

PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

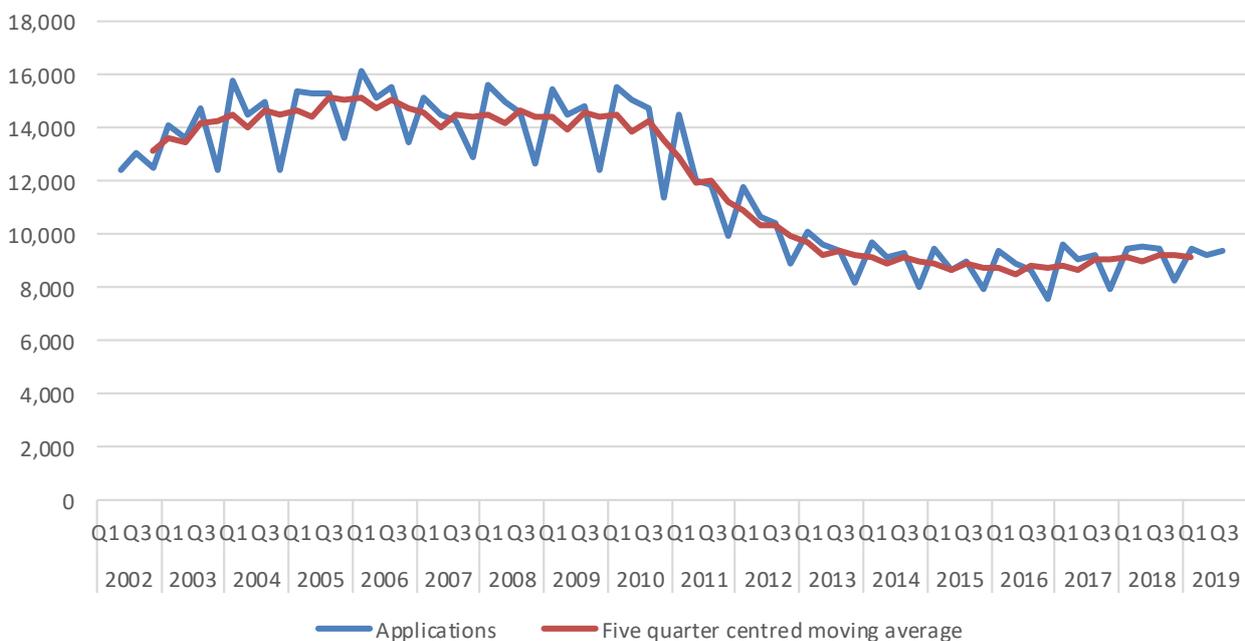
HOMELESSNESS IN SCOTLAND: Bi-annual update 1 April to 30 September 2019

This bulletin provides information on local authority homelessness applications, assessments and outcomes in the period from 1 April to 30 September 2019, and places it in the context of longer term trends. It also provides data on the number of households in temporary accommodation, along with the number of households in unsuitable temporary accommodation as defined in the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014.

The bulletin is based on data collected from local authorities through the HL1 case-level homelessness applications data collection along with the HL2 aggregate temporary accommodation summary return and the HL3 case-level temporary accommodation return.

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

Chart 1: Number of applications for homelessness assistance in Scotland, by quarter, April 2002 to September 2019



Introduction

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

Separate annual bulletins, the most recent of which was published on 26 June 2019 and covered the financial year 2018/19, are lengthier publications and provide a more in-depth analysis of the causes of homelessness in Scotland and the characteristics of the households who apply to Scottish Local Authorities for homelessness assistance. The next annual publication for the year 2019/20 is planned to be published in June 2020.

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

Please note that this bulletin updates previously published figures. There may be delays in some cases being reported to the Scottish Government due to IT issues, quality assurance processes and delayed entry of data. As a result, it is estimated that the headline number of applications may change by as much as 4% (up to around 430 cases for the current quarter for example) between first and subsequent publications (see the section [Notes on the Statistics](#)).

Readers may be interested to note that Housing Options (PREVENT1) statistics are also available at <https://www.gov.scot/collections/homelessness-statistics>. These are produced on an annual basis, with the latest publication released on 26 June 2019.

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Main Points

For the six-month period of 1 April to 30 September 2019:

Applications

- There were 18,645 applications for homelessness assistance between 1 April and 30 September 2019. Although this was a decrease of 2% (370) compared with the same 6 month period in 2018, there was no change over the 12 month period.
- In the year to end September 2019, Glasgow experienced the greatest increase in the number of applications from 5,274 to 5,873 (an increase of 599 or 11%). Perth & Kinross saw the biggest decrease from 1,025 to 780 (decrease of 245 or 24%).

Assessments

- There were 18,725 assessments made between 1 April and 30 September 2019 with 15,542 (83%) being assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. Of these, 676 (4%) were considered intentionally homeless.

Temporary accommodation

As at 30 September 2019:

- There were 11,432 households in temporary accommodation, an increase of 477 households (4%) compared to last year. This is the highest figure since the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 were commenced in 2002.
- 3,579 households in temporary accommodation had children or a pregnant member – an increase of 264 (8%) compared to 2018.
- There were 7,252 children in temporary accommodation, increasing by 426 children (6%) compared to the previous year.

For the six-month period of 1 April to 30 September 2019:

- A total of 10,945 unique households entered temporary accommodation and 11,315 exited temporary accommodation.
- The majority of households entering and exiting temporary accommodation were single person households (69% entering; 70% exiting), while a quarter (25% for both) contained children.
- Households spent an average of 178 days in temporary accommodation. The average was higher for households with children (212 days) compared to those without children (167 days).
- Of the 11,315 households which exited temporary accommodation: 2,295 (20%) had a total duration of 4 weeks or less; 5,085 (45%) had a total duration of 5 weeks to 6 months; 2,405 (21%) had a total duration of 7 to 12 months; and 1,525 (13%) were in temporary accommodation for a year or more.

Breaches of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation Order) (Scotland)

- There were 190 breaches from 1 April to 30 September 2019 and 430 between 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019. The majority were in Edinburgh (125 & 295 breaches respectively), with breaches in a total of twelve authorities over the 12 month period.

Outcomes

- Settled accommodation (predominantly permanent accommodation from social or private tenancies) was secured for 10,070 unintentionally homeless households. This is 81% of cases where contact was maintained and the outcome was known.
- 9,825 households were assessed under the Housing Support regulations (74% of all closed cases). Of these, support was provided for 4,890 (50%) and found to not be required for 4,285 (44%).

Applications

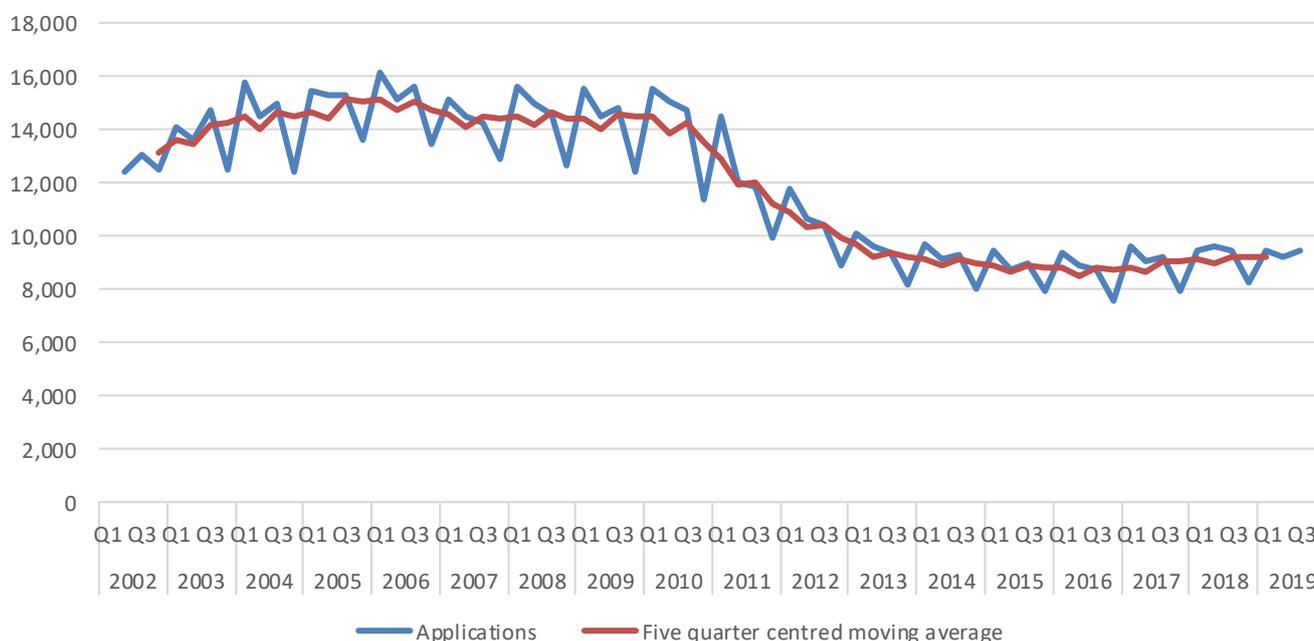
(Table 1 to Table 3)

All applications

In the 6 months between 1 April and 30 September 2019, local authorities received 18,645 homelessness applications, a decrease of 370 (2%) over the same period in the previous year (see **Table 1**). Looking over the 12 months period, figures are comparable - only 9 less applications in 2019 compared to the same period in 2018.

Chart 1 shows that the number of homelessness applications over time has decreased beginning around Spring 2010. This downward trend has slowed down over the last few years and has leveled out since 2015, although applications have been increasing slightly since 2016. There are quarterly fluctuations, but this trend is clearer when looking at the five-quarter centred moving average.

Chart 1: Number of applications for homelessness assistance in Scotland, by quarter, April 2002 to September 2019



Since 2010, local authorities have been assisting households to consider the range of options available to address their housing needs - Housing Options¹. As a consequence, some of the households who might previously have made a homelessness application may now have their housing needs met without first becoming homeless or being threatened with homelessness. This is likely to have contributed to an overall downward trend in the number of homelessness applications since 2010.² The leveling out of homelessness applications (since 2015) suggests that the effect of Housing Options on

¹ <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/homelessness/housing-options/>

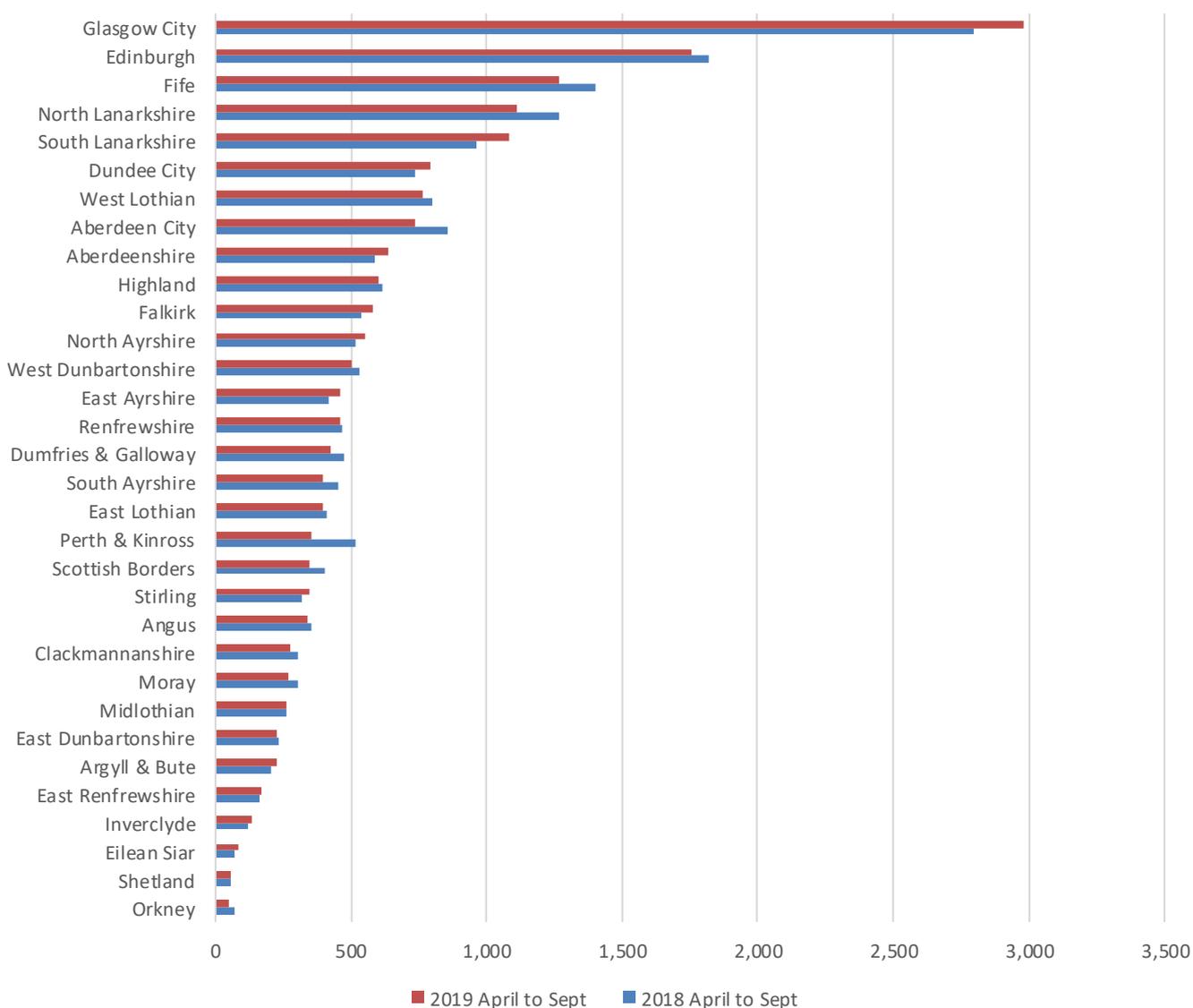
² [Homelessness in Scotland: 2017/18](#), provides further background information on the reductions in homelessness applications over time, in the Applications section.

decreasing homelessness application numbers may have reached a plateau. Indeed applications began to increase since 2016.

There is, however, variation in trends over time between local authorities. Table 1 shows that when comparing April to September 2019 with the corresponding period in 2018, the number of homelessness applications increased in 11 (34%) local authority areas and decreased in the remaining 21 (66%). The largest numerical reductions were in Perth & Kinross (-245 applications, -24%), North Lanarkshire (-190, -8%) and Aberdeen City (-149 applications, -9%). The largest numerical increases were in Glasgow (599 applications, 11%) and South Lanarkshire (168 applications, 9%).

The greatest number of applications over the 12 months period was received by Glasgow (5,873), accounting for 16% of all applications.

Chart 2: Homeless applications by local authority, April to September 2019 compared to April to September 2018



Reasons for homelessness

The underlying reasons for homelessness have remained stable over time in Scotland, since April 2007. **Table 2a** and **Table 2b** show this since January 2017.

Of the 18,645 homelessness applications received in the 6 months period between April and September 2019:

- The most common reason cited was “asked to leave” – which accounted for a total of 4,528 (24%) applications, a decrease of 75 applications (2%) relative to the equivalent period of the previous year;
- The second most common reason cited was “non-violent dispute within the household and/or a relationship breakdown” – which accounted for a total of 3,384 (18%) applications, a decrease of 47 (1%) compared to the same period in the previous year.
- The third most common reason was “dispute within the household: violent or abusive” – which accounted for 2,452 (13%) of applications. This was an increase of 22 (1%) compared to the previous year.

Chart 3: Reason for making a homeless application, April to September 2019 compared to April to September 2018

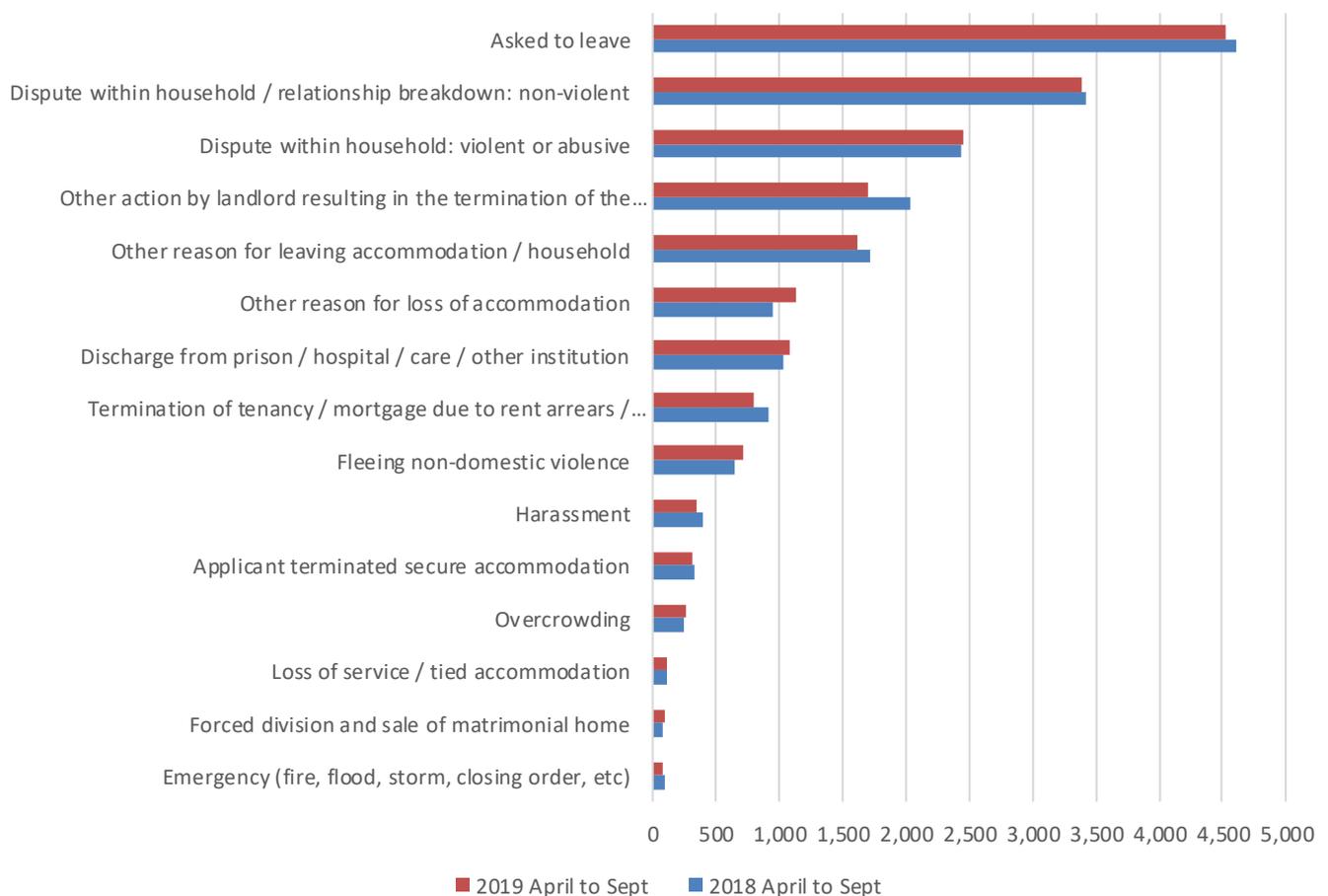
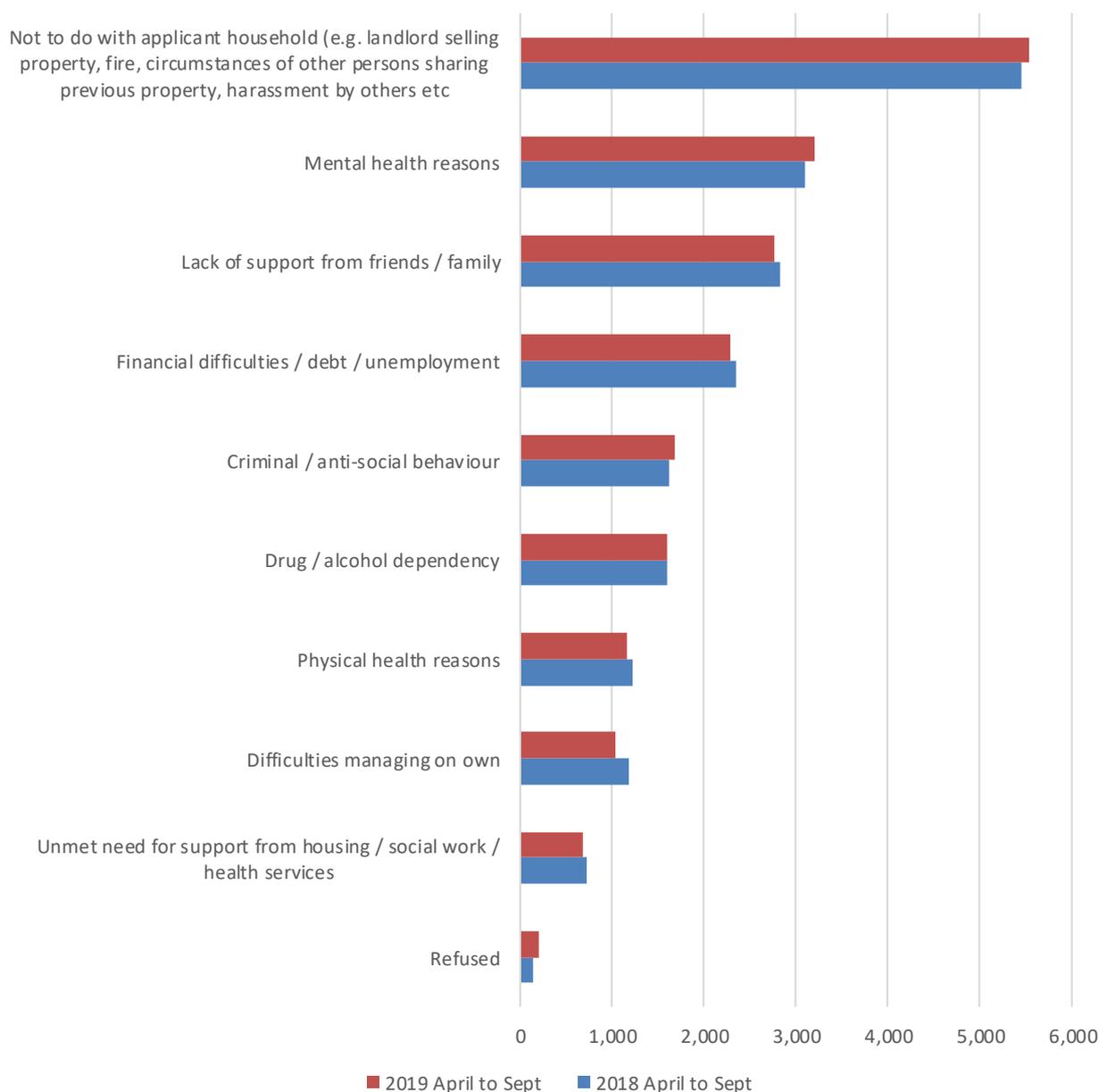


Table 3a shows that, in the 6 months between 1 April and 30 September 2019, there were 12,586 (68% of the 18,645) homelessness applications where the local authority recorded a reason for failing to maintain the accommodation³. Applicants are given a list of possible reasons, and local authorities may select multiple reasons.

Of the 12,586 applicants providing a reason for failing to maintain accommodation the most common reasons were: not to do with applicant's household (5,533, 44%), mental health (3,204, 25%) and lack of support from friends/family (2,757, 22%).

Chart 4: Additional reasons for failing to maintain accommodation, April to September 2019 compared to April to September 2018



³ More information on the questionnaire for homelessness applications can be found in the output specification for the data, found at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/15257/OutputSpecification>

Assessments

(Table 4 to Table 6)

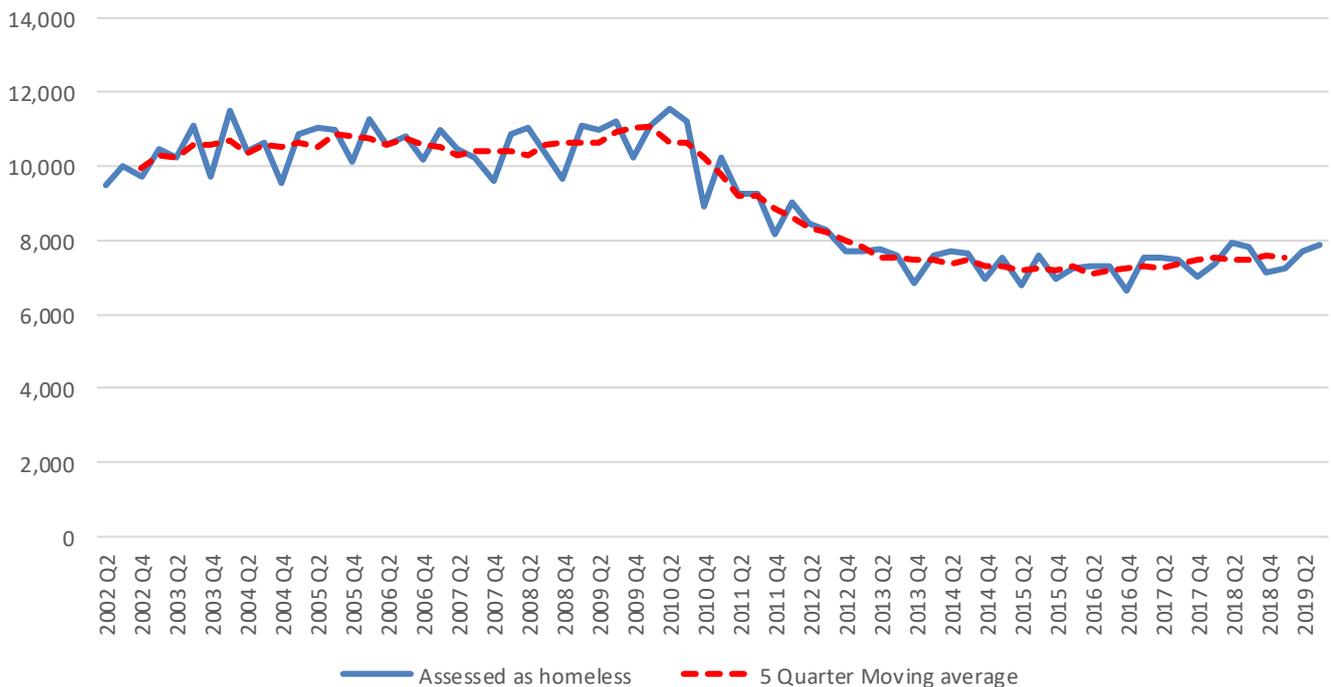
Overall assessments

There were 18,725 assessments made between April to September 2019, compared to 19,052 for the same period in 2018, a decrease of 327 assessments (-2%). Over the full 12 month period, the number of assessments was similar to the same period the previous year with only 93 less to the end of September 2019 compared with end of September 2018.

Of the 18,725 homelessness assessments made between 1 April and 30 September 2019, 15,542 (83%) were assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness, 694 (4%) were assessed as not homeless and 814 (4%) had their homelessness resolved before the assessment was made. There were 1,675 (9%) applications where contact was lost before assessment, the application was withdrawn or the applicant was ineligible for assistance. These findings are similar to the same period one year ago.

Note that the number of assessments made during April to September (18,725) is higher than the number of applications for homelessness assistance (18,645). These numbers do not match because some applications made during the period are yet to reach assessment stage; and some assessments during this period are completed for applications that were made in previous periods.

Chart 5: Applications assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness since 2002



Intentionality

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

The proportion of cases assessed as intentionally homeless increased at a national level from around 3.5% in 2009 to around 6.0% in 2014. Since 2014 this proportion has reduced to a quarterly average of around 5% (**Table 4**). Of the 18,725 homelessness assessments made between 1 April and 30 September 2019, there were 676 intentionality decisions, a decrease of 111 (14%) in the number of such decisions compared with the same period one year earlier.

Chart 6: Applications assessed as intentionally homeless since 2002

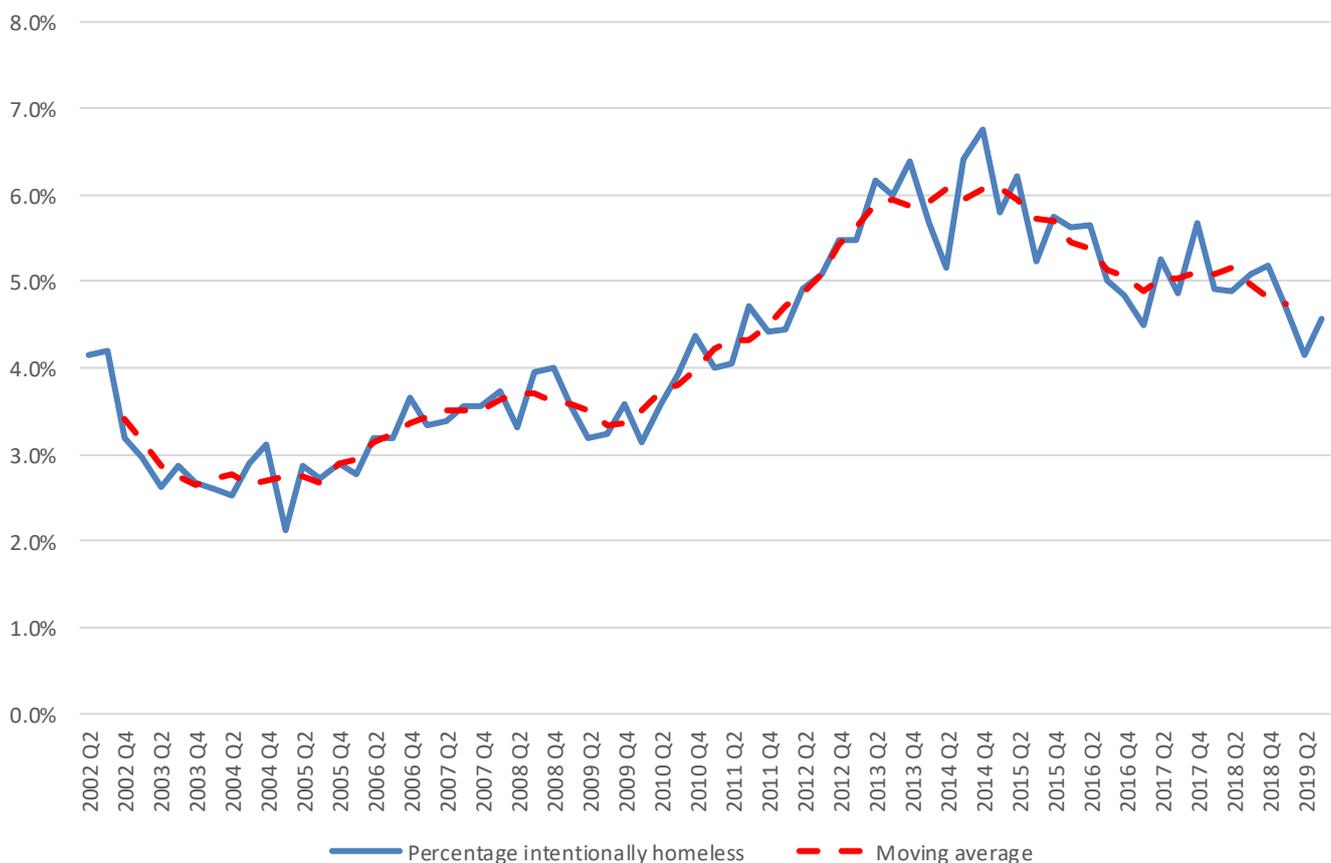


Table 6 shows that, between 1 April and 30 September 2019, there is a high proportion of intentionally homeless assessments in a number of Local Authorities - the highest proportions were in Moray (14.6%), Clackmannanshire (11.9%) and Argyll & Bute (11.1%). Conversely, there were no intentionally homeless assessments in any of the island local authorities and the mainland local authority with the lowest proportion was South Lanarkshire (1.1%).

Temporary accommodation

(Table 8 to Table 18)

Homeless applicants may be placed in temporary accommodation while the council assesses their application or while awaiting the offer of a permanent let. Also, intentionally homeless households, and before 31 December 2012, non-priority households, may have been placed in temporary accommodation as the outcome of their application.

Since 2002, local authorities have provided the Scottish Government with the total number of households in each type of temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter. This snapshot information (the HL2 return)⁴ enables us to explore trends in temporary accommodation since 2002.

In addition to the HL2 return, local authorities have provided placement level information on households in temporary accommodation to the Scottish Government (the HL3 return) since April 2017. This has enabled new analysis of households in temporary accommodation, and this information was presented for the first time in June 2018. Additional information about the HL3 data received from all 32 local authorities can be found in the [data quality section](#).

Temporary Accommodation Quarterly snapshot information

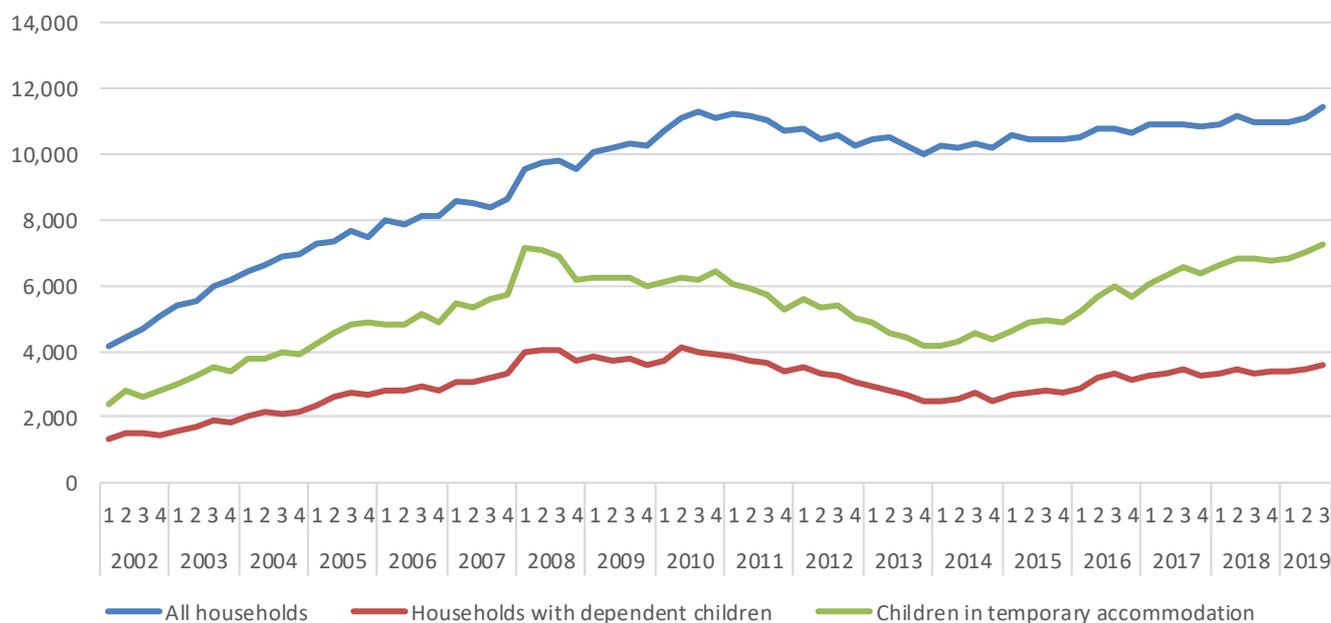
(Tables 7 to 11)

This section provides information on households in temporary accommodation as at 30 September 2019 along with historic quarterly trends, from the snapshot information collected via the HL2 return.

There has been an overall rise of numbers in temporary accommodation since 2002 (See Chart 7). In 2002 (on 31st March), there were 4,153 households in temporary accommodation. This number gradually increased between 2002 and 2011 – 11,254 households were in temporary accommodation on 31st March 2011. This increase was linked to local authorities preparing for the abolition of priority need in December 2012, as required by the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003. Since 2010, this figure has remained relatively stable, incorporating a slight dip to 2014 followed by a subsequent rise to 2019. There were 11,432 households in temporary accommodation at 30th September 2019.

⁴ For more information on the HL2 return, [see here](#).

Chart 7: Households in temporary accommodation, 2002 to 2019



The increase in the overall number of households in temporary accommodation from 2002 is likely to have been initially driven by a change to the homelessness legislation, which placed new duties on councils to provide temporary accommodation, advice and assistance for both priority and non-priority homeless households. Before 2002, the majority of priority homeless households were households with children. Following the introduction of this new duty there was a notable increase in the number of single people applying for homelessness assistance. These single people were also eligible for temporary accommodation.

From 2010 the number of homelessness applications has fallen, likely in part due to a consequence of the development of homelessness prevention activities by councils through adopting a 'housing options' approach to meeting housing need, although applications have increased slightly since 2016. This change in practice may also have contributed to the overall drop in numbers in temporary accommodation between 2011 and 2014, although the number of households in temporary accommodation has since increased between 2014 and 2019.

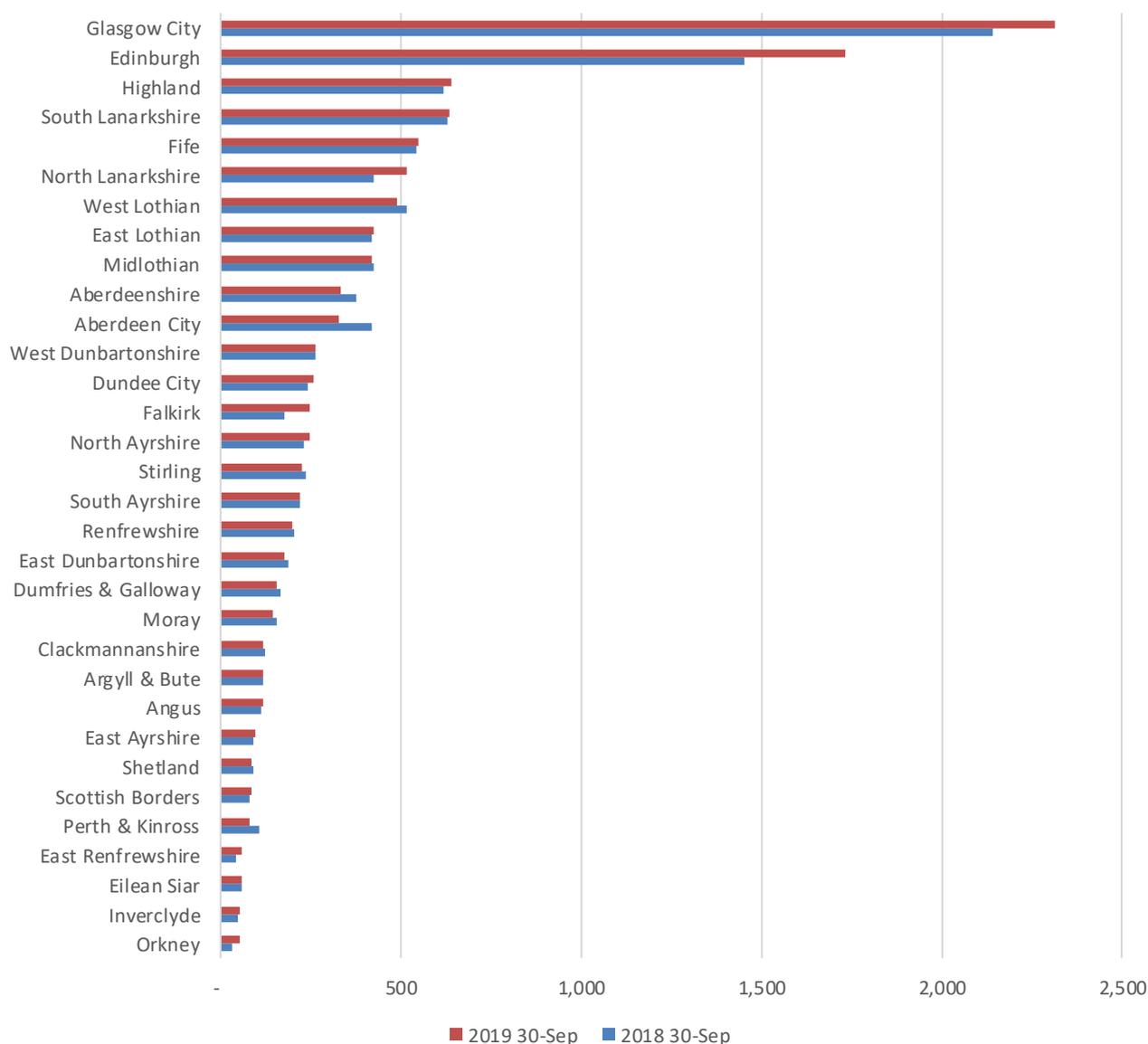
On 30 September 2019, the latest snapshot figures show that:

- There were 11,432 households in temporary accommodation, an increase of 477 households (4%) compared to the previous year. This is the highest figure since the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 were commenced in 2002 (Chart 7).
- Of these households in temporary accommodation, 3,579 had children or a pregnant member – an increase of 264 households (8%) compared to the same date one year ago (Table 7b).
- The number of children in temporary accommodation increased by 426 children (6%) to 7,252 compared to the same date one year ago (Table 7c).

Local Authority variation

Seventeen local authorities experienced a percentage increase in homeless households in temporary accommodation as at September 2019 compared to September 2018. Thirteen experienced a percentage decrease, with the remaining two staying the same. The biggest increase was in Orkney (59%, 19 households) with the most notable decreases being in Perth & Kinross (-24%, -81 households) and Aberdeen City (-21%, 330 households). (see Table 8).

Chart 8: Households in temporary accommodation on 30 September 2019, compared to 2018



Types of temporary accommodation used

The majority of households in temporary accommodation at 30th September 2019 were in Local Authority (45%) or Housing Association accommodation (16%), with a further 15% in hostels and 6% in bed and breakfast (Table 7a). Since June 2019, there has been a decrease in the number of Bed & Breakfast (B&B) temporary accommodation placements and a subsequent rise in the number of ‘other’ temporary accommodation

placements due to Edinburgh reclassifying some of their accommodation from B&B to Other.

Households with children or pregnant women are mainly provided with Local Authority (49%) or Housing Association accommodation (27%), with a small proportion (less than 1%) being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation (Table 7b). On 30 September 2019, there were 25 households with children or pregnant women in bed and breakfast accommodation – this is 12 less households compared to the same date one year ago.

On the 30th September 2019, there were 16 breaches (12 of which were in Edinburgh) of the [Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Order 2014](#) (Table 11). This is a decrease compared to the same date one year ago when there were 19 breaches of the Order.

Placement level analysis of Temporary Accommodation usage

This section provides analysis and information on households in temporary accommodation, based on the placement level data collected in the HL3 return.

Numbers of households

(Tables 12 to 16)

Between 1st April 2019 and 30th September 2019, a total of 10,945 unique households entered temporary accommodation within this year (Table 12). Over two-thirds of these households (69%) were single person households, with a quarter (25%) containing children (Table 13).

During the same time period, 11,315 households exited temporary accommodation, a figure 3% higher than the number of households entering temporary accommodation. Percentages were similar to households entering temporary accommodation with 70% of the households exiting temporary accommodation being single person households, and 25% containing children (Table 13).

Table 14 presents information on the number of households entering and exiting temporary accommodation during the 6 months, April to September 2019 by type of accommodation.⁵ It is worth noting that there were nearly 1,700 more households exiting social sector accommodation (local authority ordinary dwelling and housing association accommodation) compared to entering this type of accommodation. Conversely, there were over 1,300 more households entering bed and breakfast accommodation compared to exiting this type of accommodation during the time period. However, some of these differences are likely due to how some households have been moving between different placements whilst in temporary accommodation, for example some households may have been placed in hostel or bed and breakfast type of accommodation when they first entered temporary accommodation, after which they may subsequently have been

⁵ The use of particular types of temporary accommodation varies between local authorities, as shown by the local authority level figures provided in Table 15.

placed in social sector or other types of temporary accommodation before exiting temporary accommodation completely.

Table 15 provides information on the numbers and percentages of households entering and exiting temporary accommodation by both household type and accommodation type. This shows that there are some differences in placements by household type. For example 88% of households entering temporary accommodation in hostels are single people. Housing association has the highest proportion of households entering containing children (44%).

It should be noted that the information presented on household type is derived from the information on household type as at the time of the original homelessness application, and therefore may not reflect the actual composition of the household whilst in temporary accommodation. For example, a household with children as part of the application may or may not have the children in the temporary accommodation placement.

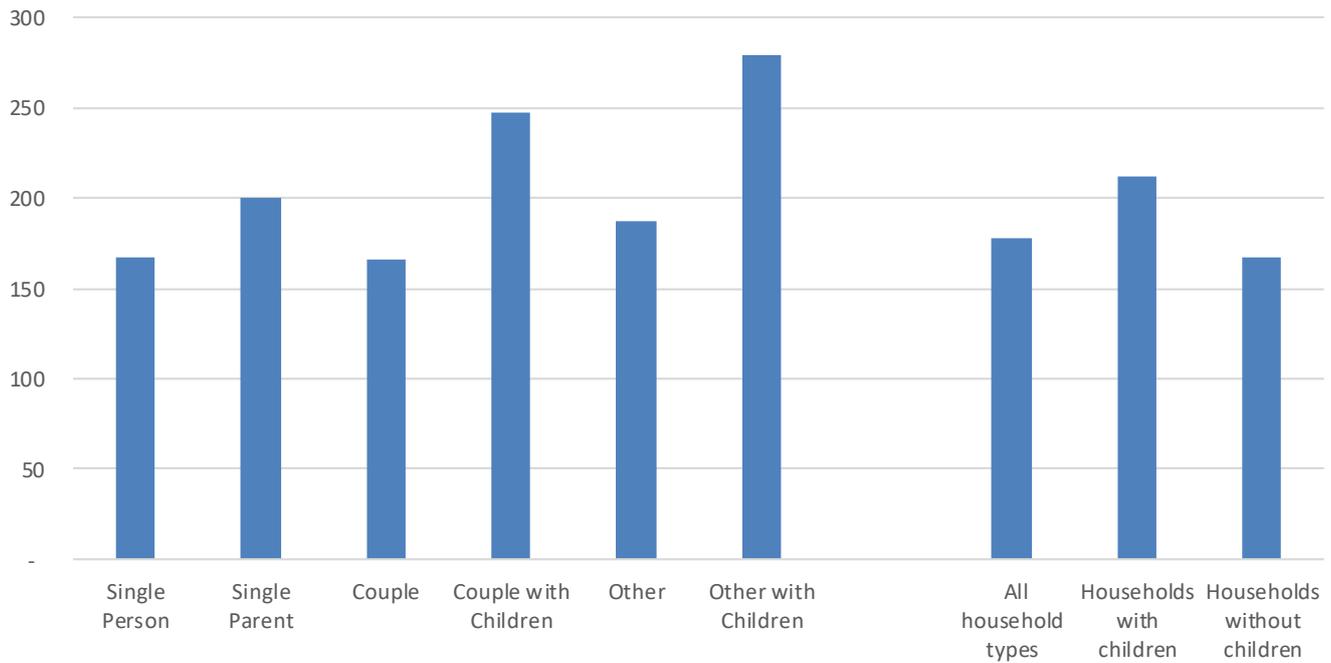
Total duration in temporary accommodation – at a household level (a measure of duration across all placements that a household has been in)

Household level analysis (Table 16)

These figures look at total duration in temporary accommodation across all placements, i.e. where a household has had more than one placement then the average time figure relates to the total time spent across all placements.

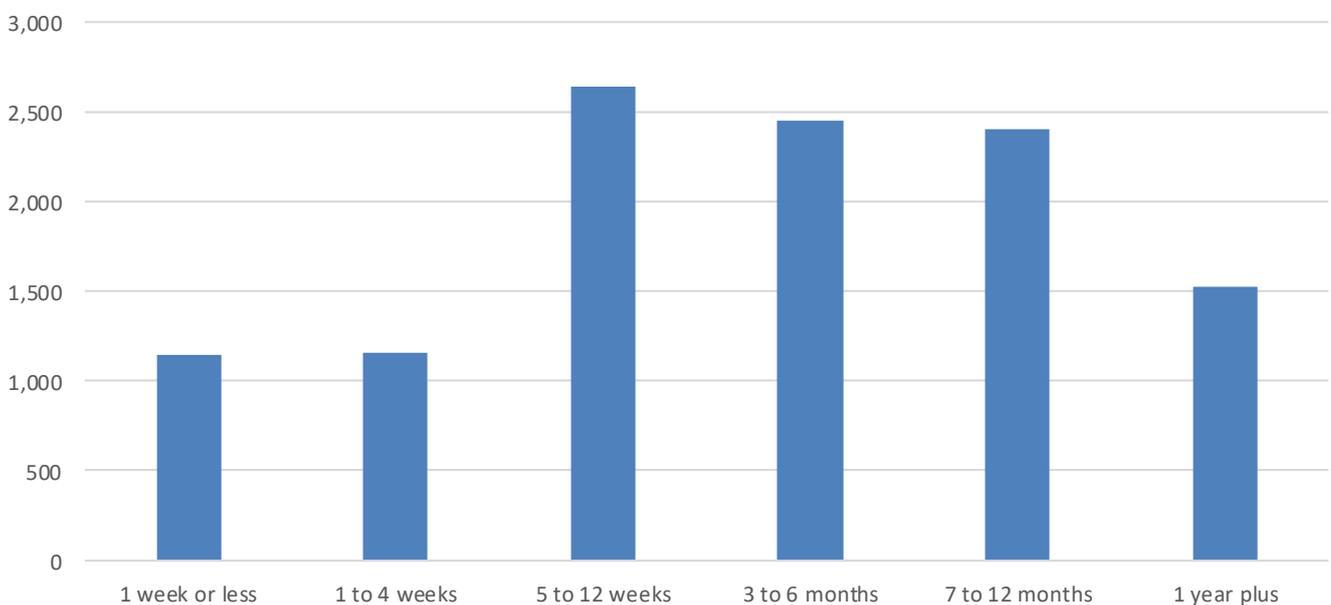
Across all local authorities during the period from April 1st to September 30th 2019 households spent on average 178 days in temporary accommodation. Households with children tend to be in temporary accommodation for longer (212 days for households with children compared to 167 days for households without children). This is particularly pronounced in some local authorities (for example, in Midlothian, the average number of days is 477 for households with children and 297 for households without children). Although it is worth noting that the number of households with children is considerably smaller than the number of only adult households.

Chart 9: Total duration (days) in temporary accommodation by household type, April to September 2019



However, as households may have more than one temporary placement, it is useful to consider the total duration of households from all placements. Chart 10 shows that of the 11,315 households which exited temporary accommodation during April to September 2019: 2,295 (20%) had a total duration of 4 weeks or less; 5,085 (45%) had a total duration of 5 weeks to 6 months; 2,405 (21%) had a total duration of 7 to 12 months; and 1,525 (13%) were in temporary accommodation for a year or more.

Chart 10: Number of households by total duration in temporary accommodation



Duration in temporary accommodation (within each placement)

Placement level analysis (Charts 11 to 13)

As noted above, households may experience more than one temporary accommodation placement. There were a total of 21,659 placements which were closed during April to September 2019⁶. Of these: 9,179 (42%) had a total duration of 4 weeks or less; 8,715 (40%) had a total duration of 5 weeks to 6 months; 2,893 (13%) had a total duration of 7 to 12 months; and 872 (4%) were in temporary accommodation for a year or more (Chart 11).

Chart 11 shows that across temporary accommodation placements which ended during April to September 2019, the average length of stay can vary by accommodation type. Local authority, housing association and private sector placements are likely to involve longer periods (i.e. 3 months or longer). Most hostel placements last 12 weeks or less. Bed and breakfast placements tend to be much shorter in length (most placements fall in the 1 week or less category); nonetheless, the chart shows that in some cases, such placements last for longer than 7 months and in some cases, over a year.

Chart 11: Time spent in temporary accommodation by accommodation type for those exiting accommodation from April to September 2019

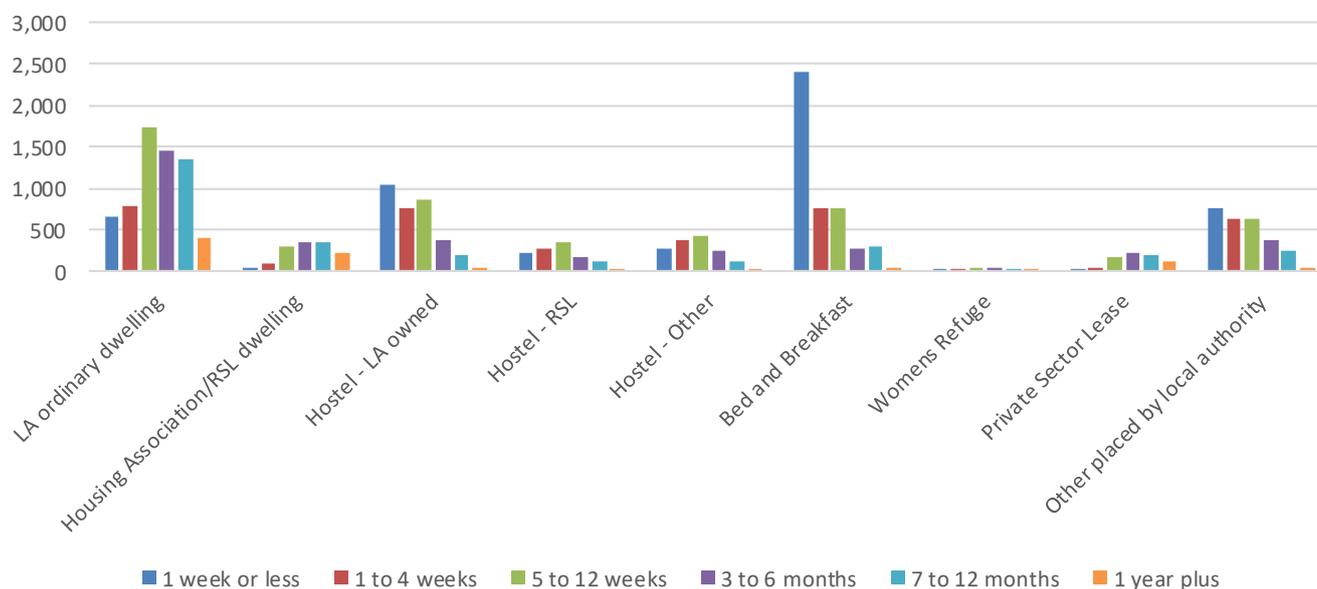
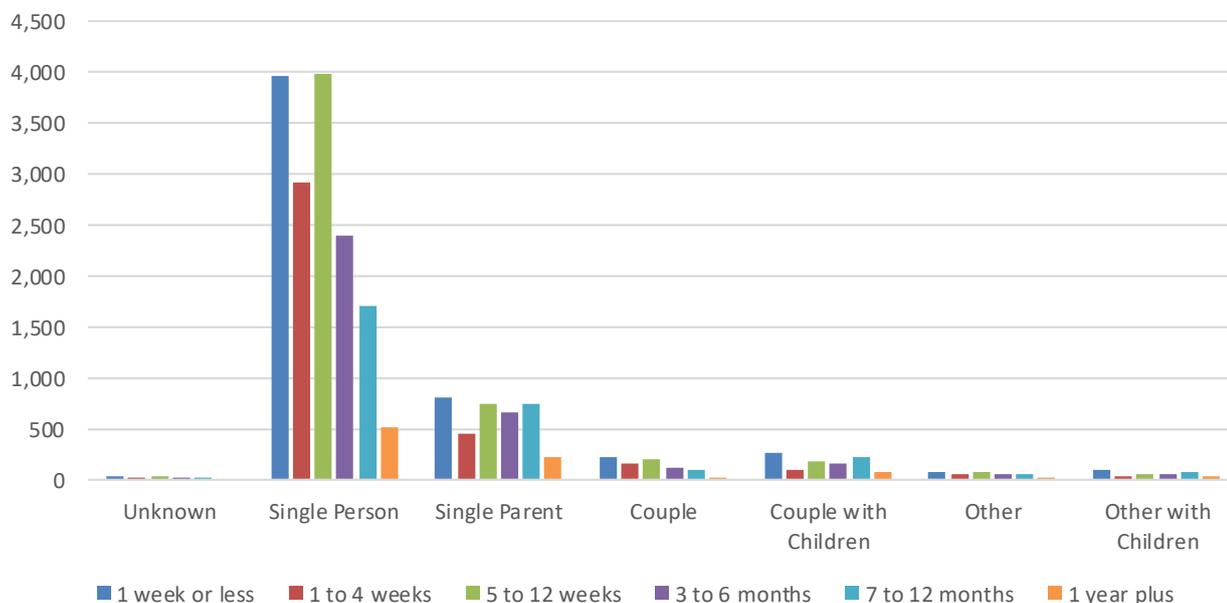


Chart 12 shows that households without children are in temporary accommodation placements for shorter periods (12 weeks or less) compared to those with children. This may be driven by the volume of single person households in accommodation types which are intended to be short-term, i.e. bed and breakfast accommodation and hostels (Table 15). Conversely, households with children have the highest percentages in

⁶ Note that these cases do not directly refer to the same 11,315 households who exited temporary accommodation in this period discussed in the previous section. This is because temporary accommodation placements that closed in April to September 2019 may be connected to households that have not yet exited temporary accommodation, while the households that exited temporary accommodation in this period may have had placements that closed prior to April 2019.

temporary accommodation for a year or more (between 6% and 8%). This may be because housing families with children is more difficult due to requirements for larger homes and proximity to schools, family and other support networks.

Chart 12: Time spent in temporary accommodation by household type for those exiting accommodation April to September 2019

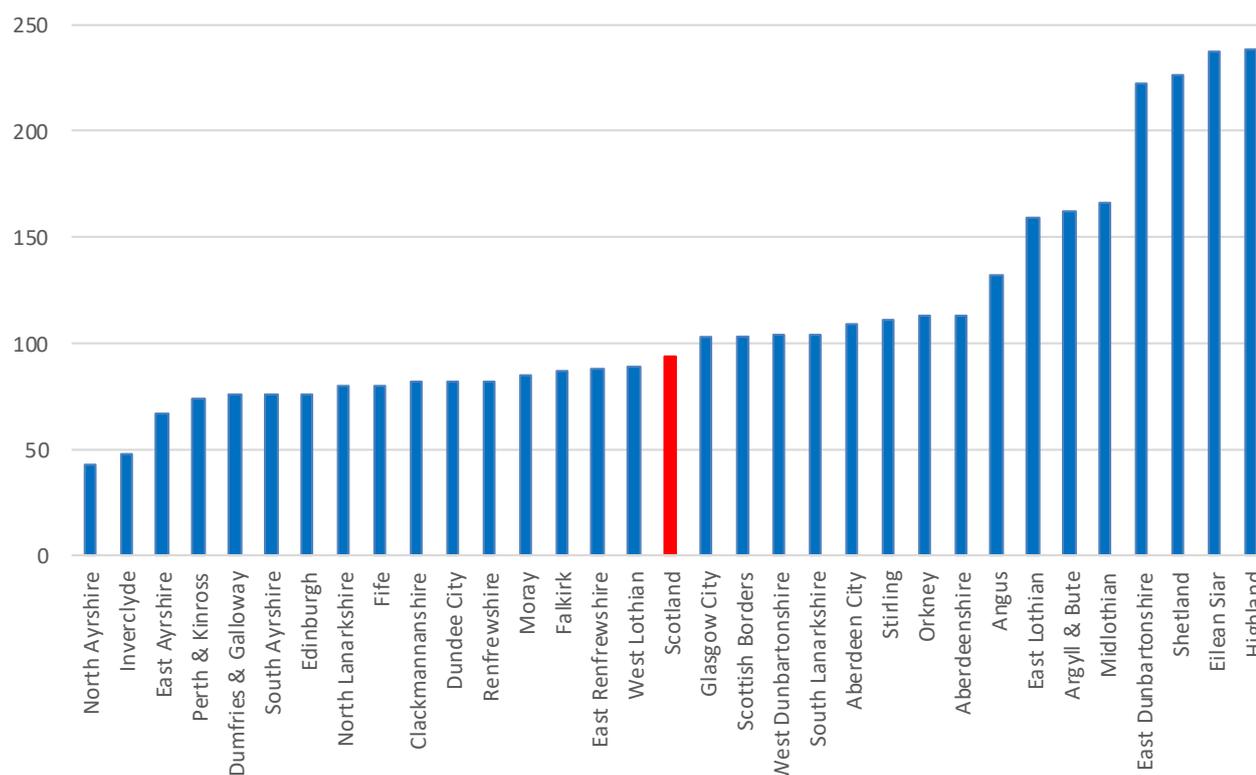


Local authority variation in placement duration

The average length of time for all placements in Scotland is 98 days. This varies from 43 days (North Ayrshire) and 47 days (Inverclyde) to 237 days (Eilen Siar) and 239 days (Highland). Sixteen local authorities are equal to or below the national average (Chart 12).

Chart 13 shows that some local authorities with a relatively small number of placements exiting temporary accommodation during April to September 2019 can have the longest average stays (for example, Shetland, Eilean Siar and Highland). This is likely due to a lack of available accommodation within these authorities that is suitable for the needs of the household. Conversely, local authorities with a much greater volume of placements (Glasgow and Edinburgh), can have smaller average durations, particularly Edinburgh, where the average length of placement is 76 days.

Chart 13: Average duration (days) in temporary accommodation by local authority



Different local authority trends emerge when looking at average time in specific temporary accommodation types. Notably, some local authorities do not use some accommodation types. For example stock transfer local authorities make very little, or no use of local authority dwellings (Glasgow, Scottish Borders, Dumfries and Galloway, Argyll and Bute, Inverclyde and Eilean Siar), while other local authorities do not use Housing Association accommodation (for example, Aberdeen City, Clackmannanshire and Fife).

Applications in which temporary accommodation was not offered

An HL3 return is completed when a local authority has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation under the homeless persons legislation and the household requires temporary accommodation. However, a local authority is also required to indicate when they do not offer temporary accommodation to a household and thus are acting unlawfully. During six months April to September 2019, 1,815⁷ applications were 'not offered' do not offer any temporary accommodation to a household and thus, are acting unlawfully temporary accommodation (Table 17). The majority (82%) of these cases were in Glasgow.⁸

⁷ The City of Edinburgh Council have previously been unable to report 'not offered' places via their HL3 return due to technical issues. The City of Edinburgh Council have now provided backdated aggregate figures (ranging from 65 to 210 per quarter), and will continue to do so until their technical issues are resolved.

⁸ As a result of data quality concerns around the capture of all offers of temporary accommodation, all not accommodated cases from 1st April 2019 are being reviewed by Glasgow City. A data improvement plan is in

Breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order

In addition to the information on breaches available through the HL2 (the number of breaches at a 'snapshot' date), the HL3 return provides the number of breaches throughout the time period; we would expect the number of breaches shown through the HL3 to be higher as these are based on breaches throughout the year rather than a single point in time. In total, there were 190 breaches of the Homelessness Persons Unsuitable Accommodation Order during the period April to September 2019 (Table 18), based on temporary accommodation placement cases closed during this year, compared to 16 breaches current on 30th September (snapshot HL2 information).

There were 195 fewer breaches of the Order recorded for April to September 2019 compared to April to September 2018. These numbers are largely driven by Edinburgh which accounted for 125 of the breaches between April and September 2019 compared to 280 during the comparable period in 2018.

place and the process for recording tenancy offers and tenancy refusals has been reviewed and training is now complete.

Outcomes

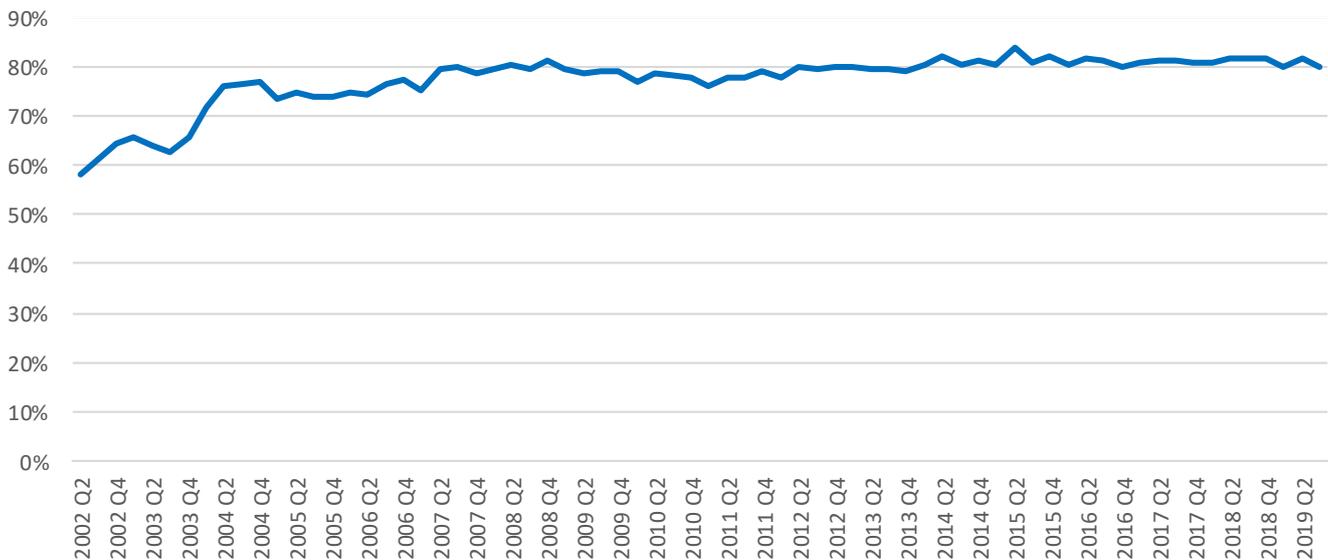
(Tables 19 to 22)

Overall outcomes

Contact was maintained for 94% of cases that were unintentionally homeless and 95% that were intentionally homeless between 1 April and 30 September 2019 (Table 19).

Table 20 shows that, between 1 April and 30 September 2019, settled accommodation (a tenancy with a local authority, a registered social landlord or a private tenancy) was secured for 10,070 (81%) of the 12,455 applications where cases were assessed as unintentionally homeless and the outcome was known. As Chart 14 shows, this proportion has remained stable over time.

Chart 14: Proportion of cases assessed as unintentionally homeless and where contact was maintained securing settled accommodation

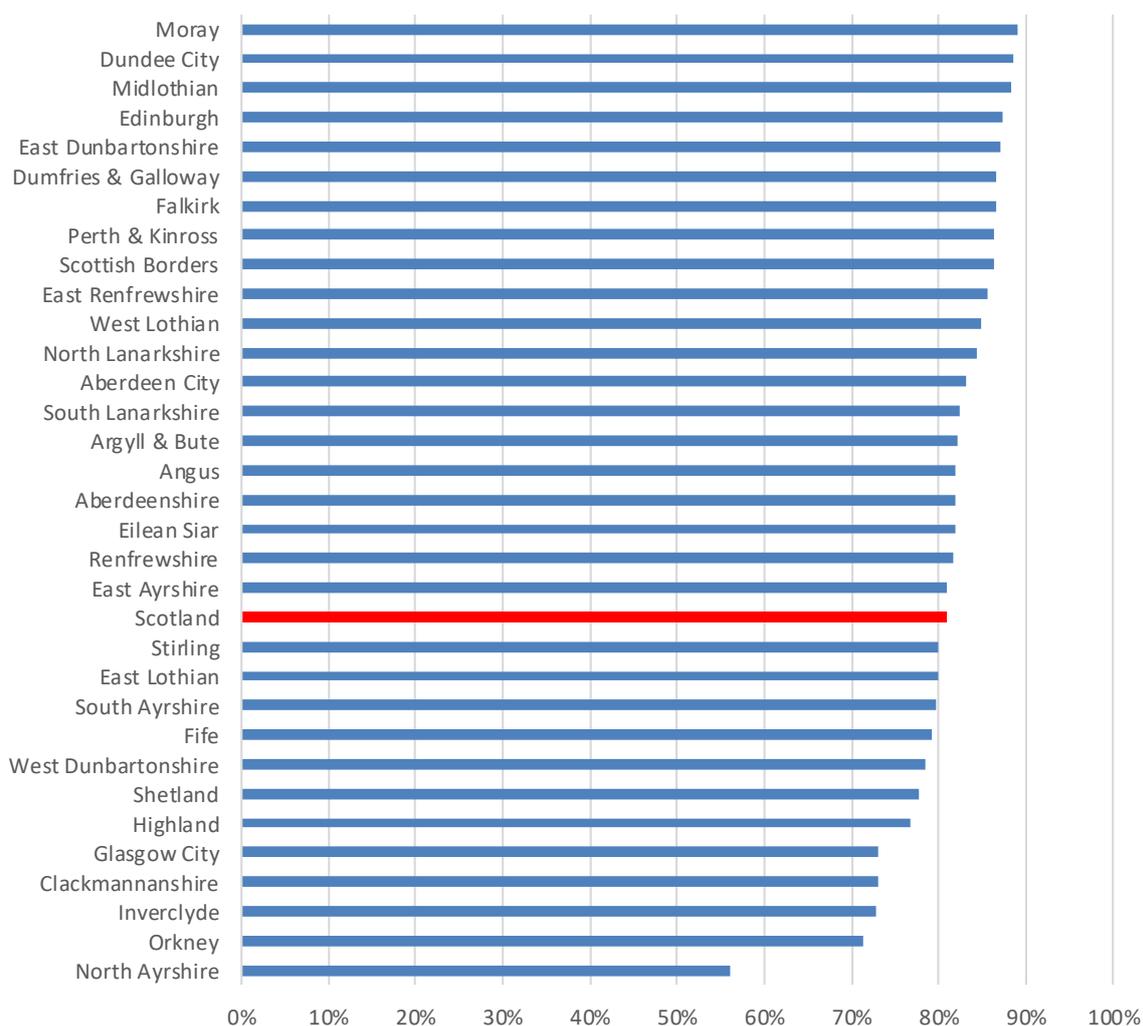


Looking at all types of settled accommodation used during the past six months (April to September 2019), Table 20 shows that (where outcome was known) Local Authority accommodation comprises almost half (43%) of all outcomes for unintentionally homeless households. Over a quarter (28%) of unintentionally homeless households secured Registered Social Landlord (RSL) accommodation with private rented accommodation taken up in 5% of cases. 18% of cases assessed as homeless had other outcomes, including return to previous accommodation (5%), moved in with friends/family (4%), other 'known' outcome (8%) and hostel (less than 1%).

However note that these percentages can vary between local authorities, for example the proportion of cases securing settled accommodation in the latest 6 month period varies between 56% in North Ayrshire to 89% in Moray (Table 21). The 6 stock transfer authorities of Argyll & Bute, Dumfries & Galloway, Glasgow, Inverclyde, Eilean Siar and Scottish Borders do not have council housing stock to manage following the transfer of social housing stock to housing associations, and therefore settled accommodation with

the social sector will generally be to housing association properties rather than local authority properties. The proportion of cases securing settled accommodation in the private rented sector ranges between 0% in Eilean Siar and Inverclyde to 19% in Edinburgh.

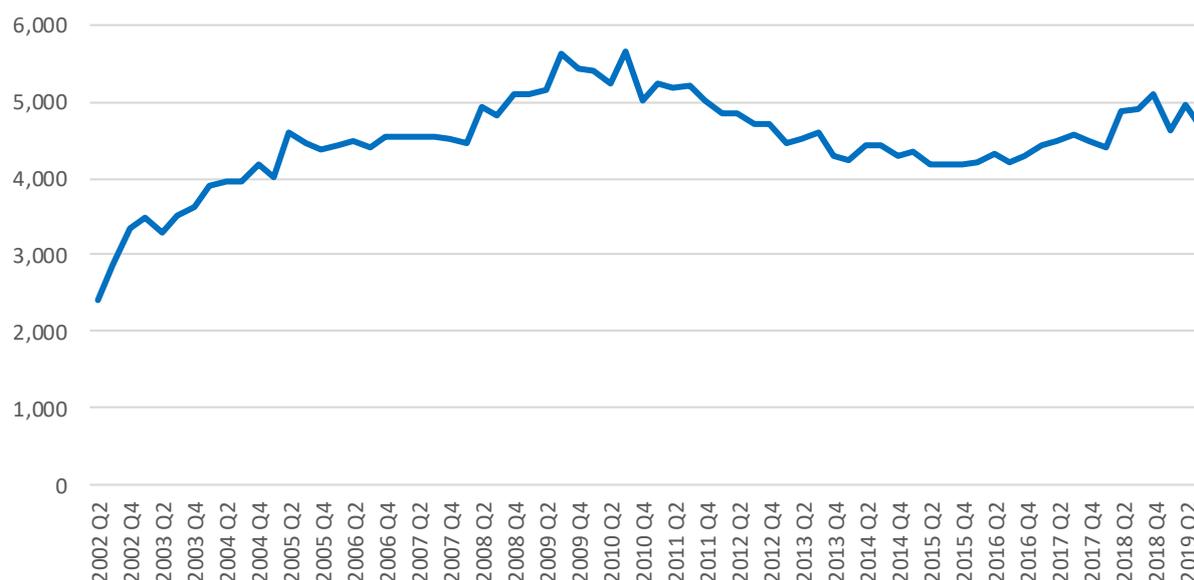
Chart 15: Percentage of households assessed as unintentionally homeless securing settled accommodation, April to September 2019



Social Lets

The number of homeless households securing a social let from either a local authority or housing association increased from around 2,400 in the April to June quarter in 2002 (Q2) to a peak of over 5,600 in the July-September quarter of 2010 (Q3). The total number of social lets to homeless households has since fallen back from this peak to around 4,200 in 2015, though has risen again since then, reaching 5,110 in 2018 (see **Chart 16**).

Chart 16: Number of households assessed as unintentionally homeless whose outcome was a social let



Note that Chart 16 is based on outcomes for all applications, regardless of assessment decision or whether contact was maintained until duty discharge.

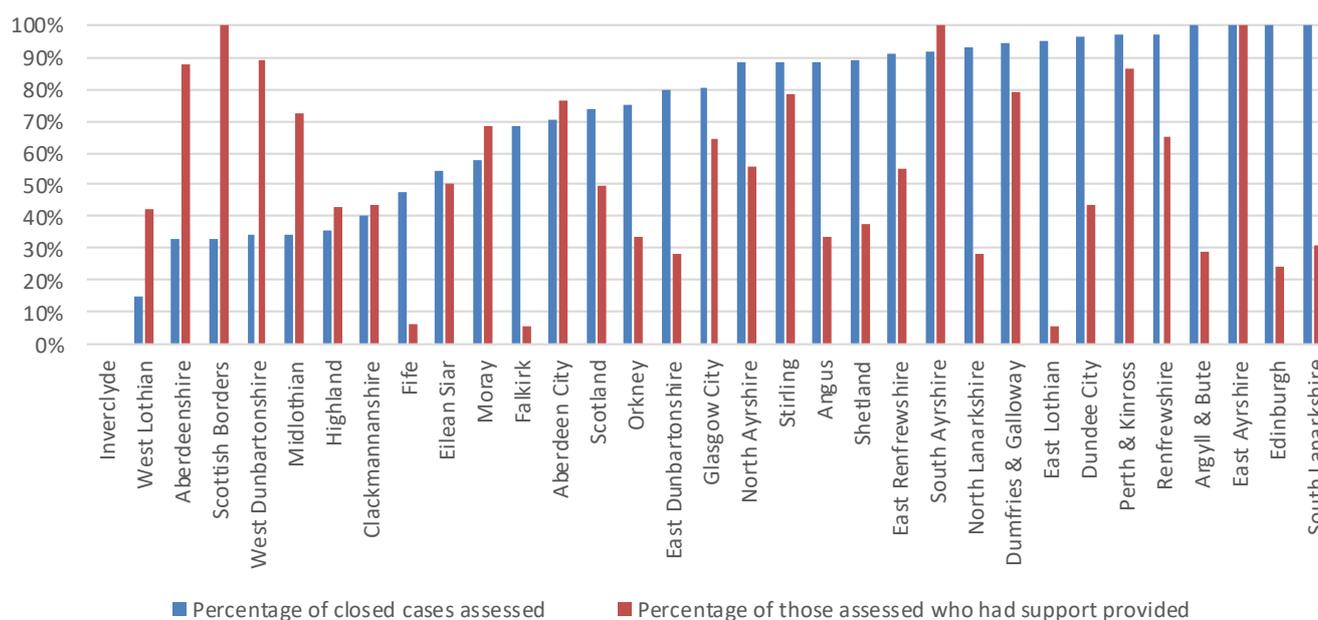
Housing support regulations

Table 22 shows that during the 6 month period from 1 April to 30 September 2019, there were 13,285 cases assessed as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness that were closed in this period. Of these, 9,825 (74%) were recorded as being assessed under the housing support regulations, of which 4,890 (50%) had support provided and 4,285 (44%) did not require any support.

There are large variations across Local Authorities in the proportions who are making assessments under the regulations and the number to whom support is provided. Some authorities are making assessments for all their closed cases, namely Argyll and Bute, East Ayrshire, Edinburgh and South Lanarkshire. This is in contrast to other authorities who are recording a low proportion of assessments under the regulations, including Aberdeenshire (33%), Scottish Borders (33%) and West Lothian (15%). In Inverclyde, none of the 60 cases had support provided.

What appears to be even more variable is the extent to which support is then being provided: there are examples where a large majority of those assessed have support provided Easy Ayrshire, Scottish Borders and South Ayrshire (all 100%). Conversely, in other local authorities, for example, East Lothian (5%), Falkirk (5%) and Fife (6%), a very small proportion of those assessed under the regulations go on to receive support (see Chart 17).

Chart 17: Unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness assessed under Housing Support regulations, April to September 2019



Note: Eligible closed cases are defined as those assessed as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness and that there is a 'reason to believe' that they need the housing support services prescribed in regulations.

The legislation which established the housing support duty (Section 32B of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 inserted by Housing (Scotland) Act 2010) states that there is a duty for Local Authorities to conduct a housing support assessment for applicants who are unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness and which they have 'reason to believe' need the housing support services prescribed in regulations.

'The regulations' are the Housing Support Services (Homelessness) (Scotland) Regulations 2012⁹ and were established after public consultation. The services prescribed are:

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

⁹ The legislation can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/sdsi/2012/9780111018170/contents>

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

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

Please note: All of the tables in this publication are available in electronic format at:
<https://www.gov.scot/collections/homelessness-statistics/>

Notes on the statistics

HL1, HL2 and HL3 recording

We are grateful to all 32 Scottish Local Authorities who submitted their HL1, HL2 and HL3 returns on time.

Given the continuous nature of the recording system, figures are updated on an on-going basis and may differ from those previously published. There may be delays in some cases being reported to the Scottish Government due to IT issues, quality assurance processes and delayed entry of data – particularly at the end of the financial year. As a result, we estimate that the headline number of applications may change by as much as 4% between first and subsequent publications.

Publication Date	Reporting of the Number of Applications (per quarter)										
	2017				2018				2019		
	Jan - March	April - June	July - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan - March	April - June	July - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan - March	April - June	July - Sept
28-Jan-20	9,618	9,024	9,173	7,956	9,413	9,568	9,447	8280	9450	9236	9409
26-Jun-19	9,619	9,023	9,179	7,958	9,413	9,570	9,422	8251	9222		
29-Jan-19	9,618	9,024	9,178	7,953	9,399	9,502	8,984				
19-Jun-18	9,570	8,975	9,108	7,852	9,037						
23-Jan-18	9,549	8,936	8,861								
27-Jun-17	9,189										

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

Difference in applications between publication shown and most recent publication

26-Jun-19	-	1	1	-	6	-	2	-	2	25	29	228
29-Jan-19	-	-	-	5	3	14	66	463				
19-Jun-18	48	49	65	104	376							
23-Jan-18	69	88	312									
27-Jun-17	429											

Percentage difference in applications between publication shown and most recent publication

26-Jun-19	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	
29-Jan-19	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	5%					
19-Jun-18	0%	1%	1%	1%	4%							
23-Jan-18	1%	1%	3%									
27-Jun-17	4%											

The data over time

In 2001, the Scottish Parliament passed legislation which placed additional duties on Local Authorities to provide a minimum of temporary accommodation, advice and assistance to all applicants assessed as homeless. From September 2002, this took effect and councils have been required to provide temporary accommodation, advice and assistance to non-priority applicants who in the past would have received advice and assistance only. This has had a noticeable impact on applications, which has been reflected in changing assessments and outcomes for

homeless people. Some tables in this release therefore present time series data so that this impact can be tracked.

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

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

The data collection was further revised in April 2007 in the light of the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003, with some additional information included to reflect current best practice. Further information on the HL1 can be found at <https://www.gov.scot/collections/homelessness-statistics>.

Interpretation of statistics on temporary accommodation

The figures on households in temporary accommodation relate to households which have been placed in temporary accommodation by a Local Authority under the Homeless Persons legislation. This will include households for whom the Local Authority's decision and final action is still pending, as well as households which were secured such accommodation as a final action by the authority under the legislation.

The summary HL2 return (since 2002) has provided a snapshot picture of the numbers of households in temporary accommodation as at the last day of each quarter.

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

Since April 2016, it has been mandatory for local authorities to also complete an HL3 return, which provides placement level information on households in temporary accommodation. By providing placement level information, it is possible to provide

in-depth analysis of the temporary accommodation use, for example, length of stay in temporary accommodation.

How we maintain quality

HL1 and HL2

The quality of this publication depends critically on the quality and consistency of the information supplied to us by Local Authorities on the HL1 and HL2 returns. The quality statement on the Scottish homelessness statistics website at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/data-protection-impact-assessment-and-quality-assurance-statement-for-hl1-hl3-and-prevent1-data-collections/> sets out the ways in which we do this. The main focus of our systems is to ensure consistency between the HL1 and HL2 and consistency of the case level information within each HL1 return.

HL3

The quality of the additional temporary accommodation analysis provided in this publication also relies on the information supplied by local authorities. From April 2016, it became mandatory for local authorities to submit placement level information on temporary accommodation through the HL3 return. The Scottish Government have been working with local authorities to quality assure this data. This has involved comparison with snapshot HL2 figures at the end of each quarter and further, consistency checks with associated HL1 records.

The 'Tables' document, which is published alongside this document, provides an additional 'HL3 Data Quality' tab with a local authority breakdown. Some local authorities have a large difference between the number of households in temporary accommodation recorded through their HL2 versus their HL3 data as at 30th September 2019. Reasons for these differences are given below the table.

Additionally, The Scottish Government have recently become aware that the City of Edinburgh council have been previously unable to report 'not offered' places via their HL3 return due to technical issues. This means that there has been a mis-reporting previously that the City of Edinburgh have no cases of 'not offered' temporary accommodation. The City of Edinburgh Council have now provided backdated aggregate figures, and will continue to do so until their technical issues are resolved (there is a planned implementation of a new IT system for April 2020). These figures have been incorporated into Table 17 in this publication.

How we deal with revisions and corrections

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

How we consult with users and providers of statistics

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

In addition the Scottish Government hosted a Homelessness Statistics User Event on 15th October 2019, which featured a range of speakers covering topics related to homelessness statistics. Details of the event, including presentation slides, can be found here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-statistics-user-event-october-2019/>

Summary of current legislation

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977, now consolidated into Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, introduced statutory duties on Local Authorities to assist those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness (potentially homeless), including providing accommodation in certain circumstances.

The legislation currently requires Local Authorities to make inquiries into the circumstances of applicants to satisfy themselves whether the applicant is homeless or potentially homeless. Once the authority is satisfied this is the case, prior to 31st December 2012, it also determined whether the applicant had a priority need. However, from 31st December 2012, the priority need test has now been abolished (see Paragraph 24). The Local Authority then tests whether the applicant became homeless intentionally and, in some cases, whether the applicant has a local connection with another authority in Scotland, England or Wales. A local connection with an authority means that the applicant normally resided in that area from choice, either because he/she was employed in or had family associations with it, or for other special reasons.

Section 24 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended, defines homelessness for the purposes of the Act as follows. A person is homeless if he/ she has no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere. A person is also homeless if he/ she has accommodation but cannot reasonably occupy it, for example because of a threat of violence. A person is potentially homeless (threatened with homelessness) if it is likely that he/ she will become homeless within two months. A person is intentionally homeless if he/ she deliberately did or failed to do anything which led to the loss of accommodation which it was reasonable for him/ her to continue to occupy.

Section 25 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended, defined the categories of household regarded as having a priority need for accommodation. Further details can be found in a previous version of the Code of Guidance on Homelessness. This is available on-line at:

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

Note however that an updated version of the Code of Guidance on Homelessness has since been published. The new version can be found at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/code-guidance-homelessness-2/>

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 amends the 1987 Act and requires councils to provide a minimum of temporary accommodation, advice and assistance to all applicants assessed as homeless, regardless of whether they have been assessed as being in priority need. The Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 is more long-term in scope, notably introducing a phasing out of the distinction between priority

and non-priority applications. The ultimate aim of the Act was to ensure that everyone assessed as being unintentionally homeless was entitled to settled accommodation from 31st December 2012.

In November 2012, the Scottish Parliament approved the Homelessness (Abolition of Priority Need Test) (Scotland) Order 2012 which gave effect to this commitment. From 31st December 2012 the priority need test for homeless households was abolished. As a result, from this date, all unintentionally homeless households are entitled to settled accommodation.

Summary of Local Authority duty to homeless households:

1. Unintentionally homeless [and in priority need]¹⁰

- Provide temporary accommodation until permanent accommodation has been secured.
- Permanent accommodation is defined as:
 - A Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST)
 - An Assured Tenancy (not a Short Assured Tenancy) (Before 1 December 2017)
 - A Private Residential Tenancy (Since 1 December 2017)
 - If the applicants have previously been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the last 3 years, or if they are subject to an anti-social behaviour order - a short Scottish Secure Tenancy can be offered.

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

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

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

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

3. Potentially homeless, unintentionally so [and in Priority Need]¹²:

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

4. Potentially homeless, intentionally so [and in Priority Need / Potentially Homeless and not in Priority Need]:

- Provide advice and assistance to help retain accommodation.

¹⁰ If before 31st December 2012.

The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004 came into force on 6 December 2004, and is intended to prevent the routine use of unsuitable temporary accommodation for households with family commitments. Under this Order, Local Authorities cannot put households with children and pregnant women into temporary accommodation which is not suitable, unless exceptional circumstances apply. Unsuitable accommodation is defined in the Order as accommodation which does not meet standards relating to the physical properties of the accommodation (the physical standard), its proximity to health and education services (the proximity standard) and its suitability for use by children (the safety standard).

The 2004 order was revoked by [The Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Order 2014](#), which came into force on the 21st November 2014. The 2014 order adds the additional requirement that the accommodation must be wind and watertight.

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

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/code-guidance-homelessness-2/>

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

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

Comparability with other UK homelessness statistics

England

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

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

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government introduced a Homelessness Case Level Information Classification (H-CLIC) in April 2018 to coincide with the commencement of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. H-CLIC collects case level data and provides more detailed information on the causes and effects of homelessness than has been collected in the past. The first set of statistics since commencement of the Homelessness Reduction Act on 3 April 2018 and the first statistical release using Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC) data was on the 13 December 2018 and is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-april-to-june-2018>

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places new legal duties on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, as long as they are eligible for assistance. The Act amends part VII of the Housing Act 1996.

The most recent statutory homelessness statistics for England are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>

Wales

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

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

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

Northern Ireland

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

The most recent statutory homelessness statistics for Northern Ireland are available at: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-housing-statistics-2017-18>

Scotland

Scottish homelessness statistics are available at: <https://www.gov.scot/collections/homelessness-statistics>

Key similarities and differences

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

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

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

The report [UK homelessness: 2005 to 2018](#) was published in September 2019 and is an assessment of the comparability and coherence of existing UK government homelessness data sources.

Also published in September 2019, the [GSS Homelessness Interactive Tool](#) allows users to explore how homelessness is defined across the four UK countries and explore an applicants' process through each of the different homelessness systems. It enables users to visualise the different definitions of homelessness currently being used for official statistics and how these compare. The tool was released as an initial product, to allow for further refinement based on user feedback, and will be updated later this year.

A National Statistics publication for Scotland

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

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

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How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

- are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- ✓ are available via an alternative route:
<https://www.gov.scot/collections/homelessness-statistics>
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

Complaints and suggestions

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

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