the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) six-fold classification of urban and rural areas (see below for a description of this), and sectors within rural and remote categories were over-sampled.

- II. In order to boost the number of respondents from remote and rural areas 31 addresses were selected in each sector located within the first three SHS urban-rural classifications (the four cities to accessible small towns), while 62 addresses were selected from the sectors within the three most rural categories (remote small towns to remote rural areas). The issued sample size is shown in Table 1.
- III. Interviewers called at each selected address and identified its eligibility for the survey. Where more than one dwelling unit was present at an address, all dwelling units were listed systematically and one was selected at random using a computer generated random selection table. In all eligible dwelling units with more than one adult aged 18 or over, interviewers also had to carry out a random selection of one adult using a similar procedure.

### ***Weighting***

7. The weights applied to the SSA 2006 data are intended to correct for three potential sources of bias in the sample:

- I. Differential selection probabilities
- II. Deliberate over-sampling of rural areas
- III. Non-response.

8. Data were weighted to take account of the fact that not all households or individuals have the same probability of selection for the survey. For example, adults living in large households have a lower selection probability than adults who live alone. Weighting was also used to correct the over-sampling of rural addresses. Differences between responding and non-responding households were taken into account using information from the census about the area of the address as well as interviewer observations about participating and non-participating addresses. Finally, the weights were adjusted to ensure that the weighted data matched the age-sex profile of the Scottish population (based on 2005 mid-year estimates from GROS).

9. Prior to the 2005 dataset, SSA data was only weighted to take account of differential selection probabilities and over-sampling in rural areas. The decision to introduce non-response weighting and 'calibration' weighting to match the sex-age profile of the population was taken following experimentation with the 2004 British Social Attitudes (BSA) dataset. Both BSA and SSA weights now incorporate these new elements, which are designed to reduce non-response bias.

## ***Fieldwork***

10. Fieldwork ran between August 2006 and January 2007 (with 77% completed by the end of October). An advance letter was sent to all addresses and was followed up by a personal visit from a *Scottish Centre for Social Research* interviewer. Interviewers were required to make a minimum of 4 calls at different times of the day (including at least one evening and one weekend call) in order to try and contact respondents, although in practice interviewers often made many more calls than this. All interviewers attended a one day briefing conference prior to starting work on the study.

11. Interviews were conducted using face-to-face computer-assisted interviewing (a process which involves the use of a laptop computer, with questions appearing on screen and interviewers directly entering respondents' answers into the computer). All respondents were asked to fill in a self-completion questionnaire which was either collected by the interviewer or returned by post. Table 1 summarises the response rate and the numbers completing the self-completion in 2006.

## **Analysis variables**

12. A number of standard analyses have been used in the five reports. Most of the analysis variables are taken directly from the questionnaire and to that extent are self-explanatory. These include age, sex, household income, and highest educational qualification obtained. The main analysis groups requiring further definition are set out below.

### ***The Scottish Government six-fold urban-rural classification***

13. The six categories used in this classification are: 1) large urban, 2) other urban, 3) small accessible towns, 4) small remote towns, 5) accessible rural, 6) remote rural. For more details see Hope, S. *et al* (2000).

### ***National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC)***

14. The most commonly used classification of socio-economic status used on government surveys is the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC). SSA respondents were classified according to their own occupation, rather than that of the 'head of household'. Each respondent was asked about their current or last job, so that all respondents, with the exception of those who had never worked, were classified. The seven NS-SEC categories are:

- Employers in large organisations, higher managerial and professional
- Lower professional and managerial; higher technical and supervisory
- Intermediate occupations
- Small employers and own account workers
- Lower supervisory and technical occupations
- Semi-routine occupations
- Routine occupations

15. The remaining respondents were grouped as 'never had a job' or 'not classifiable'.



### ***Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)***

16. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)<sup>46</sup> 2006 measures the level of deprivation across Scotland – from the least deprived to the most deprived areas. It is based on 37 indicators in seven domains of Current Income, Employment, Health, Education Skills and Training, Geographic Access to Services (including public transport travel times for the first time), Housing and, new for 2006, Crime. SIMD 2006 is presented at data zone level, enabling small pockets of deprivation to be identified. The data zones are ranked from most deprived (1) to least deprived (6,505) on the overall SIMD 2006 and on each of the individual domains. The result is a comprehensive picture of relative area deprivation across Scotland.

17. The SSA analysis used three variables created from SIMD data indicating the level of deprivation of the data zone in which the respondent lived. The first variable (nsimd06s) indicates which SIMD quintile the respondent lives in (with 1 being the least deprived and 5 being the most deprived); the second (SNIMD15) indicates whether or not the respondent lives in the most deprived 15% of data zones as measured on the SIMD; the third indicates which tertile the respondent lives in (with 1 being the least deprived and 3 being the most deprived). All three variables are based the SIMD scores for all datazones - not simply those included in the SSA sample.

### **Analysis techniques**

#### ***Regression***

18. For the more complex analysis in the reports, logistic regression models have been used to assess whether there is reliable evidence that particular variables are associated with each other.

19. Regression analysis aims to summarise the relationship between a ‘dependent’ variable and one or more ‘independent’ explanatory variables. It shows how well we can estimate a respondent’s score on the dependent variable from knowledge of their scores on the independent variables. This technique takes into account relationships between the different independent variables (for example, between education and income, or social class and housing tenure). Regression is often undertaken to support a claim that the phenomena measured by the independent variables cause the phenomenon measured by the dependent variable. However, the causal ordering, if any, between the variables cannot be verified or falsified by the technique. Causality can only be inferred through special experimental designs or through assumptions made by the analyst. All regression analysis assumes that the relationship between the dependent and each of the independent variables takes a particular form.

20. The Scottish Social Attitudes 2006 reports use logistic regression – a method that summarises the relationship between a binary ‘dependent’ variable (one that takes the values ‘0’ or ‘1’) and one or more ‘independent’ explanatory variables. The tables in this

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<sup>46</sup> See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD/Overview> for further details on the SIMD

report show how the odds ratios for each category in significant explanatory variables compares to the odds ratio for the reference category (always taken to be 1.00).

21. Taking Model 1 (below) as an example, the dependent variable is based on disagreeing with the statement ‘most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives’. If the respondent disagrees with this statement, the dependent variable takes a value of 1. If not, it takes a value of 0. An odds ratio of above 1 means respondents in that category were *more* likely to disagree with this statement than respondents in the reference category. An odds ratio of below 1 means they were *less* likely to disagree with the statement than respondents in the reference category. If we look at sex, we can see that women were *less* likely than men to disagree with the statement ‘most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives’, since they have an odds ratio of 0.59. However, if we look at education, we see that the odds of someone with a degree disagreeing with this statement are 1.68 times greater among those with a degree compared with those with no qualifications.

22. The significance of differences between the reference category and other categories are indicated by ‘P’. A p-value of 0.05 or less indicates that there is less than a 5% chance we would have found such a difference just by chance if in fact no such difference exists, while a p-value of 0.01 or less indicates that there is a less than 1% chance. P-values of 0.05 or less are generally considered to indicate that the difference is highly statistically significant, while a p-value of 0.06 to 0.10 may be considered marginally significant. As shorthand to aid interpretation, we have used symbols to summarise statistically significant differences:

- ‘+’ denotes results that are significantly different from 0 at the 10% level ( $p = 0.06-0.10$ )
- ‘\*’ denotes results that are significant from 0 at the 5% level ( $p = 0.015 - 0.05$ ) and
- ‘\*\*\*’ denotes results that are significantly different from 0 at the 1% level ( $p = 0.01$  or below).

23. It should be noted that the final regression models reported below were produced following a 2-step process. First, forward stepwise regression analysis was conducted in SPSS 12.0. The variables entered into these initial models are noted below each final model, below. Second, those variables found to be significantly associated with the dependent variable by these forward stepwise models were entered into a final regression model run through STATA. Unlike SPSS 12.0, STATA can account for complex sample designs (in particular, the effects of clustering and associated weighting) when calculating odds ratios and determining significance. The final models shown below include only those variables found to be significant after the regression models were run in STATA.

## Regression models

### Model 1 Most homeless people have just been unlucky in their lives

Dependent variable coding 1 = disagree 0 = NOT disagree	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval	P	
<b>Sex</b>				
(Men)	1.00			
Women	.59	0.43-0.80	0.001	**
<b>Socio-economic class (NS_SEC)</b>				
(Routine/semi-routine)	1.00			
Employers, managers & professionals	1.59	1.06-2.39	0.025	*
Intermediate occupations	1.19	0.78-1.81	0.405	NS
Small employers/own account workers	1.27	0.76-2.13	0.353	NS
Lower supervisory/technical	1.00	0.64-1.57	0.995	NS
<b>Highest educational qualification</b>				
(None)	1.00			
Degree	1.68	1.09-2.58	0.019	*
Highers or equivalent	1.60	1.07-2.39	0.023	*
Standard grades or equivalent	1.69	1.15-2.49	0.008	**
<b>Household income</b>				
(£11,999 or less)	1.00			
£12-£22,999	1.92	1.15-3.20	0.013	*
£23-£43,999	1.31	0.78-2.20	0.298	NS
£44,000+	1.89	1.13-3.16	0.017	*
<b>Newspaper readership</b>				
(Tabloid)	1.00			
None	0.66	0.44-0.99	0.043	*
Broadsheet	1.06	0.77-1.46	0.727	NS

Cases included in model = 1,539

Independent variables included in initial forward stepwise model: Age, sex, area deprivation (SIMD quintiles), socio-economic class (NS-SEC), SHS urban-rural classification (6-fold), tenure, highest educational qualification, newspaper readership, self-assessed hardship, household income (quartiles), position on libertarian-authoritarian scale (tertiles), position on left-right scale (tertiles), how often come across someone you think is homeless, self/someone know experienced homelessness.

**Model 2      Most homeless people could find somewhere to live if they really tried**

<b>Dependent variable coding</b> 1 = Agree 0 = NOT agree	<b>Odds ratio</b>	<b>95% confidence interval</b>	<b>P</b>	
<b>Highest educational qualification</b>				
(None)	1.00			
Degree	0.42	0.28-0.62	0.000	**
Highers or equivalent	0.52	0.34-0.79	0.003	**
Standard grades or equivalent	0.83	0.59-1.16	0.266	NS
<b>Sex</b>				
(Men)	1.00			
Women	0.58	0.42-0.79	0.001	**
<b>Age</b>				
(18-24)	1.00			
25-34	0.64	0.36-1.13	0.121	NS
35-44	0.41	0.25-0.68	0.001	**
45-54	0.53	0.31-0.90	0.019	*
55-64	0.56	0.32-0.98	0.044	*
65+	0.60	0.35-1.03	0.067	+
<b>Underlying liberal authoritarian beliefs</b>				
(Libertarian)	1.00			
Centre	1.27	0.90-1.77	0.169	NS
Authoritarian	1.77	1.29-2.43	0.001	**

Cases included in model = 1,414

Independent variables included in initial forward stepwise model: Age, sex, area deprivation (SIMD quintiles), socio-economic class (NS-SEC), SHS urban-rural classification (6-fold), tenure, highest educational qualification, newspaper readership, self-assessed hardship, household income (quartiles), position on libertarian-authoritarian scale (tertiles), position on left-right scale (tertiles), how often come across someone you think is homeless, self/someone know experienced homelessness.

**Model 3 Many people say they are homeless just to get a house from the council**

Dependent variable coding 1 = Agree 0 = NOT agree	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval	P	
<b>Underlying liberal authoritarian beliefs</b>				
(Libertarian)	1.00			
Centre	2.33	1.57-3.46	0.000	**
Authoritarian	3.97	2.78-5.66	0.000	**
<b>Highest educational qualification</b>				
(None)	1.00			
Degree	0.41	0.27-0.61	0.000	**
Highers or equivalent	0.71	0.46-1.08	0.109	NS
Standard grades or equivalent	0.64	0.45-0.90	0.010	**
<b>Underlying political left-right beliefs</b>				
(Left)	1.00			
Centre	0.63	0.45-0.88	0.008	**
Right	0.79	0.57-1.09	0.147	NS
<b>Self/someone know been homeless</b>				
(Yes)	1.00			
No	0.75	0.57-0.99	0.040	*

Cases included in model = 1,369

Independent variables included in initial forward stepwise model: Age, sex, area deprivation (SIMD quintiles), socio-economic class (NS-SEC), SHS urban-rural classification (6-fold), tenure, highest educational qualification, newspaper readership, self-assessed hardship, household income (quartiles), position on libertarian-authoritarian scale (tertiles), position on left-right scale (tertiles), how often come across someone you think is homeless, self/someone know experienced homelessness.

**Model 4      Some who become homeless for different reasons more deserving of help than others**

Dependent variable coding 1 = Some more deserving than others 0 = NOT	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval	P	
<b>Underlying liberal authoritarian beliefs</b>				
(Libertarian)	1.00			
Centre	1.98	1.41-2.79	0.000	**
Authoritarian	1.99	1.41-2.81	0.000	**
<b>Age</b>				
18-24	1.00			
25-34	0.67	0.30-1.48	0.313	NS
35-44	0.54	0.27-1.09	0.083	+
45-54	0.66	0.34-1.48	0.216	NS
55-64	0.51	0.25-1.04	0.063	+
65+	0.87	0.45-1.70	0.679	NS
<b>Scottish index of multiple deprivation</b>				
Most deprived	1.00			
2	1.11	0.79-1.59	0.522	NS
3	1.37	0.89-2.11	0.145	NS
4	1.24	0.87-1.77	0.225	NS
Least deprived	1.69	1.15-2.45	0.008	**
<b>Socio-economic class (NS-SEC)</b>				
(Routine/semi-routine)	1.00			
Employers, managers & professionals	1.10	0.75-1.61	0.637	NS
Intermediate occupations	0.61	0.37-0.99	0.048	*
Small employers/own account workers	1.14	0.66-1.97	0.5631	NS
Lower supervisory/technical	1.16	0.74-1.80	0.509	NS

Cases included in model = 1,383

Independent variables included in initial forward stepwise model: Age, sex, area deprivation (SIMD quintiles), socio-economic class (NS-SEC), SHS urban-rural classification (6-fold), tenure, highest educational qualification, newspaper readership, self-assessed hardship, household income (quartiles), position on libertarian-authoritarian scale (tertiles), position on left-right scale (tertiles), how often come across someone you think is homeless, self/someone know experienced homelessness.

**Model 5      Some kinds of people should get more help finding a new home than others**

<b>Dependent variable coding</b> <b>1 = Some should get more help</b> <b>0 = NOT</b>	<b>Odds ratio</b>	<b>95% confidence interval</b>	<b>P</b>	
<b>Sex</b>				
(Men)	1.00			
Women	0.66	0.51-0.84	0.001	**
<b>Socio-economic class (NS-SEC)</b>				
(Routine/semi-routine)	1.00			
Employers, managers & professionals	1.07	0.83-1.37	0.611	NS
Intermediate occupations	0.86	0.59-1.34	0.559	NS
Small employers/own account workers	0.58	0.39-0.88	0.010	**
Lower supervisory/technical	0.76	0.55-1.06	0.103	NS

Cases included in model = 1,550

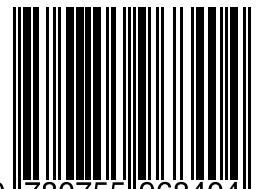
Independent variables included in initial forward stepwise model: Age, sex, area deprivation (SIMD quintiles), socio-economic class (NS-SEC), SHS urban-rural classification (6-fold), tenure, highest educational qualification, newspaper readership, self-assessed hardship, household income (quartiles), position on libertarian-authoritarian scale (tertiles), position on left-right scale (tertiles), how often come across someone you think is homeless, self/someone know experienced homelessness.

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