Together we will end homelessness

The homelessness monitor: Scotland 2021

Beth Watts, Glen Bramley, Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Hal Pawson, and Gillian Young. Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research (I-SPHERE), Heriot-Watt University; City Futures Research Centre, University of New South Wales; Newhaven Research Ltd.

September 2021

The homelessness monitor

The homelessness monitor is a longitudinal study providing an independent analysis of the homelessness impacts of recent economic and policy developments across the UK. Separate reports are produced for England, Scotland and Wales.

This year's Scotland Monitor is an account of how homelessness stands in Scotland in 2021, or as close to 2021 as data availability allows. It also highlights emerging trends and forecasts some of the likely future changes, identifying the developments likely to have the most significant impacts on homelessness.

The homelessness monitor: Scotland 2021

Beth Watts, Glen Bramley, Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Hal Pawson, and Gillian Young. Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research (I-SPHERE), Heriot-Watt University; City Futures Research Centre, University of New South Wales; Newhaven Research Ltd.

September 2021

About Crisis

Crisis is the national charity for homeless people. We help people directly out of homelessness, and campaign for the social changes needed to solve it altogether. We know that together we can end homelessness.

About the authors

Dr Beth Watts, Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick & Professor Glen Bramley are based at the Institute for Social Policy, Housing, and Equalities Research (I-SPHERE). Professor Hal Pawson is based at the City Futures Research Centre, University of New South Wales. Gillian Young is the Director of Newhaven Research, Edinburgh.

Crisis head office
66 Commercial Street
London E1 6LT
Tel: 0300 636 1967
Fax: 0300 636 2012
www.crisis.org.uk

ISBN 978-1-78519-079-7

Crisis UK (trading as Crisis).
Registered Charity Numbers:
E&W1082947, SC040094.
Company Number: 4024938

Acknowledgements

This report was commissioned by Crisis, and funded by Crisis, and our thanks go to Dr Francesca Albanese, Michael Allard, Beth Reid, Rhiannon Sims, Lucie Dunn and Ashleigh Simpson at Crisis for all of their support with this work. We are extremely grateful to all of the key informants from homelessness service providers and other organisations across Scotland who found time in their busy schedules to help us with this study, and to all 29 local authorities who completed the questionnaire. Our thanks also to Lynne McMordie for her invaluable assistance with editing and formatting.

Disclaimer: All views and any errors contained in this report are the responsibility of the authors. The views expressed should not be assumed to be those of Crisis, or of any of the key informants who assisted with this work.

Contents

Figures

Tables

Acronyms

AHC	After Housing Costs
CIH	Chartered Institute of Housing
CJRS	Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
COSLA	The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payments
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EHT	Ending Homelessness Together
FOI	Freedom of Information
GB	Great Britain
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
HARSAG	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group
HF	Housing First
HSCP	Health and Social Care Partnerships
JRF	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
LA	Local Authority
LBTT	Land and Building Transaction Tax
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LHA	Local Housing Allowance
NRPF	No Recourse to Public Funds
PRG	Prevention Review Group
PRS	Private Rented Sector
RRTP	Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
SEISS	Self-Employment Income Support Scheme
SHS	Scottish Household Survey
SMD	Severe and Multiple Disadvantage
SWF	Scottish Welfare Fund
TA	Temporary Accommodation
UAO	Unsuitable Accommodation Order
UC	Universal Credit
UKHLS	UK Household Longitudinal Study
UTA	Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation

Foreword

After being identified as a priority for the Scottish Government, the last few years have seen Scotland make huge progress in its journey towards ending homelessness.

The creation of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, followed by the publication of the Ending Homelessness Together Plan, laid out a blueprint for consigning homelessness to the past.

The work carried out by these groups, based in a shift towards quickly housing everyone experiencing homelessness into settled accommodation, represented massive steps forward for tackling homelessness. Their work was genuinely ground-breaking and set out Scotland as the first nation in Britain to have a plan to end homelessness.

As the monitor shows, this progress alongside homelessness and housing policy decisions in Scotland has led to rates of 'core' homelessness being significantly lower than England.

Overall, the report has recorded 'core' homelessness in England at 0.94% of households, compared with 0.66% in Wales and 0.57% in Scotland.

Of course, the last 18 months or so have represented an extraordinary period in our history – not just in the homelessness sector, but across all of society.

Urgent action by national and local government, as well as homelessness services, saw the numbers of people rough sleeping in Scotland fall significantly since the start of the pandemic. And whilst rates of the worst forms of homelessness are lower in Scotland, there are still many people trapped in temporary accommodation. The numbers of households living in temporary accommodation over the past year grew by 21%.

The research found that the average time spent in temporary accommodation rose from 187 days to 199 days over a year, with one in six households spending more than a year in temporary accommodation.

Meanwhile, on 31 March 2021, 3,645 households with children or a pregnant woman were in temporary accommodation across Scotland, the highest number for a decade, comprising 7,130 children.

Every one of these cases represents an injustice, with people and families left unable to move on and build a better life.

But while the numbers in temporary accommodation rose during the pandemic, the research found that 'core' homelessness was significantly lower in Scotland than in other UK nations.

Scotland continues to lead the way in its commitment to ending homelessness and plans announced by the Scottish Government to strengthen the law around homelessness prevention and consult on new duties on public bodies represent the next step in that journey.

If implemented, these proposals could make Scotland a world-leader in its journey to ending homelessness altogether.

Crisis will continue to play our part to actively support the implementation of the next phase in Scottish homelessness policy and work with others to realise the potential of meaningful reforms to end homelessness, and make sure any lessons learnt can be shared across the UK.

Jon Sparkes
Chief Executive, Crisis

Executive summary

Key points

The Homelessness Monitor series is a longitudinal study providing an independent analysis of the homelessness impacts of recent economic and policy developments in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK.[1] This fourth Scotland-focused report provides an account of how homelessness stands in 2021 (or as close to 2021 as data availability allows), and covers a period dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as intense policy activity on homelessness in Scotland. It also includes detailed modelling estimates and forward projections of extreme forms of 'core' homelessness.

Key points to emerge from this latest analysis are as follows:

- Statutory homelessness had been on a steadily rising trajectory pre-pandemic, with the number of households assessed as legally homeless having grown by 10% in the period 2016/17-2019/20. The pandemic year 2020/21 saw a year-on-year fall in statutory homeless acceptances of 13% (to 27,571), and 20% in the first quarter of 2020/21 (April-June) compared to the previous quarter. These trends were highly differentiated geographically, with reductions concentrated in East of Scotland authorities classed within the 'Edinburgh and other pressured markets' group (-19%) compared to the 'Glasgow and Clyde Valley' group (-1%).

- The number of households in temporary accommodation had been at a stable high of 10-11,000 for the decade up until March 2019. At March 2021, the numbers in temporary accommodation stood at over 13,000, well above the previous peak of 11,665 a year previously. Temporary accommodation placements rose by 12% in Q1 2020/21 (April-June) – a trajectory that peaked in Q2 (July-September). The number of families in non-self-contained B&B or hostel accommodation increased very slightly during 2020, though remaining at historically very low levels.

- An alternative to focussing exclusively on the official administratively-generated statistics on homelessness is to utilise a variety of existing data sources to assess trends in 'core homelessness'. This relates to people in the most severe and immediate forms of homelessness (e.g., rough sleeping, sofa surfing, staying in hostels, refuges or unsuitable forms of temporary accommodation). At 2019, nightly core homelessness in Scotland is estimated to have stood at 14,250 households, having been relatively stable over the preceding seven years. Rates of core homelessness are substantially lower in Scotland (0.57% of households) than in England (0.94%) and Wales (0.66%).

- Estimates triangulating statutory and survey-based data suggest a nightly estimate of around 900 people sleeping rough in Scotland in 2019. During the pandemic it is clear that rough sleeping reduced significantly. Statutory data recording people's experiences of rough sleeping prior to presentation indicate a year on year national-level reduction in the region of 10 to 16%, but key informant views suggest reductions of greater magnitude. This disjuncture is likely explained by first, the concentration of greater falls in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and second, an increase in the scale and speed of people *exiting* rough sleeping albeit a continuation of new flow *onto* the street.

- By far the largest element of core homelessness in 2019 was its least visible manifestation, sofa surfing, accounting for more than half of core homeless individuals or households (7,920). Next in numerical importance was hostels and similar accommodation (3,320), followed by unsuitable temporary accommodation like B&Bs (1,180). The least numerous groups were those sleeping rough (900) and those staying in unconventional accommodation including in cars or tents (880).

- A range of short-term measures are modelled as being able to alleviate a post-pandemic rise – and in fact reduce – core homelessness, with the biggest potential associated with the use of rapid rehousing to settled accommodation e.g. social rehousing quotas for core homeless households, maximising prevention, implementing the Unsuitable Accommodation Order, and increased welfare benefit levels making the private rented sector more accessible. Specifically in relation to rough sleeping, the most impactful practices would be prioritised access to settled housing and continued use of the special COVID-related provision of hotel-type accommodation.

- In the longer term, large projected core homelessness reductions could be generated by rapid rehousing quotas, prevention and welfare measures, raising the Local Housing Allowance, and sustained expansion of Housing First and accompanying reduction in traditional hostel accommodation. Social housing supply increases, even when carefully targeted at the most under pressure areas, have limited beneficial effects that materialise only in the longer term, though such changes may enable others measures, particularly rapid rehousing.

- Homelessness has been a renewed policy priority in Scotland for the five-years or so preceding the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2018, the Scottish Government published the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan, taking forward all recommendations of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (2017/18). The Plan received cross-party support and has been followed by two progress updates.

1 Parallel Homelessness Monitors are published for England and Wales. All of the Homelessness Monitor reports are available from https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/homelessness-monitor/

- Local authority Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans are a key delivery mechanism for the Action Plan and intended to chart a 5-year route away from reliance on temporary accommodation, and towards improved prevention and settled accommodation by default response to homelessness. Around half of local authorities have already made changes to social housing allocations policies as a result of these Plans, primarily increasing priority to homeless households. While the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted implementation, the Plans were seen to have supported responses to the crisis, including via enhanced partnership arrangements. Despite increases in the Scottish Government funding committed to implementation, there are concerns that the Plans remain acutely under-resourced.

- Three years into the Scottish Government and Social Bite-funded Housing First pathfinder programme, over 500 tenancies have been initiated. Although this falls short of the target of 800, this reflects the impacts of the pandemic, as well as a range of locally specific challenges setting up Housing First services. 85% of tenancies initiated have been sustained to date and there have been no evictions from programme tenancies. This year's local authority survey indicates that Housing First services are in operation in two thirds of Scottish local authorities, with their introduction planned in several more.

- The planned extension of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order to all household types has been pushed back several times in response to COVID-19. When implemented, no homeless households can lawfully be accommodated in unsuitable B&B or hotel accommodation for more than 7 days. Only a minority of responding local authorities anticipate the extension of the Order impacting on their temporary accommodation placement practice, but significant impacts are anticipated in pressured areas that rely more heavily on these forms of accommodation.

- In 2019, an independent Prevention Review Group was convened to develop proposals for legal changes to enhance and strengthen homelessness prevention. The Group recommended the introduction of new legal duties on local authorities and a wide range of public bodies, as well as changes to homelessness legislation to incentivise prevention. The proposals go further than earlier reforms introduced in England and Wales.

- The Scottish Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic focused on accommodating people sleeping rough and decanting night shelter accommodation using hotel or other single-room accommodation. Funds were made available to trusted third sector partners with speed and minimal bureaucratic barriers. These measures were credited by key informants and some local authorities with reducing rough sleeping to unprecedently low levels. The inclusion of those with No Recourse to Public Funds brought a group previously hidden from services into view. Intensive multi-agency working prompted by the pandemic enabled positive engagement with those with long histories of rough sleeping and complex needs.

- In combination with enhanced safety measures in congregate accommodation, the homelessness response to COVID-19 was also seen to have kept COVID-19 infection rates to a minimum among homeless and at-risk populations. Other concerns emerged, however, regarding the wellbeing of the large number of individuals accommodated in hotels in response to the pandemic and their exposure to exploitation and other forms of anti-social and criminal behaviour. These issues were especially acute in Glasgow during the early stages of the pandemic, when insufficient on-site support was reported to have been provided to those in hotels.

- Restrictions on evictions were vital in preventing homelessness during the pandemic. The number of households citing eviction as the main reason homelessness presentation fell by 57% in 2020/21 compared to the previous year. Also ranked as highly important by local authorities were additional Scottish Government funding for Discretionary Housing Payments and the Scottish Welfare Fund. The additional £5m Scottish Government funding provided to local authorities to implement Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans in November 2020 was also valued highly.

- UK Government policy responses identified as especially important in preventing or minimising homelessness during the pandemic were the Job Retention ('furlough') Scheme, and a suite of welfare mitigations, including the temporary £20 uplift in the Universal Credit standard allowance, suspension of benefit sanctions and debt-related deductions, and raising of Local Housing Allowance rates.

- The flow of social housing lettings dropped dramatically in the early stages of lockdown. While local authorities were credited with fast adaptation to these challenges, housing associations were widely recognised to having taken a more cautious and risk-averse approach with lettings almost entirely drying up from this source for the first several months of the pandemic. Social housing lets to homeless households picked up substantially in Autumn 2020, reinforced by the rapid rehousing agenda-associated changes in allocation policies noted above.

Trends in homelessness

Rough sleeping

Estimates triangulating statutory and survey-based data suggest a nightly snapshot estimate of 900 people sleeping rough in Scotland in 2019, and broad stability in these numbers in the preceding four years or so. During the pandemic it is clear that rough sleeping reduced significantly. Statutory data recording people's experiences of rough sleeping prior to presentation indicate a year on year national-level reduction in the region of 10 to 16%. Key informants suggested that reductions had been of greater magnitude, and that rough sleeping had reached historic lows during the pandemic year. This apparent disjuncture between official data and key informant testimony likely reflects two key factors. First, falls in rough sleeping were concentrated in the city centres of Glasgow and Edinburgh, and a small number of other areas. Second, while key informants were clear that the numbers on the street at any one time were as low as ever seen int these areas in particular, largely due to swift accommodation responses in place in response to the pandemic, the 'flow' of new rough sleepers onto the street was acknowledged to have continued throughout the pandemic.

Statutory homelessness and Housing Options cases

Statutory homelessness acceptances had been on a gradually rising trajectory pre-pandemic, with the national total having grown by 10% in the period 2016/17-2019/20. In the pandemic year 2020/21, Scottish local authorities logged 33,398 statutory homelessness assessments, of which 27,571 (82%) were assessed as legally homeless. These figures represent an 11% reduction on 2019/20 levels of overall assessments, and a 13% reduction in homeless acceptances.

Downward trends in new applications and assessments during the pandemic are in contrast with increases in open applications, up 18%, and temporary accommodation placements, up 12% in Quarter 1 2020/21 (April-June). These trajectories peaked in Quarter 2 (July-September 2020) before falling back, but still remained far above pre-pandemic levels at financial year end (March 2021).

There were substantial geographic differences in statutory homelessness trends during the pandemic, however. Significantly larger reductions in applications were seen in East of Scotland authorities classed within the 'Edinburgh and other pressured markets' group (-19%), as compared to local authorities in the 'Glasgow and Clyde Valley' (-1%).

The pandemic year also saw changes in the profile of, and factors contributing to, statutory homelessness. The number of households presenting as homeless due to the loss of rental tenancies fell by 57% in 2020/21 compared to the previous year (from 4,651 to 1,999). More modest reductions were also seen in applications precipitated by institutional discharge. Those resulting from non-violent disputes within the households or due to fleeing violence or harassment (excluding domestic abuse) increased in the pandemic year. Applications precipitated by violent or abusive dispute within the household remained broadly stable (4,811 compared to 4,845).

In terms of age and household type, reduced homelessness acceptances involving households headed by older people (aged above 50) were substantially greater than the overall norm, whereas the 18-24 aged cohort fell back much more modestly. Single adults continued to account for a large majority of accepted households and their numbers declined only slightly during the initial pandemic lockdown, while the number of households with children plummeted by 30%.

Prior to COVID-19, total temporary accommodation placements had been running at largely stable levels of 10-11,000 for the decade to 2019, following dramatic increases in the 2000s linked to the phasing out of the 'priority need' criterion.[2] The pandemic year saw overall temporary accommodation numbers grow by 21%, and Bed and Breakfast placements rose by 79% to stand at almost double their number a year earlier. The rise in placements seen during 2020 largely involved adult-only households.

Core homelessness

This report details quantitative analysis of 'core homelessness', which captures some of the most severe and immediate forms of homelessness. The categories captured include people sleeping rough, staying in places not intended as residential accommodation (e.g., cars, tents, boats, sheds, etc.), living in homeless hostels, refuges and shelters, placed in unsuitable temporary accommodation (e.g., Bed and Breakfast hotels, Out of Area Placements, etc.), and sofa surfing (i.e., staying with non-family, on a short-term basis, in overcrowded conditions).

We estimate that 14,250 households experienced core homelessness on a typical day in 2019, with no clear trajectory of change since 2012. Levels of rough sleeping specifically are estimated to have been broadly stable over this same period. Comparing our core homelessness analysis for other Great Britain nations, rates are substantially lower in Scotland (0.57% of households) than in England (0.94%) and Wales (0.66%).

The largest element of core homelessness in 2019 was its least visible manifestation, sofa surfing, accounting for more than half of core homeless individuals or households (7,920). Next in numerical importance was hostels and similar accommodation (3,320), followed by unsuitable temporary accommodation (1,180). The least numerous groups were those sleeping rough (900) and those staying in unconventional accommodation including in cars or tents (880).

Our predictive models indicate that, without additional policy intervention, core homelessness would be likely to increase in 2021 before stabilising again from 2023 onwards, albeit with reductions in rough sleeping and sofa surfing offset by the higher numbers in substitute COVID hotel etc. provision. Against these projected post-COVID-19 trends, we systematically tested the impact of ten different policy changes on forecast core homeless outcomes over the short (to 2023) and longer-term (to 2031/41).

Rapid rehousing into settled accommodation, for example via social housing quotas, stands out as having the biggest impacts in reducing core homelessness on all time horizons, but notably significant impacts in the short term to 2021. Maximised prevention also performs strongly in the short as well as longer term, as does ending the use of unsuitable temporary accommodation and raising Universal Credit allowances substantially. Policies which achieve a more gradual build up to long term substantial impacts include Housing First, raising Local Housing Allowance rates to make the private rented sector more accessible, and (to a smaller extent) targeted housing supply.

The beneficial effects of extended COVID-19 related special measures and destitution related welfare measures on core homelessness overall are not very significant in the longer term after allowing for the above measures, nor (in contrast to England) economic 'levelling up' across regions and sub-regions. The impact of boosting overall and social housing supply in areas where the pressure of need relative to supply of lettings is greatest,[3] primarily Edinburgh-Lothians, does have beneficial effects although these are more modest than other policies. This is in contrast to the much more substantial positive impacts of boosting housing supply in England. More muted projected impacts in Scotland are likely explained at least in part by the generally less pressured and more affordable housing market context in Scotland, and the generally higher level of social housing stock, relets supply and new provision.

Our analysis indicates that rough sleeping is more sensitive to many of the policy scenarios, in proportional terms, than other elements of core homelessness. The policies with the biggest impacts on rough sleeping are the application of rehousing quotas for core homeless households, a proportion of which would go to rough sleepers; increasing the scale of Housing First programmes, enabling a rundown of hostel capacity; and extending the special hotel provision made in response to COVID-19 over the next four years, and then at a lower level indefinitely beyond that. Other policies with projected positive impacts are increases in Universal Credit personal allowances combined with other measures to reduce destitution including ending the five-week wait and the benefit cap, and maximising prevention.

A comprehensive and appropriately sequenced programme of measures is forecast to reduce core homelessness by 40-45% in the relatively short term (2023) and on a sustained basis, compared with what it would have been without any change in policies. This scenario would see overall core

2 Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Watts, B., Wood, J., Stephens, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2019) *The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2019*. London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240002/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2019.pdf

3 For details on the needs indicator used see Bramley, G. (2021 forthcoming) *Research on Core Homelessness and Homeless Projections: Technical Report on New Baseline Estimates and Scenario Projections for Scotland and Wales*. Edinburgh. Heriot-Watt University.

homeless 40% below the level of 2019-20. Furthermore, unsuitable temporary accommodation would go down by 95%, rough sleeping would be reduced by 63%, sofa surfing down by 38% and hostels down by 31%. There would also be large reductions in statutory homelessness.

Many, though not all, of the changes identified as impactful in reducing core homelessness are within the power of the Scottish Government, and moreover, largely consistent with the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan. This applies, for example, to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order extension, to the pursuit of the Prevention Review Group's recommendations, to commitments on mainstreaming Housing First, and to more strongly prioritising homeless households in social housing allocations.

Economic, policy and COVID-19 impacts on homelessness

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, the Scottish economy had experienced over a decade of weak economic growth and austerity,[4] induced by the economic shock of the Global Financial Crisis of 2008/09 and UK Government cuts to public services and social security benefits. In the 2017-20 period, the after housing costs poverty rate in Scotland stood at 19%. While poverty amongst working age adults had been broadly stable over the 2010s, child poverty rates have gradually increased, coinciding with social security and tax credit reforms.[5] Austerity measures and labour market developments have deepened the severity of poverty and material deprivation experienced by people with very low incomes. Between 2010-13 and 2017-19, the proportion of people living in Scotland with an after housing cost income of less than 50% of median income grew from 12% to 14% whilst the proportion of children in severe poverty increased from 13% to 18%. Deepening poverty and inadequate social security provision have contributed to a growing problem of destitution in the UK.[6]

COVID-19 and the introduction of lockdown measures to contain the spread of the virus sent shockwaves through the economy.[7] The Scottish economy shrank by around 10% in 2020,[8] far surpassing the damage inflicted by the Global Financial Crisis in 2008-09. The impacts of this contraction were mitigated by unprecedented peacetime levels of fiscal support to sustain jobs, household income, and economic activity including various job 'furlough' schemes. The official unemployment rate for Scotland for the three months to February 2021 was 4.4%, just 0.7 percentage points higher than a year earlier,[9] though the overall 2020 rate was 13.5%, 5% higher than 2019.[10] The furlough scheme was also, according to our local authority survey, crucial in mitigating homelessness risks during the COVID-19 crisis: all respondents considered it 'very' or 'somewhat' important in this regard.

Lockdown brought the housing market to a halt, whilst the wider economic dislocation brought fears of mass evictions and mortgage possessions. The UK and Scottish Governments acted to protect tenants and mortgaged owners from eviction during the pandemic by introducing compulsory and blanket forbearance on the part of landlords and mortgage lenders. For renters, forbearance relied on two main mechanisms. First, the notice period that social and private landlords must give tenants of their intention to seek eviction was generally extended to six months. Second, all grounds for eviction in the private sector were made discretionary, permitting the First-tier Tribunal to consider all factors before determining whether to issue an eviction order. Both measures will now remain in place until 31st March 2022, with the exception of notice period for cases involving antisocial and criminal behaviour, which reverted to one month in October 2020 following concerns about the impact of such behaviour on neighbours and local communities.[11] All responding Councils considered these measures to have been important in preventing or minimising homelessness in their area, with 90% seeing them as very important.

Official homelessness statistics for 2020/21 capture the dramatic impact of the evictions ban, with the number of homeless households assisted as a result of the ending of private and social tenancies plummeting (see above). The evictions ban may also explain the changed profile of statutory homelessness in the pandemic year, with greater reductions in statutory homelessness among family households and older age groups likely to reflect their greater likelihood of residing in rental accommodation and protection from eviction during the pandemic. Greater reductions in more pressured areas may similarly reflect the relative importance of the private rented sector as a generator of homelessness in these parts of Scotland. The pandemic altered the statutory homeless households cohort profile in other ways too. Cases associated with disputes within the household or relationship breakdown increased somewhat, something that key informant and local authority survey respondents saw as likely to reflect the strain on informal temporary living situations during the pandemic. This may also explain the small reductions in statutory homelessness among younger age groups more likely to be staying informally with friends and family. Statutory homelessness numbers associated with domestic abuse remained steady during the pandemic, a concern given reports of an increase in domestic abuse itself during lockdown and potentially suggesting that the pandemic and lockdown measures restricted women's capacity to escape perpetrators.[12]

Resulting in part from the construction slowdown due to the pandemic, the Scottish Government failed to achieve its target to deliver 50,000 affordable homes, including 35,000 social rented homes between 2016-17 and 2020-21, delivering just over 41,000 affordable homes and just over 28,000 social homes in the target period. This nevertheless represents a rate per 1000 households far in excess of those

4 The Fraser of Allander Institute (2019) *A Guide to Scottish GDP*. FAI, Glasgow: University of Strathclyde. https://fraserofallander.org/scottish-gdp-guide/

5 Fitzpatrick S, Pawson H, Bramley G, Wilcox S, Watts S. (2015) *The Homelessness Monitor Scotland 2015*, London: Crisis, https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/236831/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2015.pdf; Fitzpatrick S, Pawson H, Bramley G, Wilcox S, Watts B, Wood J, Stephens M, Blenkinsopp J. (2019) *The Homelessness Monitor Scotland 2019*, London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240002/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2019.pdf

6 Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., Blenkinsopp, J., Wood, J., Sosenko, F., Littlewood, M., Johnsen, S., Watts, B., Treanor, M. & McIntyre, J. (2020) *Destitution in the UK 2020*. York: JRF. www.jrf.org.uk; Bramley, G., Sosenko, F. & Fitzpatrick, S. (2018) *Destitution in the UK 2018*. York: JRF.

7 Financial Times (2021) *UK suffers biggest drop in economic output in 300 years*. February 12. Online: Financial Times. https://www.ft.com/content/96e19afd-88b3-4e8d-bc3e-a72bd1f60d3c

8 Scottish Government (2021) *Monthly Economic Brief: March 2021*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/monthly-economic-brief-march-2021/

9 Scottish Government (2021) *Labour Market Trends (monthly) April 2021*. Online: Scotland. https://www.gov.scot/publications/labour-market-trends-april-2021/

10 Scottish Government (2021) *Labour Market Statistics for Young People (16-24 year olds): Scotland and UK: Statistics from the Annual Population Survey dataset*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/labour-market-statistics-for-young-people-16-24-years-scotland-and-uk---january-2020-to-december-2020/

11 Scottish Government (2021) Coronavirus Acts: Sixth Report to Scottish Parliament. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-acts-sixth-report-scottish-parliament/

12 Scottish Government (2020) *Improving Housing Outcomes for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse: Scottish Government Working Group Report*. Online: Scottish Government. https://womensaid.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Improving-Housing-Outcomes-for-Women-and-Children-Experiencing-Domestic-Abuse-Report.pdf

for the other UK countries.[13]

The COVID-19 crisis also restricted access to existing social rented housing, with 20% fewer permanent social lettings (36,000) made in 2020/21 as compared to the previous year. The proportion of (all) new social lettings to homeless households was, however, creeping up pre-pandemic, from 38% in 2015-16 to 44% in 2019/20,[14] though lettings data for 2020/21 is not yet available to track the impacts of the pandemic on this figure. It is clear from interviews with key informants, however, that pandemic impacts on homeless households' access to social housing varied both over the course of the crisis and between local authority landlords and housing associations. While the pandemic generated immense challenges to all housing providers in re-letting empty properties and rehousing new tenants, local authorities were seen to have adapted swiftly. The response of housing associations by contrast was described as slow and cautious, and to have contributed to the backlog of individuals accommodated in emergency COVID-19 hotel placements. By autumn 2020 the position was seen to have improved significantly, with accommodation increasingly being made available to homeless households on a temporary and permanent basis.

A key recommendation from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group reconvened in June 2020 to review the Scottish Government's pandemic response[15] was that the allocation of social housing voids to homeless households be *"maximise[d]… for a limited emergency period to enable people to move on from hotels and other emergency accommodation"*. The report continued: *"While recognising local variation, we expect this being in the region of 80-90% or more during Phases 2 and 3 of the Scottish Government's route map through and out of the coronavirus response"*.[16] The Scottish Government did not ultimately endorse this specific numerical target in its latest Action Plan Update, following strong resistance from local authorities and Registered Social Landlords.[17] Key informants had mixed views on the proposed numerical target and the Scottish Government's failure to pursue it. However, it was perceived that due to both pre-pandemic policy and specific pandemic-related drivers, the trajectory is towards increasing social housing allocations to homeless households.

The pandemic prompted rapid shifts in responses to homelessness in Scotland. The immediate focus was on supporting rough sleepers and those occupying 'shared air' night shelter accommodation. In March 2020, the Scottish Government made £1.5m available to third sector organisations, and Rapid Rehousing Welcome Centres were established in Edinburgh and Glasgow to replace previous shelter provision. The crisis response was inclusive of those facing homelessness with No Recourse to Public Funds, and newly drafted guidance, emergency legislation and top-up funding to relevant third sector organisations ensured that this group had access to accommodation, support and healthcare during the pandemic. The crisis context also occasioned a step-change in multi-agency working that enhanced services capacity to engage and assist those with long histories of homelessness and complex needs.

The overall speed and efficiency of the Scottish Government's response, and their focus on empowering trusted organisations and frontline workers, drew praise from key informants. These measures were also seen by key informants to have dramatically reduced rough sleeping, though reductions reported in statutory data were more modest. This disparity may reflect the geographical scope and 'inflow' focus of the statutory data, whereas key informants' comments largely focused on the 'stock' of rough sleeping in the city centres of Glasgow and Edinburgh. The move away from dormitory style night-time only shelters during the pandemic was universally welcomed by key informants, and has prompted the development of a route-map charting an end to the need for night-shelter and hotel provision as a response to homelessness,[18] an ambition now officially adopted. Pandemic responses also prompted an abrupt end to Glasgow City Council's longstanding failure to meet its statutory duty to offer temporary accommodation to all those entitled to it.[19] Serious concerns were raised, however, regarding the wellbeing of the large numbers of people[20] accommodated in hotels in response to the pandemic, issues that were identified as especially acute in Glasgow in the early stages of the pandemic due to insufficient support provision. Concerns were also voiced by several key informants regarding the pace of move on from emergency hotel accommodation, especially in the early stages of the crisis.

Supportive wider changes to welfare policy were also vital in protecting homeless people and other low-income groups during the public health emergency. The Scottish Government's boost to the 2020/21 Discretionary Housing Payment and Social Welfare Budgets were highly valued by local authorities, with almost all survey respondents (28 and 27 out of 29, respectively) describing these as important in minimising or preventing homelessness. Key informants were scathing about the inadequacy and poor design of the Scottish Government's Tenants Hardship Loan Fund intended to assist those ineligible for other forms of support to pay rent, with Fund data revealing very low award levels.[21] In response to low take-up, the Scottish Government announced grant fund to support households struggling to pay their rent as a direct result of the pandemic in June 2021.[22]

13 Scottish Government (2021) *Housing statistics quarterly update: June 2021*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-scotland-quarterly-update-2/pages/8/
14 Calculated from Annual Return on the Charter data from the Scottish Housing Regulator.
15 Scottish Government (2020) *Ending homelessness together: Updated Action Plan - October 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/
16 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (2020) *Tackling Homelessness in Scotland following the Coronavirus Pandemic - Recommendations from Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/corporate-report/2020/07/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-action-group-final-report-tackling-coronavirus/documents/harsag-final-report-on-homelessness-after-coronavirus/harsag-final-report-on-homelessness-after-coronavirus/govscot%3Adocument/HARSAG%2BCovid%2Bfinal%2Breport.pdf. p.11
17 Scottish Government (2020) *Ending homelessness together: Updated Action Plan - October 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/
18 Ibid.
19 Scottish Government (2018) *Homelessness in Scotland 2017-2018*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2017-18; Scottish Housing Regulator (2018) *Housing people who are homeless in Glasgow*. Online: Scottish Housing Regulator. https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance/national-reports/thematic-work/housing-people-who-are-homeless-in-glasgow; Shelter Scotland (2017) *Evidence of Gatekeeping in Glasgow City Council*. Online: Shelter Scotland. https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/evidence_of_gatekeeping_in_glasgow_city_council
20 Although Scottish Government did not collect separate data on the numbers accommodated on this basis, key stakeholders reported that around 600 people were accommodated in emergency hotels in Glasgow alone at the peak.
21 Scottish Parliament (2021) *Official Report of Meeting of the Parliament: Thursday 20 May 2021- Covid-19 (Protection from Eviction)*. Online: Scottish Parliament. https://www.parliament.scot/api/sitecore/CustomMedia/OfficialReport?meetingId=13228
22 Scottish Housing News (2021) *Scottish Government announces £10m grant fund for tenants in arrears due to COVID-19*. 23 June. Online: Scottish Housing News. https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/article/scottish-government-announces-10-million-grant-fund-for-tenants-in-arrears-due-to-covid-19

The UK Government's £20 per week uplift in the Universal Credit standard allowance (which ends in September 2021) was identified as important by 25 of 29 local authority respondents, with very high proportions also ranking as important the suspension of benefit sanctions in the early stages of the pandemic (23), the increase of Local Housing Allowance caps to the 30th percentile (23) and the suspension of debt-related benefit deductions (22).

Addressing homelessness has been a renewed policy priority in Scotland for a number of years pre-pandemic. In 2017, *"a clear national objective to eradicate rough sleeping in Scotland and transform the use of TA"*[23] was announced, alongside associated funding (the £50 million EHT Fund) and the appointment of a short-life Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group to advise on how to achieve these aims.[24] In 2018, the Scottish Government published the Ending Homelessness Together High Level Action Plan,[25] taking forward all of the Group's recommendations, including on 'rapid rehousing', Housing First, a new prevention duty on public authorities, and several changes to existing homelessness legislation including to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.[26]

A key mechanism for the delivery of the Action Plan has been the development and implementation of 5-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans by all local authorities. Key stakeholders were generally positive about the implementation of plans to date and prospects for further progress. More than half of local authority survey respondents (15 of 29) reported that Plans in their area had let to alteration of social housing allocations policies, with changes anticipated in the near future in seven more. In most cases, these adjustments involved increasing quotas or targets for the proportion (or number) of social housing lettings for allocation to homeless households. The key concern to emerge from this study in relation to the implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans relates to resourcing. Recognising the shortfall between requested funds and allocated budget in the first tranche of Plans, and again in response to the pandemic, the Scottish Government has increased allocated funding. The associated £5 million 2021/22 funding uplift was acknowledged as an important element of the COVID-19 response by most local authority survey respondents (24 of 29). Nevertheless, there was a common view that Plans remain significantly under-resourced.[27]

More than a third of local authority survey respondents (11 of 29) reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had negatively impacted local implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans.[28] The most frequently cited challenges were the need to cope with increased demand for temporary accommodation during 2020/21; additional pressure on staff members due to pandemic-induced workload stress; and reduced ability to rehouse households out of temporary accommodation due to diminished social housing letting activity. On the other hand, having Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans in place supported homelessness responses to the pandemic according to most local authority survey respondents (20 of 29), not least as a result of improved partnership arrangements in place their development.

Over half (17 of 29) of local authority survey respondents reported Health and Social Care Partnerships making a positive contribution to the prevention and/or alleviation of homelessness, almost double the number in our 2018 survey (8 of 28). This progress is likely to reflect the dual drivers of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans development and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a third of local authorities nevertheless reported that Health and Social Care Partnerships have had little impact on their ability to prevent and/or alleviate homelessness, and some noted this as a barrier to progressing the rapid rehousing agenda.

Three years into the Housing First pathfinder programme, over 500 tenancies have been initiated. This falls short of the original target of 800, in part as a result of the pandemic but also because of a range of local challenges setting up Housing First services. Of the tenancies started, 85% have been sustained to date and there have been no evictions from the programme so far.[29] Key informants were generally positive about the Pathfinder programme, noting that all areas involved have all voiced intentions to continue provision despite the tapering down of the Scottish Government funding. This year's local authority survey indicates that Housing First services are in operation in two thirds of Scottish local authorities, with their introduction also planned in several more. Positive impacts include tenancy sustainment, wider benefits to tenant choice and control of tenants, and gains on partnership working. At the same time, there are ongoing challenges in relation to resourcing, access to housing, levels of buy-in from non-housing partners, and maintaining programme fidelity, concerns also raised in relation to the Pathfinder programme. In March 2021, the Scottish Government's 20-year housing strategy articulated an aim for *"Housing First to be the default option for people with multiple and complex needs"*.[30] In the same month, Homeless Network Scotland published a ten-year national framework to start up and scale up Housing First in Scotland. Notably, the Housing First approach was endorsed by all political parties in the 2021 Holyrood election.

Following recommendations from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, in 2017 the Unsuitable Accommodation Order was amended to extend restrictions on the use of hotels and Bed and Breakfasts for pregnant women or families with children to a maximum of 7 days to all household types. The new Order, however, had not yet come into force at the onset of the pandemic, and its implementation was subsequently delayed. At the time of writing

23 Scottish Government (2018) *A Nation with Ambition: the Government's Programme for Scotland 2017-2018*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/nation-ambition-governments-programme-scotland-2017-18/
24 HARSAG published four reports over the course of 9 months, containing 70 recommendations, all of which were accepted in principle by the Scottish Government. HARSAG's first set of recommendations, published in November 2017, aimed to "reduce rough sleeping during winter 2017/18", and were designed for immediate implementation. Its two subsequent reports focussed on "how to eradicate rough sleeping", and on "ways to transform TA", published in March and May 2018 respectively. See https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-action-group-final-report/
25 Scottish Government (2018) *Ending Homelessness Together. Action Plan*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-high-level-action-plan
26 Scottish Government (2020) *Ending Homelessness Together: Annual Report*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-action-plan-annual-report-parliament/; Scottish Government (2020) *Ending homelessness together: Updated Action Plan - October 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/
27 The Salvation Army (2021) *Homelessness in Scotland: Research for The Salvation Army*. Online: The Salvation Army. https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/2021-03/TSA%20Report%20Homelessness%20in%20Scotland%20FINAL%20%28Full%29.pdf
28 Ibid.
29 Housing First Scotland (2021) *Housing First Tracker: Progress to May 2021*. Online: Homeless Network Scotland. https://homelessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/HF-Scotland-Monthly-Tracker-MAY-2021.pdf
30 Scottish Government (2021) *Housing to 2040*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2021/03/housing-2040-2/documents/housing-2040/housing-2040/govscot%3Adocument/housing-2040.pdf. p. 53

provisions are intended to come into force in September 2021. There was a consensus among key informants that the extension of the Order to all households was a positive and highly significant shift, but opinions were divided on the justifiability of delays to its implementation. These delays have been heavily criticised by Shelter Scotland and a group of Members of the Scottish Parliament,[31] as well as a small minority of key informants in this study. The delays were strongly defended by statutory sector key informants, with most voluntary sector participants sympathetic to the need for the delays given challenges associated with the pandemic response. Only nine local authority survey respondents anticipated that the extension would pose funding and resourcing challenges, with a key concern being local authority capacity to sufficiently scale back Bed and Breakfast placements that had expanded due to pandemic period demand pressures.

Further changes to homelessness policy and practice look set to reshape the landscape in the coming months and years. Key among them is a planned long-term move away from night shelter provision[32] and related and highly significant plans to continue improved responses to those experiencing homelessness who have No Recourse to Public Funds.[33] Most significant are plans to introduce new homelessness prevention duties on local authorities and a range of wider public bodies.[34] The proposals thus represent a radical reshaping of the legal duties owed to homeless or at risk households that go further than preceding reforms in England and Wales, in particular with regard to requiring co-operation from other public bodies. Key informants and local authority survey respondents were in general positive about the Group's recommendations and almost all local authority survey respondents identified aspects of the proposals that would work well in their locality, albeit with half identifying aspects that would be challenging. The emphasis on improved joint working and obligations on wider public bodies was especially welcome, though concerns were voiced about the practicalities of implementing both a six month prevention duty and new duties on wider public sector bodies.

31 Shelter Scotland (2021) *Scottish Government Back-tracks on Homeless Protections*. 14 Jan. Online: Shelter Scotland. https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/media/press_releases/scottish_government_back-tracks_on_homeless_protections; Scottish Parliament (2021) *Unsuitable Accommodation Order*. Motion ref. S5M-23862. 15 Jan. Online: Scottish Parliament. https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S5M-23862

32 Everyone Home Collective (2020) *Route-Map 1: Ending the Need for Night Shelter & Hotel Room Provision*. Online: EHC. https://www.everyonehome.scot/pdf/route-map.pdf; Scottish Government (2020) *Ending homelessness together: Updated Action Plan - October 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/

33 Everyone Home Collective (2020) *Route-Map 1: Ending the Need for Night Shelter & Hotel Room Provision*. Online: EHC. https://www.everyonehome.scot/pdf/route-map.pdf; Scottish Government (2021) *Ending Destitution Together A Strategy to Improve Support for People with No Recourse to Public Funds Living in Scotland: 2021-2024*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2021/03/ending-destitution-together/documents/ending-destitution-together-strategy-improve-support-people-no-recourse-public-funds-living-scotland-2021-2024/ending-destitution-together-strategy-improve-support-people-no-recourse-public-funds-living-scotland-2021-2024/govscot%3Adocument/ending-destitution-together-strategy-improve-support-people-no-recourse-public-funds-living-scotland-2021-2024.pdf

34 Scottish Government (2020) *Ending homelessness together: Updated Action Plan - October 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/

Conclusion

Two core themes dominate this edition of the Homelessness Monitor Scotland. First, the catastrophe of the COVID-19 pandemic forced renewed reflection on the shape of homelessness services in Scotland. The legal protection owed to homeless households in Scotland is world- and UK-leading in its generosity and inclusiveness, and this is reflected in the relatively modest scale and geographic concentration of required crisis response to the most acute forms of homelessness. The pandemic nevertheless shone a light on the continuing reliance on night shelters in Edinburgh and Glasgow, the inadequacy of support (driven by UK policy) available to those with No Recourse to Public Funds, and the ample room for improvement in collaboration and joint working between local authorities and wider stakeholders. The pandemic also reinforced a key message running through the Homelessness Monitor reports, namely the central importance of policy as a driver of both the scale and profile of homelessness.

Second, this edition of the Monitor has offered an opportunity to assess initial progress against the Scottish Government's radical transformation agenda on homelessness. The verdict is primarily positive, not least in relation to early progress implementing the rapid rehousing agenda, scaling up Housing First, and the prospect of progressing legal reforms to improve statutory protections for households at risk of homelessness. The scale of, and resources required to effectively implement, the rapid rehousing agenda have been starkly underlined. Our projections analysis reveals the enormous potential in Scotland to reduce statutory and core homelessness, including rough sleeping, by historically significant degrees if the right policy levers are effectively pursued, sequenced and resourced, even within the constraints of the current devolution settlement. The next Scotland Monitor will provide an opportunity to assess the Scottish Government and wider homelessness stakeholders' record in fulfilling this potential.

Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study provides an independent analysis of the impact on homelessness of recent economic and policy developments in Scotland. It considers the impact of the welfare reforms implemented by the UK Government, as well as the effect of relevant Scottish Government policies on housing, homelessness and welfare.

This fourth update report provides an account of how homelessness stands in Scotland in 2021 (or as close to 2021 as data availability allows), and analyses key trends in the period running up to 2021. It focuses in particular on what has changed since we published the last Homelessness Monitor for Scotland in 2019 and on the homelessness-related impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020. We also for the first time provide an analysis which projects homelessness trends in Scotland into the future, holding the current context steady and also under a range of policy scenarios. Readers who would like a fuller account of the recent history of homelessness and related policy in Scotland should consult with the three previous reports for Scotland.[35] Parallel Homelessness Monitors have been published for other parts of the UK.[36]

1.2 Scope of report

There is a great deal of debate on the most appropriate definition of homelessness, with stakeholders often disagreeing vigorously on where the boundary should lie between 'homelessness' and other forms of housing need.[37] In order for this report to be as comprehensive and inclusive as possible, we adopt a range of definitions or 'perspectives' on homelessness, considering the impacts of relevant policy and economic changes on the following (partially overlapping) groups:

- People sleeping rough.

- Statutorily homeless households: that is, households who seek or receive housing assistance from local authorities (LAs) on grounds of being currently or imminently without accommodation.

- People experiencing 'core homelessness':[38] this refers to households who are currently experiencing the most acute forms of homelessness or living in short-term or unsuitable accommodation. It includes people in the following situations: rough sleeping; sleeping in cars, tents and public transport, or occupation of non-residential buildings; staying in hostels, refuges and shelters; living in 'unsuitable' temporary accommodation (TA) (e.g., Bed and Breakfasts (B&Bs)); sofa-surfing (i.e. staying with non-family, on a short-term basis, in overcrowded conditions).

1.3 Research methods

Five methods have been employed in this longitudinal study.

- First, relevant literature, research and policy documents have been reviewed.

- Second, we have undertaken in-depth interviews with a sample of key informants from across the statutory and voluntary sectors in Scotland. The sample of 8 interviewees included representatives of homelessness service providers, as well as other key stakeholders with a national overview of relevant areas of policy and practice in Scotland (see Appendix 1 for the basic topic guide used, though note that this was tailored for each interviewee).

- Third, we have undertaken statistical analysis on a) relevant economic and social trends in Scotland; and b) the scale, nature and trends in homelessness amongst all of the homeless groups noted above.

- Fourth, for the second time in Scotland, we have conducted a bespoke online survey of Scotland's LAs (in spring 2021), with a view to gaining their perspective on local homelessness trends and also on the impacts of a range of relevant policy developments. We laid particular emphasis this year on how the housing, social security, labour market and other COVID-19 related policy responses were impacting on homelessness trends and responses at local level, and on the interaction between the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of the Scottish Government's Ending Homelessness Together (EHT) Action Plan.[39]

- Fifth, we incorporate a statistical modelling exercise which both estimates 'core' forms of homelessness, and projects trends in these forms of homelessness into the future.

In all, 29 Scottish LAs responded (a response rate of 91%). The only non-respondents were Moray, the Shetland Islands and West Lothian. In analysing the returns, responding authorities were classed according to a typology presented in Table 1, which combines geography and housing market conditions.

35 Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G. & Wilcox, S. (2012) *The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2012*. London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237059/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2012.pdf; Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. & Watts, B. (2015) *The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2015*. London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/236831/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2015.pdf; Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Watts, B., Wood, J., Stephens, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2019) *The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2019*. London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240002/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2019.pdf

36 See http://www.crisis.org.uk/pages/homelessnessmonitor.html

37 Busch-Geertsema, V., Culhane, D., & Fitzpatrick, S. (2016) 'Developing a global framework for conceptualising and measuring homelessness', *Habitat International*, 55, 124–132.

38 Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness Projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain, Summary Report*. Online: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237582/crisis_homelessness_projections_2017.pdf

39 Scottish Government (2018) *Ending Homelessness Together: Action Plan*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-high-level-action-plan/

Table 1.1: Scottish local authority typology

Edinburgh and other pressured markets	Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, East Lothian, Edinburgh, Highland, Midlothian, Moray (non-respondent), Orkney Islands, Perth & Kinross, Shetland (non-respondent) Stirling, West Lothian (non-respondent)
Glasgow and rest of Clyde Valley	East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire
Rest of Scotland	Angus, Argyll & Bute, Clackmannanshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, East Ayrshire, Eilean Siar, Falkirk, Fife, North Ayrshire, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire

1.4 Causation and homelessness

All of the Homelessness Monitors are underpinned by a conceptual framework on the causation of homelessness that has been used to inform our interpretation of the likely impacts of economic and policy change.[40]

Theoretical, historical and international perspectives indicate that the causation of homelessness is complex, with no single 'trigger' that is either 'necessary' or 'sufficient' for it to occur. Individual, interpersonal and structural factors all play a role – and interact with each other – and the balance of causes differs over time, across countries, and between demographic groups.

With respect to the main structural factors, international comparative research, and the experience of previous UK recessions, suggests that housing market trends and policies have the most direct impact on levels of homelessness, with the influence of labour market change more likely to be lagged and diffuse, and strongly mediated by welfare arrangements and other contextual factors. The central role that poverty plays in shaping homelessness risks in the UK is also now well established.[41]

The individual vulnerabilities, support needs and 'risk taking' behaviours implicated in some people's homelessness are themselves often, though not always, rooted in the pressures associated with poverty and other forms of structural disadvantage. At the same time, the 'anchor' social relationships which can act as a primary 'buffer' to homelessness, can be put under considerable strain by stressful financial circumstances. Thus, deteriorating economic conditions in Scotland could also be expected to generate more 'individual' and 'interpersonal' vulnerabilities to homelessness over time.

The COVID-19 pandemic provides an additional and unprecedented dynamic highly relevant to homelessness causation and responses. The pandemic itself and associated lockdowns have had wide ranging homelessness-related impacts, with key mechanisms here including direct effect of the public health emergency on individual, household and organisational (e.g., LA and landlord) behaviour and choices,

40 For a more detailed account of this conceptual framework please consult with Chapter 2 in the first Homelessness Monitor for Scotland: Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G. & Wilcox, S. (2012) *The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2012*. London: Crisis.

41 Bramley, B. & Fitzpatrick, S. (2018) 'Homelessness in the UK: who is most at risk?', *Housing Studies*, 33(1), 96-116.

consequences for the economy, and impacts on Westminster and the Scottish Government policy in relation to welfare, housing and homelessness. These mechanisms have affected households in varying circumstances differently, with complex and sometimes countervailing impacts on homelessness all of which are explored further in this report.

1.5 Structure of report

Chapter 2 reviews the wider context for homelessness, including economic, poverty and labour market trends, housing market developments, and welfare policy changes – all of this heavily impacted by responses to the COVID-19 crisis. Chapter 3 shifts focus to homelessness-specific policies and practices at national and local level, including in direct response to the pandemic. Chapter 4 provides a fully updated analysis of the available statistical data on the current scale of and recent trends in statutory homelessness in Scotland, focusing on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter 5 provides estimates of the current scale of core homelessness in Scotland, and projects trends in these forms of homelessness into the future. All of these chapters are informed by the insights derived from our in-depth interviews with key informants conducted in 2021, and from the statistical and qualitative information gleaned from this year's online survey of LAs. In Chapter 6 we summarise the main findings of this report.

The context

2. The context for homelessness: wider economic, housing, and welfare drivers

2.1 Introduction

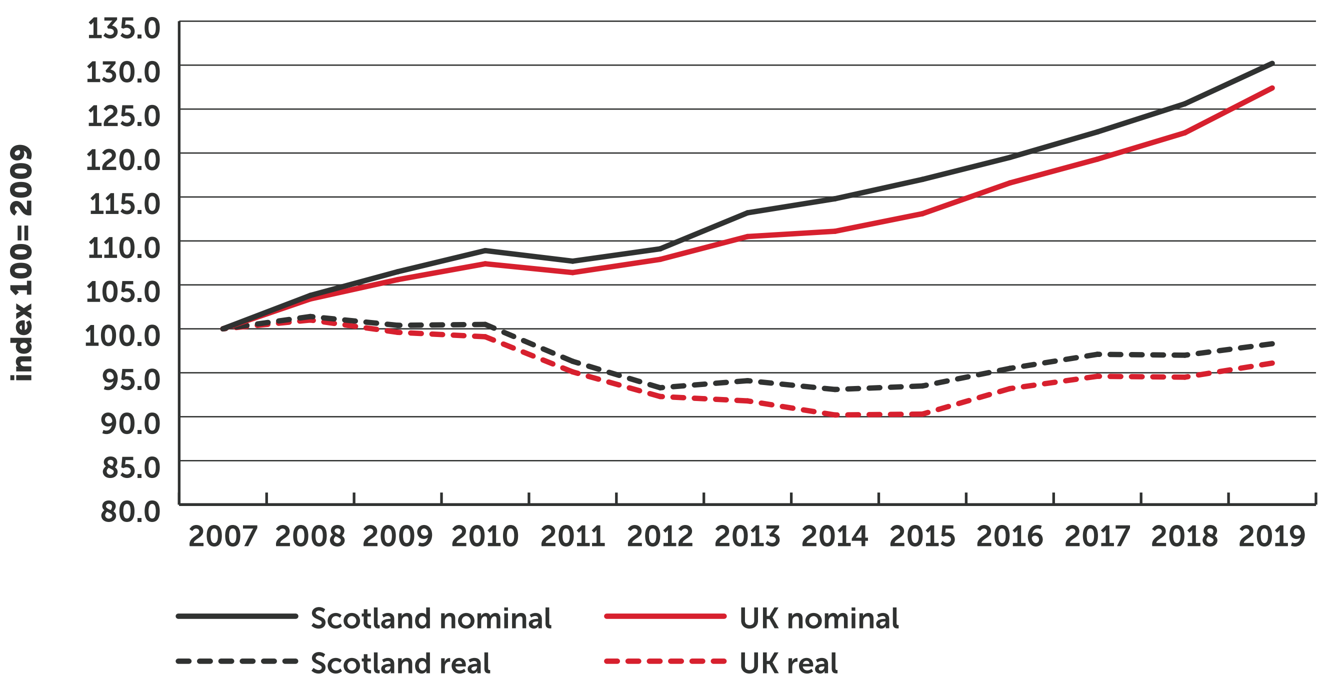
This chapter places homelessness within the wider social, economic and housing policy context. It has a particular emphasis on policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic but it also considers developments prior to the pandemic that are likely to influence the labour market and the housing system going forward. Section 2.2 summarises employment, earnings and poverty trends as Scotland entered the COVID-19 crisis, the UK and Scottish Governments response to the economic shock of the crisis and economic and labour market prospects. Section 2.3 examines the housing market and housing policy context, including the COVID-19 emergency measures. Section 2.4 focuses on policies to bolster household incomes in response to the crisis. This includes the UK Government's furlough and social security measures plus the Scottish Government financial support for individuals.

2.2 The social and economic context

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, the Scottish economy had experienced over a decade of weak economic growth and austerity.[42] This was induced by the economic shock of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008-09 and the UK Government decision to reduce the national public debt by constraining expenditure on public services and social security benefits. A fall in oil prices in 2014 and uncertainty generated by the 2014 'Independence' and 2016 'Brexit' referenda also slowed the recovery of the economy.

Scotland's economic growth failed to keep pace with that of the UK for much of the decade, but the Scottish labour market, a key driver of prosperity for many people, strengthened significantly. Unemployment rates dropped below pre-recession levels and employment reached record high levels, with 2,702,153 people in Scotland aged 16 and over in employment in May 2019.[43] Despite this, wages increased more slowly than inflation, such that by 2019 the median real wage for both Scotland and the UK remained below 2007 levels (Figure 2.1). This trend was influenced by changing patterns of work, including the growth in underemployment,[44] solo self-employment,[45] and other forms of precarious work. This lack of real wage growth also squeezed living standards and stalled progress in reducing poverty, which is a significant risk factor for homelessness.[46]

Figure 2.1: Trends in nominal and real earnings for the Scotland and the UK, 2007-2019, (2007 = 100)



Source: Derived from Office for National Statistics (2020) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
Note: Based on gross weekly earnings for all part-time and full-time employees.

Poverty

Poverty plays a central role in the generation of homelessness in the UK (see chapter 1). Income poverty is generally measured on a relative, rather than an absolute scale. Relative poverty is defined as individuals that live in a household with an income below 60% of the UK median after adjusting for household composition ("equivalised"). Poverty estimates for Scotland, both before (BHC) and after (AHC) housing costs are deducted, are based on three-year rolling averages to limit the impact of sampling variation and error.

In 2017-20, before the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, around 910,000 people in Scotland experienced relative poverty before housing costs. This increased to 1.03 million people after housing costs had been paid. The BHC poverty rate (17%) was in line with the comparable UK rate. In contrast, the AHC poverty rate (19%) was three percentage points lower than the UK rate (22%). This gap has persisted for many years and is largely attributable to the greater availability of social housing and the lower cost of housing in Scotland relative to the UK.[47] This also helps to explain why Scotland had the lowest rate of AHC in-work

42 The Fraser of Allander Institute (2019) *A Guide to Scottish GDP*. FAI, Glasgow: University of Strathclyde, https://fraserofallander.org/scottish-gdp-guide/
43 Office of National Statistics Labour Force Survey (LFS) *Headline indicators*, accessed via NOMIS, accessed 26 June 2021.
44 Bell, D., & Blanchflower, D. (2018) 'Underemployment and the lack of wage pressure in the UK', *National Institute Economic Review*, 243(1), 53-61.
45 Giupponi, G., and Xu, X. (2020) *What does the Rise of Self-employment tell us about the UK Labour Market?* Online: The Institute for Fiscal Studies https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/15182
46 Bramley, B. & Fitzpatrick, S. (2018) 'Homelessness in the UK: who is most at risk?', *Housing Studies*, 33(1), 96-116.
47 JRF (2020) *Poverty in Scotland 2020-The independent annual report*, York, JRF.

poverty in the UK at the close of the last decade.[48]

In the decade to 2017-20, the overall rate of AHC poverty for Scotland had been stable despite the squeeze on living standards (Figure 2.2). The main reason for this seemingly counter-intuitive finding has been that wage stagnation led to a fall in median incomes and thus relative poverty thresholds.[49] Stable poverty rates therefore suggest that at the aggregate level the living standards of people in lower income households have fallen no faster than people in households clustered around the middle of the income distribution.

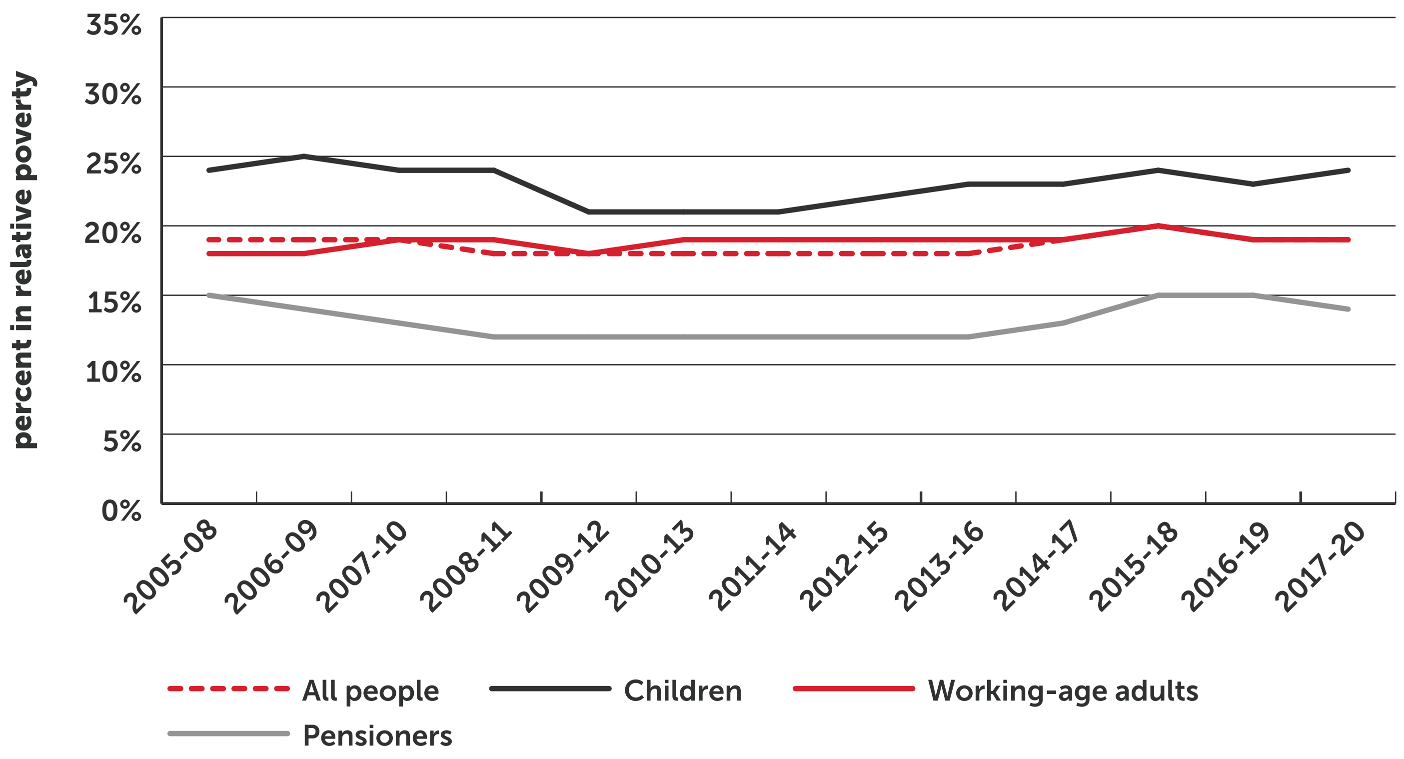
Poverty amongst working age adults has mirrored the overall trend. In contrast, child poverty rates have gradually increased since 2011-14, coinciding with social security and tax credit reforms pursued by the UK Government outlined in earlier editions of the Homeless Monitor.[50] In 2017-20, some 24% of all children in Scotland experienced AHC poverty, rising to 38% of those from minority ethnic families[51] who continue to be over-represented in the private rented sector (PRS).[52] Pensioner poverty rates have also increased since 2011-14 but the proportion has remained below those for the two other demographic groups.

The poverty figures do not take account of the new Scottish Child Payment, which forms part of the Scottish Government's Social Security System and is available to families with children who are eligible for universal credit or equivalent legacy benefits. The first weekly payments of £10 were made to families with children under 6 years in February 2021, with the extension to all eligible families with children under 16 years planned for the end of 2022. It is estimated that this new top up benefit will cost £77 million in 2021-22.[53] IPPR in Scotland has estimated that doubling this payment to £20 in 2022-23, which is something the main political parties have committed to, would cost £180 million per year and lift 20,000 children out of poverty.[54]

The stability of relative poverty rates for the last decade disguises the reality that austerity measures and labour market developments have deepened the severity of poverty and material deprivation experienced by people with very low incomes. Between 2010-13 and 2017-19, the proportion of people living in Scotland with an AHC income of less 50% of median income grew from 12% to 14% whilst the proportion of children in severe poverty increased from 13% to 18%. Deepening poverty and inadequate social security provision

48 Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2021) *UK poverty 2020-21*. York: JRF. https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2020-21
49 Bourquin, P., Joyce, R. & Norris Keiller, A. (2020) *Living Standards, Poverty, and Inequality in the UK: 2020. Report no. 170*. London: Institute for Fiscal Studies. https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R170-Living-standards-poverty-and-inequality-in-the-UK-2019-2020%20.pdf
50 Fitzpatrick S, Pawson H, Bramley G, Wilcox S, Watts S. (2015) *The Homelessness Monitor Scotland 2015*, London: Crisis, https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/homelessness-monitor/scotland/the-homelessness-monitor-scotland-2015/; Fitzpatrick S, Pawson H, Bramley G, Wilcox S, Watts B, Wood J, Stephens M, Blenkinsopp J. (2019) *The Homelessness Monitor Scotland 2019*, London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240002/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2019.pdf
51 Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (2020) *Ethnicity and Poverty in Scotland 2020, Analysis and Reflection on the Impact of Covid-19*. Online: CRER, https://www.crer.scot/post/new-research-from-crer-ethnicity-and-poverty-in-scotland-2020
52 Statham, R. (2021) *Intersectionality: Revealing the Realities of Poverty and Iinequality in Scotland*. IPPR: Scotland, Edinburgh, Poverty and Inequalities Commission. https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Intersectionality-Revealing-the-Reality-of-Poverty-and-Inequality-in-Scotland-May-2021.pdf
53 Scottish Fiscal Commission (2020) *Supplementary Costing: Scottish Child Payment*, Edinburgh: SFC.
54 Statham, R., Parkes, H., & Gunson, R. (2021) *Securing A Living Income In Scotland: Towards a Minimum Income Guarantee*, Edinburgh: Institute for Public Policy Research Scotland.

Figure 2.2: Relative poverty in Scotland after housing costs by type of person, 2005-08 to 2017-20 (%)



Source: Scottish Government (2021) Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2017-20, Table 1a.

have contributed to a growing problem of destitution in the UK.[55] They also appear to be taking a toll on health.[56] Inequalities in premature mortality have widened in recent years, reflecting an increase in mortality rates in the fifth most deprived areas in Scotland.[57] National Records of Scotland report that 1,264 people lost their lives to drugs in Scotland in 2019, the majority of which were men aged 25-54 years. This was more than double the number (614) in 2014.[58]

COVID-19 and the economy

COVID-19 and the introduction of lockdown measures to contain the spread of the virus sent shockwaves through the economy and caused the most rapid and severe downturn that the UK has experienced in 300 years.[59] The first lockdown in the second quarter of 2020 saw the UK economy shrink by over 19%[60] and

55 Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., Blenkinsopp, J., Wood, J., Sosenko, F., Littlewood, M., Johnsen, S., Watts, B., Treanor, M. & McIntyre, J. (2020) *Destitution in the UK 2020*. York: JRF. www.jrf.org.uk; Bramley, G., Sosenko, F. & Fitzpatrick, S. (2018). *Destitution in the UK 2018*. York: JRF
56 Joyce, R., and Xu, X. (2019) *Inequalities in the twenty-first century: introducing the IFS Deaton Review*. London: Institute for Fiscal Studies https://www.ifs.org.uk/inequality/chapter/briefing-note/
57 Fenton L., Wyper G.M., McCartney G. & Minton J. (2019) Socioeconomic inequality in recent adverse all-cause mortality trends in Scotland, *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*. 73: 971–974.
58 National Records of Scotland (2020) *Drug-related Deaths in Scotland in 2019*. Edinburgh: NRS https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/drug-related-deaths/2019/drug-related-deaths-19-pub.pdf
59 Financial Times (2021) *UK suffers biggest drop in economic output in 300 years*. February 12. Online: Financial Times. https://www.ft.com/content/96e19afd-88b3-4e8d-bc3e-a72bd1f60d3c
60 Office for National Statistics (2021) *GDP quarterly national accounts, UK: October to December 2020* (31 March 2021) Online: ONS. https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/bulletins/quarterlynationalaccounts/octobertodecember2020; Scottish Government (2021) *Gross Domestic Product: Quarterly Output Statistics* (Open data). Online: Scottish Government. https://statistics.gov.scot/resource?uri=http%3A%2F%2Fstatistics.gov.scot%2Fdata%2Fgross-domestic-product-quarterly-output-by-industry

the Scottish economy by over 21%.[61] The economy recovered somewhat in summer as businesses re-opened. However, recovery slowed as a tier system of COVID-19 restrictions was imposed in response to rising infection rates, culminating in a second Scottish lockdown in January 2021. Overall, the Scottish economy, like the UK economy, shrank by around 10% in 2020,[62] far surpassing the damage inflicted by the GFC recession in 2008-09.

Unprecedented peacetime levels of fiscal support to sustain jobs, household income, and economic activity has ensured that the labour market has so far held up well compared to previous recessions in terms of preventing substantial rises in unemployment. The official unemployment rate for Scotland for the three months to February 2021 was 4.4%, just 0.7 percentage points higher than a year earlier.[63] The furlough scheme is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, but in the absence of the wage subsides it provides, the Scottish Government estimate that unemployment might have risen to 14%.[64]

Other labour market measures for Scotland paint a more disquieting picture and indicate that lower paid and younger workers have been the most adversely affected by the crisis. In the year to March 2021, claimant count based unemployment, which includes people aged 18 years and over who are unemployed or are required by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to seek additional work to boost their extremely low earnings, increased by 86% to 209,748.[65] Likewise, employment amongst 16-24 year-olds in Scotland in 2020 was 52%, 6 points lower than in 2019 whilst unemployment increased by 5% to 13.5%.[66] Various UK studies also indicate that the adverse economic effects of the crisis have fallen more heavily on women and in particular single parents,[67] minority ethnic workers,[68] disabled people,[69] workers with precarious contracts and self-employed sole traders.[70]

Unlike previous recessions, the COVID-19 crisis has impacted on household expenditure. At the UK level, total household savings have increased and household debt has decreased, primarily because higher

61 Scottish Government (2021) *GDP quarterly national accounts: 2020 quarter 4 (October-December)* accompanying tables second update. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/gdp-quarterly-national-accounts-2020-q4/
62 Scottish Government (2021) *Monthly Economic Brief: March 2021*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/monthly-economic-brief-march-2021/
63 Scottish Government (2021) *Labour Market Trends (monthly) April 2021*. Online: Scotland. https://www.gov.scot/publications/labour-market-trends-april-2021/
64 Scottish Government (2020) *Coronavirus (Covid-19): UK fiscal path –a new approach*. Online: Scottish Government: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-fiscal-path-new-approach/pages/4/
65 Claimant Count - seasonally adjusted, accessed via NOMIS, June 25 2021.
66 Scottish Government (2021) *Labour Market Statistics for Young People (16-24 year olds): Scotland and UK: Statistics from the Annual Population Survey dataset*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/labour-market-statistics-for-young-people-16-24-years-scotland-and-uk---january-2020-to-december-2020/
67 Close the Gap (2021) *One Year On: How COVID-19 is impacting women's employment in Scotland*. Glasgow: Close the Gap. https://www.closethegap.org.uk/content/resources/1617267711_One-Year-On---How-COVID-19-is-impacting-womens-employment-in-Scotland.pdf
68 Brewer, M., Corlett, A., Handscomb, K., McCurdy, C. & Tomlinson, D. (2020) *The Living Standards Audit 2020*, London: Resolution Foundation. https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/07/living-standards-audit.pdf
69 Leonard Cheshire (2020) *Locked out of the labour market- The impact of Covid-19 on disabled adults in accessing good work*. London: Leonard Cheshire https://www.leonardcheshire.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/Locked-out-of-labour-market.pdf
70 Cominetti, N., Henehan, K., Slaughter, H. & Thwaites, G. (2021) *Long Covid in the labour market: The impact on the labour market of Covid-19 a year into the crisis, and how to secure a strong recovery*. London: Resolution Foundation. https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/02/Long-covid-in-the-labour-market.pdf

income households have reduced expenditure on things like travel, hospitality and leisure. Lower income families, however, have seen their spending increase to cover the additional costs of having children at home, such as higher food and energy bills and the extra expense of entertaining children at home.[71] This has required many low-income families to run down their savings, to turn to informal loans from family and friends and to increase consumer debt through use of credit cards and overdrafts.[72]

Future economic prospects

Although there are signs of optimism,[73] when and how the Scottish economy and labour market will recover from the impacts of COVID-19 remain uncertain and it could be a bumpy road ahead.[74] Assuming no new strains of the virus cause a resurgence in infections, the roll-out of the vaccine programme and the extension of furlough and other fiscal support schemes until September 2021 saw the economy begin to recover and employment pick up during spring and summer 2021. Time will tell if the scale of this recovery will be strong enough to avoid a substantial rise in unemployment once the furlough scheme ends.

Longer-term prospects will be contingent on policy interventions and the ability to ensure public finances remain sustainable without derailing the recovery of the economy. These fiscal policy decisions, which will affect future spending on housing, other public services and social security, will be pivotal in setting the context for homelessness in the years ahead.

The UK Government borrowed £303 billion in 2020/21. This accounted for 14.5% of gross domestic product (GDP) and pushed Government debt (borrowing accumulated over the years) to 98% of GDP,[75] which is forecast to rise to 107% in 2021.[76] For now, record low debt servicing costs due to low interest rates has given the UK Government breathing room to provide further fiscal stimulus to sustain recovery over the next year or so. However, if the UK Government is to attain its stated aim of balancing day-to-day spending and revenue by the middle of the decade, there is a risk that austerity measures and further tax rises may be announced following the Autumn spending review.

There are also uncertainties around whether the Scottish Government will be able to secure the level of finance required to rebuild the economy, particularly if revenues from devolved taxes fall relative to the rest of the UK. The Scottish Government has secured greater flexibility both to increase borrowing and to use its cash reserves for 2021-22 and 2023-24.[77] However, reserves can only be used once and any extra borrowing would be repayable. Much may therefore depend on the outcomes of the review of the fiscal framework that governs the funding and financial powers of the Scottish Government that is scheduled for later in 2021.[78]

Longer term, there are concerns that Brexit and the trade deal between the UK and European Union (EU) may hold back the Scotland's economy. The Scottish Government suggest that GDP could be 6% lower by 2030 than

71 Brewer, M. & Patrick, R. (2021) *Pandemic Pressures, why families on a low income are spending more during Covid-19*. London: Resolution Foundation https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/pandemic-pressures/
72 Ibid.
73 Scottish Government (2021) *Monthly economic brief: June 2021*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
74 Fraser of Allander (2021) *FAI Economic Commentary, 2021 Q2*, Glasgow: University of Strathclyde. https://fraserofallander.org/publications/fai-economic-commentary-2021-q2/
75 ONS (2021) *Public sector finances, UK: March 2021 – Statistical Bulletin*, London: ONS
76 Office Budget Responsibility (2021) *Economic and Fiscal Outlook Report*, London: OBR.
77 Scottish Government (2021) *Budget Statement: 2021-22*, Edinburgh Scottish Government.
78 Bell. D., Eiser, D. & Phillips, D. (2021) *Designing and funding the devolved nations' policy response to COVID-19*. Glasgow: Strathclyde University. https://ifs.org.uk/publications/15406

if the UK had remained in the EU as a result of increased barriers to trade and lower levels of migration, resulting in a smaller workforce and tax base.[79]

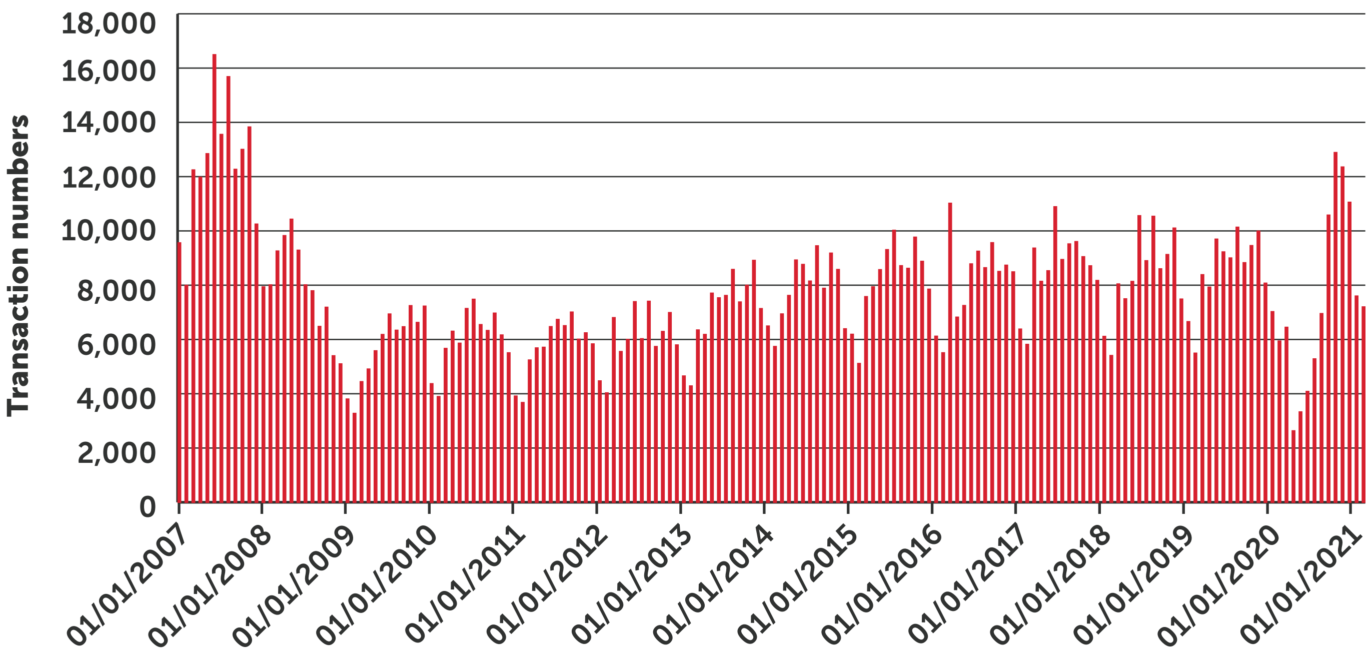
2.3 The housing market and housing policies

This section explores recent housing market and policy developments. The policy discussion primarily focuses on measures to ameliorate the economic impact of COVID-19, including protections against evictions and repossessions but it also refers to recent policy developments that may affect access to housing in the near future.

Housing market developments

The performance of the housing market during the COVID-19 crisis has been unprecedented. Restrictions on house moves throughout the first lockdown effectively suspended market activity. From April to June 2020, transactions plummeted to 2,632, well below those witnessed during the GFC recession (a low of 3,274 in February 2009) (Figure 2.3). With the easing of restrictions, transactions began to rebound strongly in July. Transactions were further boosted in the middle of July, when the Scottish Government temporarily raised the Land and Building Transaction Tax (LBTT) nil tax threshold for owner occupiers from £145,000 to £250,000 to the end of March 2021.

Figure 2.3: Annual growth in Scottish private existing and new build sales January 2007 to February 2021



Source: UK House Price Index: data downloads June 2021 (Scotland)

79 Scottish Government (2021) *Scotland's Fiscal Outlook: The Scottish Government's Medium-Term Financial Strategy*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-fiscal-outlook-scottish-governments-medium-term-financial-strategy/pages/4/

Housing construction also plummeted during the first lockdown. In the second quarter of 2020 just 690 private sector led homes were completed in Scotland, 85% less than for the same quarter in 2019.[80] This had a negative impact on new build transactions. Overall, 9,111 such sales were recorded in 2020-21, 26% lower than in 2019-20.[81] Although housing construction has picked up since summer 2020,[82] it remains unclear how quickly private housing construction might return to pre-crisis levels.

The average house price in Scotland increased by 11% to around £169,000 in the year to March 2021, the highest annual rate of increase in house prices in case terms since the GFC (see Figure 2.4). Although this may be linked to some change in consumer housing preferences in response to the pandemic[83] other factors appear to have been more significant, including the LBTT 'holiday', low interest rates, tight supply and pent-up demand from households, especially house movers, whose income was unaffected by the pandemic.[84] Reflecting this, the average house price in Scotland dropped back to £161,000 in April 2021 as the market cooled down following the end of the LBTT holiday.

In longer term perspective, as the UK economy and labour market recovered from the GFC, greater numbers of households, typically dual earners, have been able to buy their first home. UK Finance figures indicate that in 2019 there were 33,500 first time buyers in Scotland, almost double the number such transactions in 2009.[85] Sales to first time buyers dipped in 2020 but appear to be rising again, aided by stabilising housing prices, low interest rates and the UK Government's Mortgage Guarantee Scheme, which has seen lenders re-introduce high loan-to-value mortgage of up to 95% for first time buyers.[86] If the scheme ends in December 2022, as currently scheduled, increasing deposit requirements, especially if accompanied by higher interest rates, could push more 'would be' homeowners back into private renting, increasing demand pressures in the sector.

80 Scottish Government (2021) *Housing statistics quarterly update: June 2021*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-scotland-quarterly-update-2/pages/5/

81 Registers of Scotland (2021) *Property Market Report 2020-21: A long-term statistical review of the Scottish property market*. Edinburgh: RoS. https://www.ros.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/189001/Property-Market-Report-2020-21.pdf

82 National House Building Council (2020) *New home statistics review 2020*. Online: NHBC. https://www.nhbc.co.uk/binaries/content/assets/nhbc/media-centre/stats/2020-new-home-statistics-review.pdf

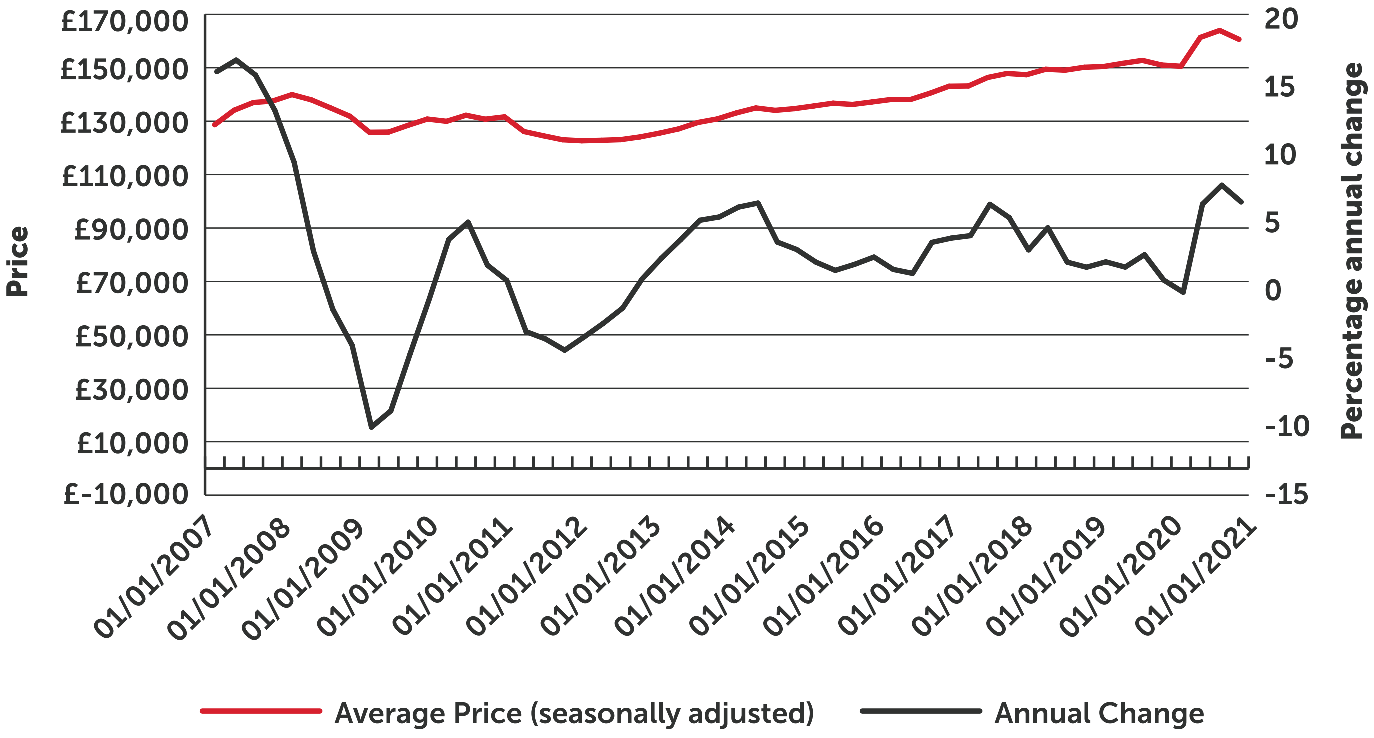
83 Scottish Government (2021) *Scottish Housing Market Review: October - December 2020*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2020/03/scottish-housing-market-review-2020/documents/scottish-housing-market-review-q4-2020/scottish-housing-market-review-q4-2020/govscot%3Adocument/Scottish%2BHousing%2BMarket%2BReview%2B-%2BQ4%2B2020.pdf

84 Ball, M. (2021) *Budget 2021: Chancellor in danger of stoking short-lived mini housing boom*. Online: Henley Business School, University of Reading. https://www.henley.ac.uk/news/2021/budget-2021-chancellor-in-danger-of-stoking-short-lived-mini-housing-boom

85 Bank of Scotland (2020) Number of first-time buyers in Scotland surges by more than 90% over the last decade. Edinburgh: Bank of Scotland.

86 HM Treasury (2021) *Policy paper: the mortgage guarantee scheme*. London: HM Treasury.

Figure 2.4: Trends in average seasonally adjusted current house prices from January 2007 to April 2021

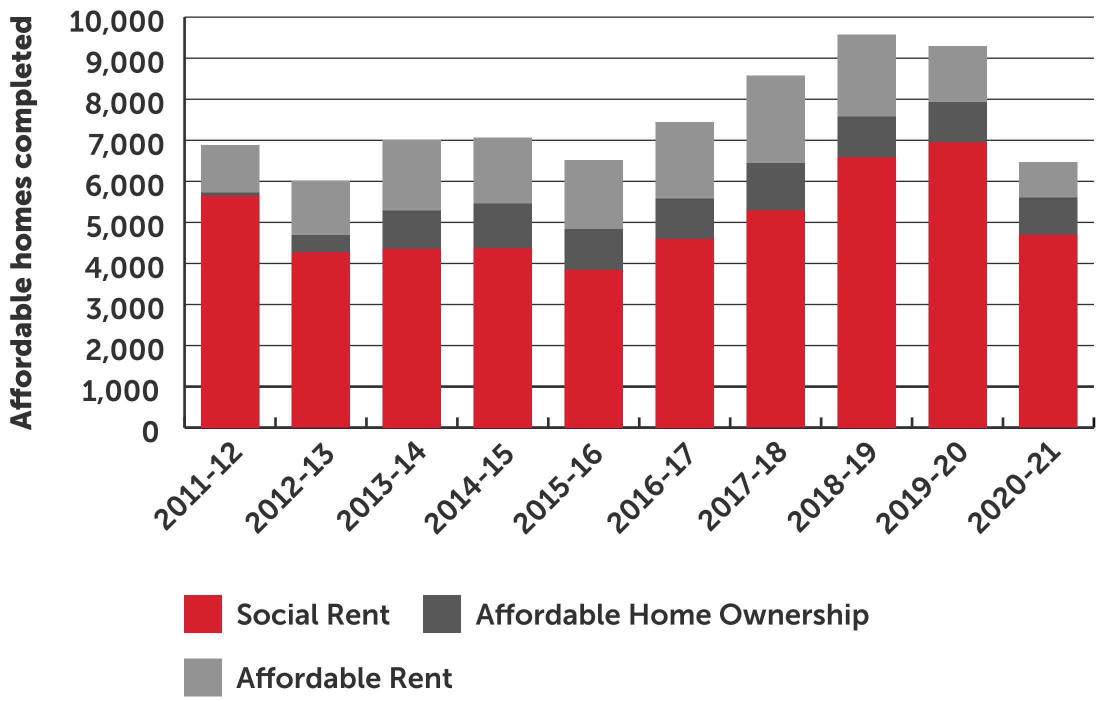


Source: UK House Price Index: data downloads June 2021 (Scotland)
Note: The average price is based on December each year. It is a geometric mean, which is type of average used to calculate growth rates and entails multiplying all house prices together and then dividing by the root of all cases. It produces figures that are closer to the median than the arithmetical mean (which entails adding all prices and then diving by the number of cases) because it is less affected by extreme values. The figures are also mix adjusted and take account of the characteristics of properties sold.

Access to the private rented sector during pandemic
In the months following the onset of the pandemic, reports suggested that private landlord registrations declined,[87] voids increased, and demand fell back.[88] Citizens Advice Scotland also reported a drop in inquiries about rent deposits, pointing to a possible slow-down in tenant turnover.[89] However, demand for private lets appears to have picked up since spring 2021.[90] Evidence on private rents is conflicting, with some reporting that increasing demand has exerted upward pressure on rents[91] and others reporting that increasing supply has exerted downward pressure on rents.[92] These varying observations suggest that the impact of the crisis

87 Scottish Government (2020) *Private Rented Sector Resilience Group minutes: 9 November 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/private-rented-sector-resilience-group-minutes-9-november-2020
88 Scottish Association of Landlords (2021) *Rent arrears fear for landlords despite pandemic discounts*. Online: Scottish Association of Landlords. https://scottishlandlords.com/news-and-campaigns/news/rent-arrears-fear-for-landlords-despite-pandemic-discounts/
89 Citizens Advice Scotland (2021) *Housing advice data; Comparison of April-December 2019 and April-December 2020 housing advice trends*. Online: CAS. https://www.cas.org.uk/system/files/publications/cas_housing_data_q1-3.pdf
90 PayProp (2021) *Results are in from the first ever PayProp Rental Confidence Index*. Online: PayProp https://blog.payprop.com/blog-posts/payprop-rental-confidence-index-december-2020
91 Propertymark (2021) *Private Rented Sector Report – June 2021*. Warwick: ARLA Propertymark.
92 Donnell, R. (2021) *Hometrack Q4 2020: Rental Market Report*. Online: Hometrack. https://www.hometrack.com/uk/insight/rental-market-report/q4-2020-rental-market-report/

Figure 2.5: Affordable housing completions, in Scotland, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Scottish Government (June 2021) Affordable Housing Supply Programme Summary Tables (new style): new affordable housing completions: 2021 q1 to latest available

on the private rental market has been both fluid and uneven, with the latter reflecting local variations in employment prospects, student demand, tourism demand and the balance between long term and short-term lettings on the eve of the crisis.

Access to social rented housing
The Scottish Government did not achieve its target to deliver 50,000 affordable homes, including 35,000 social rented homes between 2016-17 and 2020-21. Nonetheless, the rate of affordable homes delivered per 1,000 people remained far in excess of those for the other UK countries.[93] Over the five-year period, 53,936 affordable homes were approved, 53,078 were started and 41,353 were delivered (see figure 2.5). The corresponding numbers for social rented homes were 37,596, 36,578 and 28,154 respectively. The slowdown in construction brought about by the COVID-19 restrictions had a particularly marked impact on the delivery of social rented homes, which relies on the construction of new homes, unlike other forms of affordable homes, which involve a mix of new homes and off-the-shelf acquisitions. Overall, 872 social rented homes were completed in the first half of 2020-21 compared to 2,307 in the first half of 2019-20.

The COVID-19 crisis has reduced turnover, extended the time taken to relet vacated homes and increased the use of social rented dwellings for TA, particularly in the first half of 2020-21. These developments, along with the slowdown in social rented completions, have contributed to a downturn in the numbers of permanent social lettings. Scottish Housing Regulator figures indicate that around 36,000 permanent social

93 Scottish Government (2021) *Housing statistics quarterly update: June 2021*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-scotland-quarterly-update-2/pages/8/

lettings, excluding short term lettings, were made in 2020-21,[94] some 20% fewer than in 2019-20.

The proportion of (all) new social lettings to homeless households has, however, increased from 38% in 2015-16 to 44% in 2019/20.[95] While comparable data for 2020/21 is not yet available, the rapid rehousing by default agenda being pursued by the Scottish Government via its EHT Action Plan in combination with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic may lead to further increases in the years to come (see chapter 3).

Protection from eviction and repossessions

To protect tenants and borrowers, both the UK and Scottish Governments took the unprecedented step of introducing temporary, but compulsory, forbearance on the part of landlords and lenders. As discussed in chapter 4, key informants and LA survey respondents were of the view that these protections have been critical in preventing homelessness.

In April 2020, the notice period that social and private landlords operating in Scotland must give tenants of their intention to seek eviction was generally extended to six months. In addition, all grounds for eviction in the private sector were made discretionary, permitting the First-tier Tribunal (Tribunal) to consider all factors before determining whether to issue an eviction order. Both measures were initially intended to operate until September 2020, but will now remain in place until 31st March 2022, with the potential for the Scottish Parliament to extend them until the 30th September 2022. The one exception was that in October 2020 the three month notice period for cases involving antisocial and criminal behaviour reverted to one month. This occurred after various organisations voiced concerns about the impact of such behaviour on the safety and wellbeing of neighbours and local communities.[96]

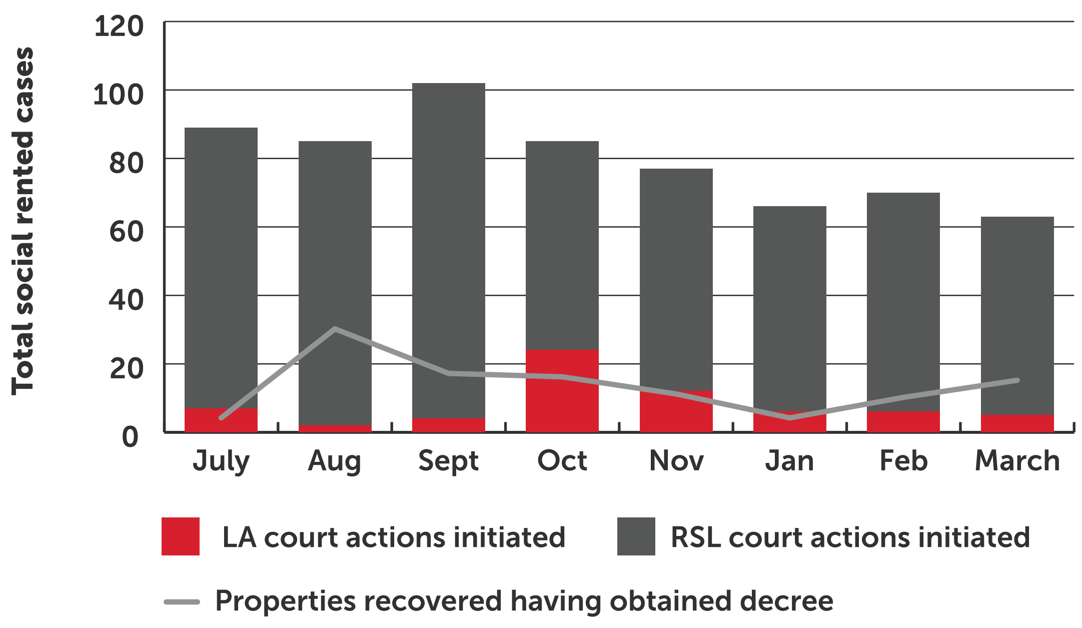
In December 2020, the enforcement of Court and Tribunal eviction orders was suspended. This has prevented sheriff officers from removing social or private tenants from their home unless an order is granted for antisocial or criminal behaviour or domestic abuse. Again, the timeframe for this measure has been extended. Initially introduced from 11 December 2020 to 22 January 2021, it was subsequently extended to 31 March 2020 and could continue to apply in areas where people were prohibited from gathering in homes until 30 September. However, by July, every local authority level had moved below Protection Level 3.

Prior to the pandemic, social landlords were already subject to pre-action requirements and were expected to make all reasonable efforts to work with tenants to manage arrears prior to proceeding with court action. This requirement was extended to private landlords at the end of September 2020 for a period of up to a year, which has now been extended until at least 31 March 2022. The Scottish Government has now confirmed it plans to make this a permanent arrangement. It also plans to look at how existing provisions can be improved to deliver extra protection for people experiencing domestic abuse and, where appropriate, remain in the family home as a sole tenant.[97]

This package of measures has led to a dramatic drop in evictions in the social rented sector. Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) dashboard data is not directly comparable to SHR historic evictions data and it does it not cover the whole of 2020-21 but it provides some insight into the recent eviction activity. It suggests that social landlords recovered a minimum of 107 homes in 2020-21, compared to an average of 2,145 homes in each of the three years to 2019-20. This decline was mostly due to a fall in eviction for rent arrears, which accounted for 62 cases in 2020-21, down from an average of 2,018 cases in the three years to 2019-20. A further 39 evictions were for antisocial behaviour, down from an annual average of 113 cases.

94 Scottish Housing Regulator (2021) *Monthly Covid-19 dashboards – March 2021 Update*. Online: Scottish Housing Regulator. https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance/national-reports/monthly-covid-19-dashboards
95 Calculated from Annual Return on the Charter data from the Scottish Housing Regulator.
96 Scottish Government (2021) *Coronavirus Acts: Sixth report to Scottish Parliament*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-acts-sixth-report-scottish-parliament/
97 Scottish Government (2021) *Housing to 2040*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-2040-2/

Figure 2.6: Social landlord eviction related court actions, July 2020 to March 2021



Source: Scottish Housing Regulator (2021) Full dataset from all landlords from April 2020 to March 2021
Note: Eviction figures for April, May, June and December 2020 were not collected by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Figure 2.6 illustrates that evictions fell month-on-month from August to January 2021. Since then, evictions have risen slightly, driven by evictions for anti-social behaviour and criminal activity. It also illustrates that the numbers of cases where court action was initiated peaked at 102 in September 2020 but dropped back to 63 in March 2021. Most actions that were initiated prior to October involved cases where a notice of proceedings had been issued before the 7 April, when the COVID-19 measures took effect.

Although rent arrears have accrued, the scale of increase has been lower than perhaps initially feared. Between April and November 2020, total rent arrears increased from £150 million to £167 million. By March 2021, this sum had dropped to £161 million, which equated to 6.2% of total rental income due and was just 0.5% higher than reported for 2019-20. The position of individual social landlords is, however, very variable. At the end of March 2021, rent arrear rates reported by social landlords ranged from less than 1% to over 12%, with LAs typically reporting higher levels of rent arrears than Registered Social Landlords

(RSLs).[98] UK estimates suggest 9-13% of social tenants were behind with their housing payments at various points during 2020-21.[99]

The picture for private sector rent arrears and evictions is less clear. The sixth report to the Scottish Parliament on the COVID-19 emergency powers[100] stated that the Tribunal had received 163 eviction applications that fell within the scope of the temporary eviction rules in 2020-21. However, it did not clarify how many of these cases had been heard and what decisions had been reached. In the same report, the Scottish Government suggested that perhaps 11% of private rentals had secured a discounted rent from their landlord, but there is a lack of hard evidence to corroborate this. It also quoted figures from 'PayProp' that indicated that the proportion of private renters in arrears peaked at 14% in May 2020, before falling back to 8% in November 2020. Elsewhere, Citizens Advice Scotland report that during April-December 2020, greater numbers of private renters had sought advice than for the same period in 2019. Most had sought advice in connection with rent and rent arrears, repairs and deposits but Citizens Advice Scotland also highlighted a "worrying increase" in cases involving landlord harassment and illegal eviction.[101]

Starting in March 2020, the UK Government, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and mortgage lenders put in put in place temporary measures to assist homeowners and private landlords throughout the UK to avoid repossession. For owners, a moratorium on repossessions was introduced alongside opportunities for borrowers to apply for a three month mortgage payment deferral and (latterly) a break in payments, and guidance advising lenders to exercise forbearance for borrowers that continue to experience financial difficulties after six months of deferred payments. Private landlords that are not a registered business and own less than 6 properties are eligible for the Scottish Government's Private Rent Sector Landlord COVID-19 Loan Scheme. This £5 million fund offers interest-free loans to cover lost rental income for up to three properties. Demand for the loan fund in its first months of operation has been very modest (£149,305) possibly because private landlords facing financial problems have yet to 'max out' their mortgage deferral holiday.[102] Taken together, these measures have contained repossessions and arrears for homebuyer and buy to let landlord borrowers alike.[103]

Unfolding challenges

Uncertainty around what might happen when temporary measures are withdrawn makes it extremely difficult to gauge how the housing situation might unfold. However, there are concerns that the temporary eviction protections may have delayed rather than removed the threat of an upsurge in homelessness, with particular concerns voiced about PRS tenants who have built up arrears while the protections have been in place:

> **"homelessness delayed is not homelessness resolved… eviction can be the right path for some folk, as long as the services are there to pick them up. At least it's an end to the accruing of new arrears. So there are people accruing arrears and arrears and arrears, that we still don't know how that's going to be resolved."** (Key informant, voluntary sector)

> **"We don't know the people in PRS accommodation, and we don't know the level of arrears that they've got… The response of Local Authorities to high levels of arrears isn't going to be eviction, necessarily. A range of factors will be considered and it's for services, ultimately, to decide what's the best option, but there's a level of, I suppose, control over that… There's a level of predictability in there, but there's not really the same level of predictability with the PRS side of things"** (Key informant, local government)

There are also concerns that any labour market slump that further increases pressure on incomes could lead to a double hit on arrears, increasing the numbers of households in arrears and deepening rent arrears amongst those already in difficulty. An upsurge in evictions was certainly a central concern for LA survey respondents, all of whom expect to see an increase in homelessness demand precipitated by eviction from the PRS in the post-lockdown period, with 20 (of 29) respondents also anticipating an increase as a result of social sector evictions and 19 also expecting an increase in demand from repossessed homeowners.

The Scottish Government has announced plans to invest £3.3 billion to support the delivery of 50,000 affordable homes by 2027. This forms phase one of its goal to deliver 100,000 homes by 2032, of which 70% are to be for social rent. These plans are consistent with independent projections that show a continued need to expand the stock of social housing.[104] In line with fuel poverty, child poverty and climate change targets, new homes will be required to attain higher energy efficiency and fire safety standards. The Scottish Government, in the wake of COVID-19, also wants to see homes built to more spacious indoor and external standards all of which will further drive up the cost of building new homes.

Achieving these ambitions will largely depend on the willingness and capacity of social landlords to invest in new homes whilst ensuring rents remain affordable. The dilemma is that the requirement for investment in existing social homes is also increasing, mainly driven by new fire safety requirements plus targets to decarbonise heating systems and bring social housing up to EPC Band B rating by the end of 2032:

> **"it's unrealistic for the government to expect we'll actually deliver that on the money that they're providing… they're expecting… super high-spec, energy-efficient, passive house, lifetime, green space, digitally connected home. Of course, we should have that… but you're not going to get that**

98 Scottish Housing Regulator (2021) Full dataset from all landlords from April 2020 to March 2021. Online: Scottish Housing Regulator. https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance/national-reports/covid-19-dashboards/full-dataset-from-all-landlords-from-april-2020-to-march-2021

99 Judge, L. (2021) *Getting ahead on falling behind- Tackling the UK's building arrears crisis*. London: Resolution Foundation. https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/getting-ahead-on-falling-behind/

100 Scottish Government (2021) *Coronavirus Acts: sixth report to Scottish Parliament*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-acts-sixth-report-scottish-parliament/

101 Citizens Advice Scotland (2021) *Housing advice data; Comparison of April-December 2019 and April-December 2020 housing advice trends*. Online: CAS. https://www.cas.org.uk/system/files/publications/cas_housing_data_q1-3.pdf

102 Scottish Government (2020) *Private Rent Sector Landlord (non-business) COVID-19 Loan Scheme questions: FOI release*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-202000115141/

103 UK Finance (2021) *Lenders continue commitment to supporting mortgage customers into 2021-* online statement. Online: UK Finance. https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/press/press-releases/Lenders-continue-commitment-to-supporting-mortgage-customers-into-2021; UK Finance (2021) Mortgage Arrears and Possessions Update Quarter 4 2020. Online: UK Finance. https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Data%20(XLS%20and%20PDF)/UKF-Mortgage-Arrears-Possessions-Update-11-February-2021-FINAL.pdf

104 Dunning, R., Moore, T., Ferrari, E., Hoolachan, J., Keskin, B., Powell, R. & O'Brien, P. (2020) *Affordable Housing Need in Scotland post 2021*. SFHA, Chartered Institute of Housing and Shelter Scotland. https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/affordable_housing_need_in_scotland_post-2021

on, broadly, the existing grant rate that we're giving social landlords... Something has to give...the standards or the supply" (Key informant, housing sector)

Operating costs have also been increasing in order to support tenants to cope with the economic, health and wellbeing impacts of the crisis, to keep staff safe and to transform how services are delivered (see chapter 3). These competing pressures are shaping discussions around the level of grant subsidy required to support the development of new social homes. The outcome of these discussions will impact on the numbers of new social homes built in the next few years and progress towards rapid rehousing for all.

2.4 Furlough and social security related measures

This section explores the measures taken by the UK and Scottish Government to protect the financial security of individuals and families during the COVID-19 crisis. It discusses, the furlough scheme and related measures to sustain jobs, temporary modification to Universal Credit (UC), including the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), and finally it considers Scotland specific measures put in place by the Scottish Government.

Furlough and self-employment schemes

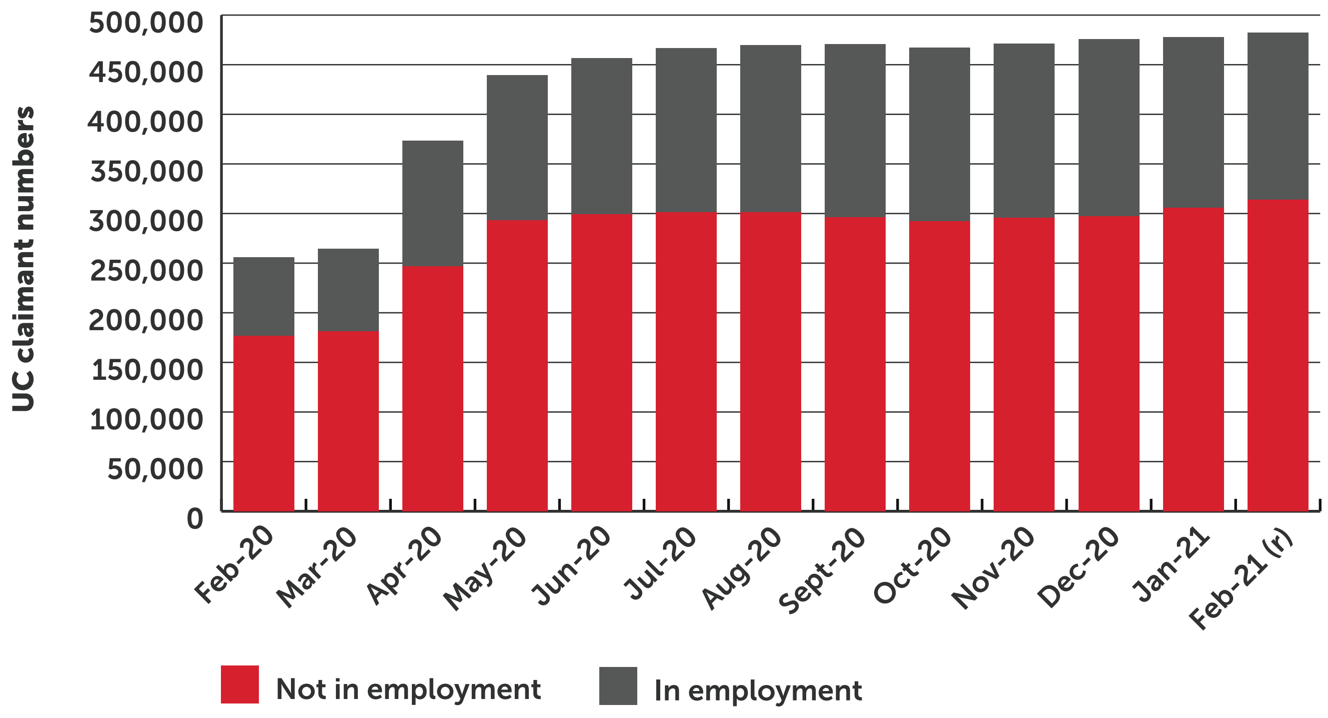
On 20 March 2020, the UK Government launched the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), providing a grant to employers to pay furloughed staff 80% of their wages up to £2,500 per month. It has been extended four times, during which times grant conditions have been modified. From July 2020, staff on furlough were permitted to work part-time. From August, employers were required to pay employer NI and pension contributions for furloughed staff. In late October, the tapering down of grant rates was reversed after the second lockdown in England was announced. CJRS is now due to end on 30 September 2021. In line with this, the CJRS grant will be reduced from 75 to 70% of wages in July and to 60% in August, with employers required to top up the remaining 10-20%.

The CJRS had supported a cumulative total of 11.5 million employee jobs by March 2021, including 897,700 Scottish jobs, at a cost of £61.3 billion.[105] The numbers of furloughed jobs in Scotland have fluctuated in line with the easing and tightening of COVID-19 restrictions, peaking at 490,000 in June 2020 and dropping to 200,000 in early October 2020. Most of the 327,100 furloughed jobs in Scotland at 31 March 2021 were fully rather than partially furloughed. Comparatively high proportions of young people (16-24 years) and lower paid people have been furloughed, due to the fact that they tend to work in customer facing sectors that have been most adversely affected by the crisis, such as hospitality, tourism, leisure and retail. LA survey respondents universally deemed the CJRS to have been an important policy measure in preventing or minimising homelessness in their areas, with 21 describing it as 'very important' in this regard and the remaining 7 'somewhat important'.

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) provides a taxable grant for sole traders, with three out of the five grant tranches paid in 2020-21 at a gross cost of £19.7 million. In Scotland, 158,000 people were paid a SEISS 1 grant, which was capped

105 HM Revenue and Customs (2021) *Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics: 6 May 2021* - data tables. Online: HMRC. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-6-may-2021

Figure 2.7: Numbers of Universal Credit claimants in Scotland by employment status in year to February 2021



Source: Department and Works and Pensions Stat-Xplore, Universal Credit tables

at £2,500 per month, and 131,000 received a SEISS 3 grant, of which 26% worked in construction.[106]

The CJRS and SEISS schemes have preserved jobs and protected household incomes. However, there has been criticism that the delay in announcing the extension of the CJRS to late October, just ahead of its planned abolition, contributed to 400,000 redundancies in the UK in the three months to November.[107] The failure to adjust the schemes to better target lower earners has also been criticised. Of the 2.1 million self-employed adults in the UK that Financial Conduct Authority estimate to have lost income,[108] up to 1.5 million may have been ineligible for SEISS.[109]

One of the groups excluded from SEISS were newly self-employed adults. However, few turned to the Scottish Government's £34 million Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund, which was open for applications near the start of the crisis. In total, 5,673 adults were awarded a discretionary one-off £2,000 taxable grant, totalling

106 HM Revenue and Customs (2021) *Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) Statistics: February 2021 (tables 1,2 and 6).* Online: HMRC. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/self-employment-income-support-scheme-statistics-february-2021

107 Cominetti, N., Henehan, K., Slaughter, H. & Thwaites, G. (2021) *Long Covid in the labour market: The impact on the labour market of Covid-19 a year into the crisis, and how to secure a strong recovery.* London: Resolution Foundation. https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/02/Long-covid-in-the-labour-market.pdf

108 Financial Conduct Authority (2021) *Financial Lives 2020 survey: the impact of coronavirus*. London: Financial Services Agency https://www.fca.org.uk/publication/research/financial-lives-survey-2020.pdf

109 Cominetti, N., Henehan, K., Slaughter, H. & Thwaites, G (2021) *Long Covid in the labour market: The impact on the labour market of Covid-19 a year into the crisis, and how to secure a strong recovery.* London: Resolution Foundation. https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/02/Long-covid-in-the-labour-market.pdf

£11.3 million.[110] The fund was re-opened for a few weeks in March 2021, with an increased grant offer of £4,000.

Universal Credit and temporary benefit adjustments
UC is now the sole option for people of working age that make a new claim for means-tested financial support and has been the principal safety net for people who have been made redundant or have experienced a sharp drop in earnings since the crisis began. Figure 2.7 illustrates that during March-June 2020, the numbers of people claiming UC in Scotland surged upwards. The rate of growth in claimant numbers subsequently slowed but by February 2021, some 482,549 people were claiming UC, 88% higher than in February 2020, when 256,083 people claimed UC.

Figure 2.7 also illustrates that since the start of the crisis, there has been a proportionately sharper growth in UC claims from those in employment (113%) than for those classed as unemployed (78%). This is partly because many people with reduced earnings, whether on furlough or not, have become eligible for UC and partly because temporary UC measures have effectively extended entitlement to UC further up the earnings scale. These measures include the weekly £20 uplift in the standard UC allowance and the LHA uplift, both of which are discussed below, plus the suspension of the Minimum Income Floor for the self-employed.[111] The Office for Budget Responsibility estimates that these three measures collectively boosted household incomes by £8.3 billion in 2020-21.[112]

The majority of the increase in claims in Scotland since March 2020 has been from single adults and people that do not live in the social rented sector. Reflecting this, the profile of people claiming UC since the start of the crisis differs from the profile of people that were already claiming UC when the crisis started. Drawing on a YouGov survey of 7,601 UK claimants in the second quarter of 2020, The Welfare at a (Social) Distance study found that new claimants were also typically younger (18-29 years), higher-skilled, better educated and less likely to have a disability.[113] New claimants that are unemployed may therefore face fewer barriers to re-entering paid work than people that were unemployed and claiming UC prior to the crisis, so long as the labour market recovers quickly. On the other hand, many have struggled to bridge the gap between their benefit income and their living costs without using up any savings, borrowing from family or running up debt. They also appear to have been more likely to have fallen behind with their housing costs than existing claimants.[114]

The surge in demand for UC placed huge operational pressures on the DWP and required nearly 10,000 staff to be redeployed from within the DWP and from other Government departments to help process new claims. DWP have been praised by Westminster Committees for its prompt response, which saw 96% of new UC claims in April 2020 receive their full first payment on time.[115] The move to a 'don't call us, we'll call you' policy also seems to have improved the experience of UC applicants.[116]

That said, the lockdown highlighted existing flaws, such as difficulties applying online for those without adequate digital literacy or digital access. The closure of Jobcentres and reduced access to welfare rights advice also appears to have most adversely affected people with additional support needs such as people with limited English, people with learning disabilities, people with hearing or vision impairments, prison leavers and people with complex needs.[117] Evidence is also emerging from the Welfare at a (Social) Distance study that the problem of non-take up of UC and other social security benefits has increased during the crisis, and has contributed to households falling behind with their housing payments and other regular bills.[118] Concerns continue that a number of pre-existing features of UC including the five-week wait and benefit sanctions continue to *"directly contribute to homelessness"*,[119] and LA survey respondents clearly lack confidence in the capacity of the welfare safety net to protect the newly unemployed from homelessness with 18 (of 29) anticipating an increase in homelessness demand from this group in the post-lockdown period.

Sanctions and direct deductions
The use of conditionality backed by benefit sanctions remains one of the more controversial aspects of the UK social security system, with evidence that the imposition of sanctions is associated with an increase in financial hardship, material deprivation and food insecurity.[120]

The claimant commitment and benefit sanctions were suspended for new claimants during the first lockdown to permit staff to be redeployed and speed up UC payments,[121] with almost all LA survey respondents (23 of 29) seeing this move as important in preventing or minimising homelessness in their area. The sanctions moratorium began to be phased out from 1 July 2020 but the numbers of UC sanction decisions across Britain have remained low, mainly because people must have a claimant commitment that has been put in place or revised since March 2020 before a sanction can be imposed. In January 2021, there were 489 decisions to sanction people claiming UC (full service) across Britain, down from 18,466 in January 2020.[122] These changes did

110 Scottish Government (2020) *Coronavirus (COVID-19): summary of Scottish funding - 30 April 2021.* Online: Scottish Government. https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20210521121958/http://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-summary-of-scottish-funding---30-april-2021/
111 The Minimum Income Floor is based on the minimum wage and the number of hours a person is expected to work and caps UC entitlement. Thus, anyone who has been self-employed for over twelve months who earns less than the Minimum Income Floor is treated as earning this amount. The suspension runs until the end of July 2021.
112 Office for Budget Responsibility (2020) *Economic and fiscal outlook – November 2020.* Online: OBR. https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-november-2020/
113 Edmiston, D., Geiger, B., de Vries, R., Scullion, L., Summers, K., Ingold, J., Robertshaw, D., Gibbons, A. & Karagiannaki, E. (2020) *Who are the new COVID-19 cohort of benefit claimants? Welfare at a (Social) Distance Rapid Report 2.* Salford: University of Salford. https://hub.salford.ac.uk/welfare-at-a-social-distance/wp-content/uploads/sites/120/2020/09/WaSD-Rapid-Report-2-New-COVID-19-claimants.pdf
114 Summers, K., Scullion, L., Baumberg Geiger, B., Robertshaw, D., Edmiston, D., Gibbons, A., Karagiannaki, E., De Vries, R., & Ingold, J (2021) *Claimants' experiences of the social security system during the first wave of COVID-19.* Welfare at a (Social) Distance Project. Salford: University of Salford.
115 Mackley, A. (2021) *Coronavirus: Universal Credit during the crisis:* House of Commons briefing paper 8999, House of commons Library. Online: UK Parliament. https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8999/CBP-8999.pdf
116 Wilson, H. & Finch, D. (2021) *Unemployment and mental health - Why both require action for our COVID-19 recovery.* London: The Health Foundation. https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/unemployment-and-mental-health
117 Mackley, A. (2021) *Coronavirus: Universal Credit during the crisis:* House of Commons briefing paper 8999, House of commons Library. Online: UK Parliament. https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8999/CBP-8999.pdf
118 Baumberg Geiger, B., Scullion, L., Summers, K., Martin, P., Lawler, C., Edmiston, D., Gibbons, A., Ingold, J., Robertshaw, D., & de Vries, R. (2021) *Non-take-up of Benefits at the Start of the COVID-19 Pandemic:* Salford. Salford University Welfare at a (Social) Distance. https://62608d89-fc73-4896-861c-0e03416f9922.usrfiles.com/ugd/62608d_602f7840f4114361a4dbf6d007d3825b.pdf
119 Scottish Government (2021) *Homelessness and Universal Credit.* Edinburgh: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-universal-credit/
120 Pattaro, S., Bailey N., Williams, E., Gibson, M., Wells V., Tranmer, M. & Dibben, C. (2021) *The impacts of benefit sanctions: a scoping review of the quantitative research evidence.* Glasgow: Glasgow University. https://eprints.gla.ac.uk/234959/
121 Mackley, A. (2021) *Coronavirus: Universal Credit during the crisis:* House of Commons briefing paper 8999, House of commons Library. Online: UK Parliament. https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8999/CBP-8999.pdf
122 Department of Work and Pensions (2021) *Benefit sanctions statistics.* London: DWP. https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/jobseekers-allowance-sanctions

not extend to people who had already had their benefits sanctioned prior to the lockdown. In January 2021 4,038 people across Britain that were in receipt of UC (Full Service) had their benefit reduced as a result of having a sanction imposed. Of these, some 2,700 had been continuously sanctioned throughout the crisis.[123]

Direct deductions for benefit overpayments and third-party debts were suspended for a short period at the start of the crisis, a move seen to be very or somewhat important in preventing or minimising homelessness by three quarters of LA survey respondents (22 of 29) (see table 4, Appendix 1). Whilst the UK Government has continued to require people to repay UC advances to cover the minimum five-week wait, in April 2021, it increased the period over which UC advances are recovered from 12 to 24 months and reduced the maximum rate of deduction from 30% to 25% of the UC standard allowance.

£20 weekly supplement

The £20 weekly supplement to UC and the Working Tax Credit, which was estimated to cost £6.1 billion in 2020-21,[124] is generally perceived to have helped alleviate financial hardship. The Scottish Government estimates that without it, up to an additional 60,000 people, including 20,000 children, might have been in relative AHC poverty.[125] Almost all LA survey respondents (25 of 29) saw the uplift to have been important in preventing or minimising homelessness in their area during the pandemic, something that key informants strongly agreed with, while noting the continuing inadequacy of the broader welfare safety net:

> **"the £20 really made a difference, really did… £20 can be a big percentage of an otherwise small number. So we did get a lot of feedback on that making a difference"**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

> **"the uplift in Universal Credit has had a positive impact… but people have been struggling to get food… people are still being left short… the benefit system is still needing radical change."**
> (Key informant, local government)

> **"anything that tops up Universal Credit is going to make a difference to individuals and how they're able to cope"**
> (Key informant, statutory sector)

A six month extension to the end of September 2021 was confirmed in the March Budget, although this is said to be less than many organisations called for.[126]

The UK Government stopped short of applying the £20 uplift to contributory and other legacy benefits. Many carers, people with disabilities and vulnerable people who tend to rely on these benefits have therefore received no extra financial support to cope with rising living costs through the crisis. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Poverty report called for the £20 uplift to be extended to all legacy benefits, but this was not taken forward in the March Budget.[127]The upcoming High Court review of whether the decision not to apply the £20 to Employment and Support Allowance is unlawful and discriminatory may change matters.[128]

More generally, the £20 uplift has renewed focus on the inadequacies of the social security system and the low replacement rates of working age benefits compared to countries in Europe.[129] This has led to calls to take the opportunity offered by the COVID-19 crisis to build a fairer and more coherent system, even though the UK Government has expressly said it does not want to reform UC.

Local Housing Allowance and the Benefit Cap

The LHA sets the maximum amount of housing support that tenants in privately rented accommodation can receive as part of their UC housing costs element or Housing Benefit claim. In 2011, the LHA was reduced from 50% to 30% of the median rent in the Broad Rental Market Area and was subsequently only uprated by 1% until 2016/17, when it was frozen for four years. The maximum LHA for 2020-21 was reset to the 30th percentile of market rents for each Broad Rental Market Area as part of the package of welfare changes introduced in response to the pandemic. Almost all LA survey respondents (23 out of 28) deemed this change to have been important in preventing or minimising homelessness in their area since its introduction, and key informants noted that the change had been especially instrumental in opening up access to the PRS in some areas. Speaking about the situation in Edinburgh, one commented:

> **"one of the reasons the PRS was able to get going was because the LHA went up in April and there were no tourists, there was a whole bunch of houses that were available."**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

However, key informants expressed disappointment that the move *"didn't go further"* (Key informant, voluntary sector) and LAs made clear that it was not sufficient to substantially enhance access to private tenancies for low-income households or those facing homelessness, with the continuing barriers to access highlighted as especially acute for under 35 year olds impacted by the Shared Accommodation Rate:

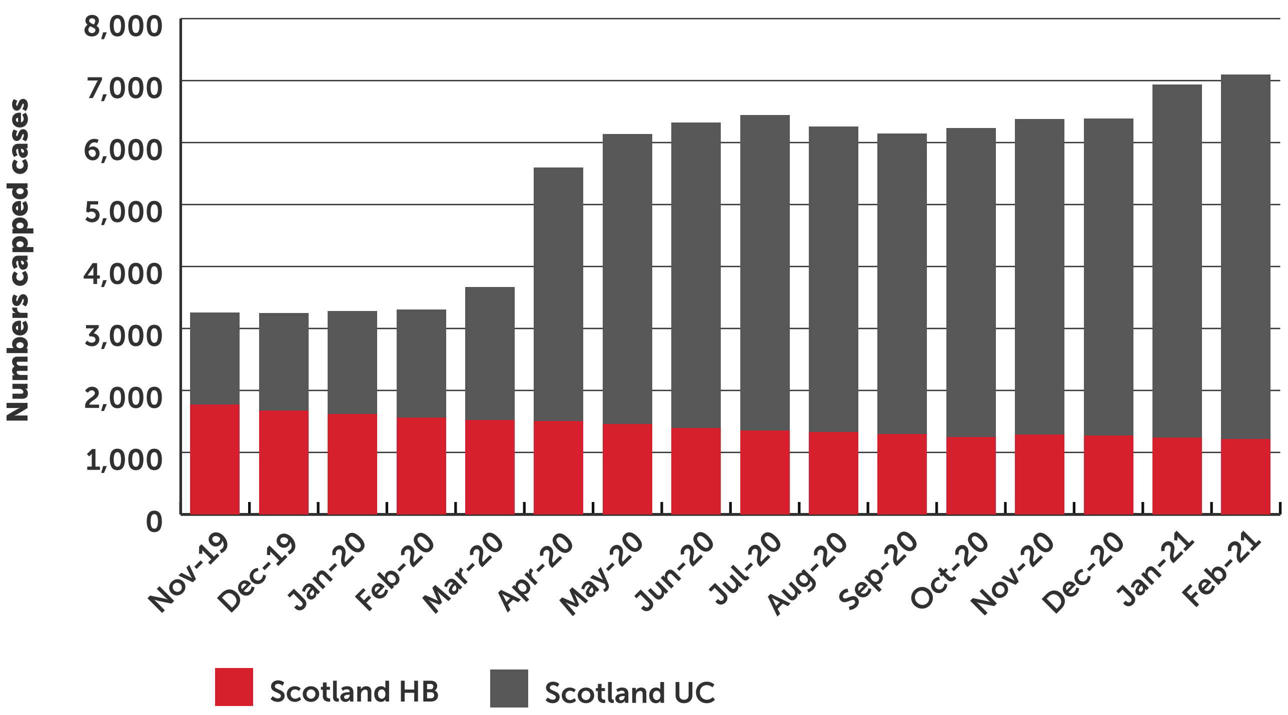
> **"Though the 'LHA maximum raised to 30th percentile' provided some support it does not go far enough in preventing or responding to homelessness. The LHA would need to be in line with the cost of renting in the private sector and the shared room rate needs to be abolished to make a significant difference in making the private sector an affordable long term housing solution, particularly for single people under 35"**
> (LA, rest of Scotland)

> **"Affordability for under 35s in receipt of LHA has not changed at all as a result of the increase in LHA rates (based on a record of all properties advertised in the last financial year compared to the previous year)"**
> (LA, rest of Scotland)

Moreover, LHA rates were subsequently frozen at their current rate for 2021-22. This will inevitably widen the gap between actual rents payable and the rent used to assess benefit entitlement, which is likely to increase the numbers of private renters

123 Webster, D. (2021) *CPAG Briefing - Benefit Sanctions Statistics February 2021*. Online: CPAG. https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/21-02%20Sanctions%20Stats%20Briefing%20-%20D.Webster.docx
124 Office for Budget Responsibility (2020) *Economic and fiscal outlook – November 2020*. Online: OBR. https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-november-2020/
125 Scottish Government (2020) *Impact of withdrawing emergency benefit measures*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/impact-of-withdrawing-emergency-benefit-measures/pages/introduction/
126 Brewer, M., & Handscomb, K. (2021) *Half-measures: The Chancellor's options for Universal Credit in the Budget*. Online: Resolution Foundation. https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/02/Half-measures.pdf
127 All-Party Parliamentary Group on Poverty (2021) *The impact on poverty of not maintaining the £20 uplift in universal credit and working tax credits, and of not extending the uplift to legacy and related benefits*. Online: APPGP. http://www.appgpoverty.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/APPG-on-Poverty-20-uplift-report-FINAL.docx.pdf
128 Mackley, A., Hobson, F. & McInnes, R. (2021) *Coronavirus: Legacy benefits and the Universal Credit 'uplift' – briefing paper*. London: House of Common Library https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9246/CBP-9246.pdf
129 Trade Union Congress (2020) *Fixing the Safety Net: Next Steps in the Economic Response to Coronavirus*. Online: TUC. https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/fixing-safety-net-next-steps-economic-response-coronavirus

Figure 2.8: Households subject to Total Benefit Cap in Scotland in November 2019 to February 2021



Source: Department for Work and Pensions, Stat-Xplore accessed June 2021

struggling to pay their rent and falling into arrears.

A related concern is how the £20 supplement and LHA uplift interact with the total benefit cap, which limits the total amount in benefits a working-age household classed as "out of work" can receive. As shown in figure 2.8, around 3,670 households in Scotland were subject to the benefit cap prior to April 2020. The numbers increased to 5,600 in April when these two measures came into effect and then fluctuated between 6,100 and 6,400 until the end of the year. They then jumped to around 7,000 in the first two months of 2021, which is when people who had been working immediately prior to claiming UC at the start of the crisis became subject to the benefit cap. Over 98% of those subject to the benefit cap in the year to November 2020, and therefore did not benefit from the £20 supplement, were lone parents or families with dependent children.

Scottish Government measures to bolster incomes

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are a benefit that can be paid to renters in receipt of either Housing Benefit or the Universal Credit housing element to help cover any shortfall between rent liability and housing related benefit payments. This social security benefit was devolved to the Scottish Government in 2017, and us awarded to households by LAs, who administer it. The DHP budget for 2020-21, including an additional £8 million to respond to COVID-19 related demands, was £78.6 million, of which around £76.5 million (97%) had been spent or committed during the year.[130]

130 Scottish Government (2021) *Discretionary Housing Payments in Scotland: 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/discretionary-housing-payments-in-scotland-1-april-2020-to-31-march-2021/

The Scottish Government uses the DHP budget to fully fund the mitigation of any social security shortfalls incurred by social rented tenants as a result of the bedroom tax. This accounted for £62.7 million (82%) of the DHP budget for 2020-21. Of the 'discretionary' £13.3 million, LAs spent £3.6 million on lessening the impact of the benefit cap, £2.9 million on mitigating the LHA and a £6.8 million on 'core' functions such as help with removal costs, rent deposits and rent payments in advance. Expenditure on the LHA and the benefit cap, were significantly lower than the notional budgets suggested by the Scottish Government whilst 'core' expenditure was higher. This is explained by the fact that LAs can decide how they use the discretionary element of the DHP. LA spending priorities are very variable. For instance, LHA related expenditure in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Highland exceeded the notional LHA budget whereas in Edinburgh and the Lothians, LHA expenditure generally accounted for less than 50% of the notional LHA allocation.

The Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) is intended to provide a safety net for people facing a financial crisis and offers two types of grant. Crisis grants assist people coping with an emergency or disaster and can help with paying for food and other essentials. Community care grants enable people to pay for things like floor coverings, beds, and kitchen appliances that are essential for independent living. The SWF budget for 2020-21 was £57.5 million, including a £22 million COVID-19 allocation.[131] Of this budget, £49.1 million had been spent by 31 March 2021.[132] The latest figures report that by December 2020, some 31,000 community care grants and 136,300 crisis grants had been awarded throughout Scotland.[133]

LA survey respondents who participated in this study highly valued the Scottish Government boosts to DHP and SWF budgets, with almost all describing these increases as very or somewhat important in minimising or preventing homelessness in the area, more than for any other listed welfare change introduced during the pandemic (see table 4, Appendix 1). This reinforces a theme in past Homelessness Monitor reports regarding the value of these mechanisms as a homelessness response. Key informants agreed, but raised concerns about the capacity of LAs to effectively administer these funds:

> **"[increases to] DHP and Scottish Welfare Fund, definitely welcome, but… The small teams in DHPs and the Welfare Fund was never designed to meet the number of asks that it now makes, which means that it's just a lot more difficult for local authorities to process… government are always very reluctant to fund any kind of additional administration costs. If people can't be there to do it, then that makes it really difficult."**
> (Key informant, local government)

LAs have a lot of discretion over how the SWF is delivered in their area. In the wake of the pandemic, the operation of the SWF and the DHP discretionary element have come under the spotlight. There are concerns that expenditure in 2020-21 failed to reflect the extra demand anticipated

131 The Scottish Government allocated an extra £20 million in October that Councils could use to supplement their SWF or DHP budgets or support people through the pandemic in another way but this resource is not included in SWF or DHP statistics.
132 Scottish Government (2021) *Scottish Welfare Fund and Self-Isolation Support Grant monthly management information & Discretionary Housing Payments monthly official statistics*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/swf-monthly-management-information/
133 Scottish Government (2021) *Scottish Welfare Fund Statistics: Update to 31 December 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-welfare-fund-statistics-update-to-31-december-2020/

during the COVID-19 crisis.[134] The Scottish Poverty and Inequality Commission[135] has also published a report suggesting that current SWF arrangements are deeply flawed and that the ability to secure SWF support largely depends on the area in which a person lives rather than their individual circumstances, with anecdotal reports that some LAs had suspended Community Care Grants during the early months of this pandemic. The report pointed to a lack of awareness amongst those potentially eligible for SWF, inconsistencies in the way the SWF is promoted and communicated by LAs and (as above) a failure to ensure LAs had sufficient resources to properly administer the SWF during the past year.

In addition to these two main grant programmes, the Scottish Government opened a £10 million Tenants Hardship Loan Fund in December 2020. This loan was intended to assist tenants to pay rent or rent arrears and was targeted primarily at people ineligible for other support such as DHP and SWF grants. By mid-May 2021 the minimal impact of this measure had become clear, when the Scottish Parliament heard that just 145 loan awards, totalling £472,000, had been made.[136] It is therefore surprising that a majority of LA survey respondents deemed the Fund to have been important in preventing or minimising homelessness in their area (see table 4, appendix 1). Key informants, by contrast, where scathing about the design of the fund:

"A lot of the people who need to benefit from it can't access it... they don't qualify"
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

"The Tenants' Loan Fund... is a joke... for the Government to come up with a loan scheme for people who are already struggling with debt and potential redundancy and unemployment, beggars belief"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

In response to low take up of the loan-based fund, the Scottish Government announced on 24 June 2021 that it is to introduce a £10 million grant fund to support households who are struggling to pay their rent as a direct result of the pandemic.[137] This fund should be available later in 2021, once details have been discussed with representatives from the private and social rented sector.

2.5 Key points

- The lack of growth in real earnings and the growth of under-employment and non-standard forms of work in Scotland following the financial crisis have squeezed living standards, stalled the downward trend on poverty, and heightened the risk of in-work poverty.

- The proportion of people living in Scotland that are in poverty AHC remains lower than for the rest of the UK, but child poverty has been rising, with one out of every four children now living in poverty. The numbers of people experiencing severe poverty and destitution is also increasing, increasing the numbers at risk of becoming homeless.

- The pandemic has had a dramatic impact on the economy and public finances, with GDP for Scotland and for the UK as a whole both 10% lower in March 2021 than in March 2020. Likewise, Government debt, which represents the stock of its past borrowing, has increased from 84% to almost 100% of GDP.

- The UK Government's furlough and related self-employment schemes protected jobs and household incomes during the pandemic, but as they wind down, more people are likely to face unemployment and large income loses unless that can find another job quickly.

- Housing construction fell to historically low levels during the first lockdown and contributed to tight supply at time of growing demand, partly fuelled by the LBTT holiday, leading to a mini-boom in house prices in 2020-21. With the resumption of the main LBTT rates in April 2021, the market may have started to cool.

- The pause in construction was one of the factors that saw the Scottish Government fall short of its target to deliver 50,000 affordable homes in 2016-21. The Scottish Government now aims to deliver 100,000 affordable homes by 2032, of which 70% will be for social rent.

- There is a lot of uncertainty around whether social landlords will have the financial capacity to fund new homes that are to be built to higher and more spacious standards and simultaneously improve and decarbonise existing homes, whilst keeping rents at levels tenants can afford and prevent a rise in poverty.

- The Scottish Government acted swiftly to protect tenants from eviction by social and private landlords. The extension of eviction notice period and the temporary ban of enforcing evictions provided much-needed security to renters during the pandemic.

- Confirmation that the extension of notice periods to six months will run until March 2022, the planned £10 million grant fund for tenants struggling to pay their rent and may reduce the risk that there will be a big surge in social or private rental evictions as furlough and related measures come to an end.

- The temporary £20 weekly enhancement to UC and Working Tax Credits was widely welcomed but those on contributory and legacy benefits plus those subject to the total benefits cap have not benefited from this uplift and its removal at the end of September 2021 is like to place additional strain of on public services and food banks.

- The temporary restoration of the LHA to 30% of the private rent in each of Scotland's 18 Broad Market Areas provided extra support for lower income private renters but its value has been curbed by the decision to yet again freeze these rates rather than maintain parity with the 30th percentile rent.

- The Scottish Government enhancements to the DHP and SWF have also been welcomed and were identified as the most important welfare change introduced in response to the pandemic by LA survey respondents. There are question marks, however, over whether the funding has been used to best effect.

134 Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2021) *UK poverty 2020-21*. York: JRF. https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2020-21
135 Poverty and Inequality Commission (2020) *Scottish Welfare Fund Briefing*. Online: Poverty and Inequality Commission. https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Scottish-Welfare-Fund-briefing-.pdf
136 Scottish Parliament (2021) *Official Report of Meeting of the Parliament: Thursday 20 May 2021- Covid-19 (Protection from Eviction)*. Online: Scottish Parliament. https://www.parliament.scot/api/sitecore/CustomMedia/OfficialReport?meetingId=13228
137 Scottish Housing News (2021) *Scottish Government announces £10m grant fund for tenants in arrears due to COVID-19*. 23 June. Online: Scottish Housing News. https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/article/scottish-government-announces-10-million-grant-fund-for-tenants-in-arrears-due-to-covid-19

Homelessness policies

3. Homelessness policies

3.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the evolution and impact of homelessness-specific policies in Scotland. We begin by considering pre COVID-19 policy developments, especially the Scottish Government's EHT Action Plan, moving on to consider the homelessness-related response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, we consider future prospects for homelessness policy and service provision post-pandemic.

3.2 The Scottish Government's 'Ending Homelessness Together' Action Plan

Addressing homelessness has been a renewed policy priority in Scotland since 2017, when the Scottish Government announced *"a clear national objective to eradicate rough sleeping in Scotland and transform the use of TA"*.[138] In pursuit of this aim, a short-life Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG)[139] was appointed by the First Minister, alongside the announcement of £50 million additional expenditure on homelessness over the next five years (the 'EHT Fund'). In November 2018, the Scottish Government published the EHT High Level Action Plan,[140] taking forward all 70 of HARSAG's recommendations on how to bring about an end to homelessness in Scotland, including on 'rapid rehousing', Housing First (HF), having a stronger focus on the frontline, expanding emergency and settled housing options, a new prevention duty on public authorities, and legal changes to intentionality and local connection rules. The plan received cross-party support in the Scottish Parliament and has been followed by the publication of two updated Action Plans[141] detailing progress on the actions committed to, as well as an expanded set of emerging actions grouped under five key themes: embedding a person-centred approach; prevent homelessness happening in first place; join up planning and resources to tackle homelessness; respond quickly and effectively whenever homelessness happens; and prioritising settled homes for all.

Writing in the European Journal of Homelessness, Anderson describes the EHT Action Plan as *"hugely ambitious, and appropriately so, given the nation's claim to lead the world on homelessness policy"*. She sees the Plan as addressing gaps left by the *"in many ways groundbreaking"* 1999 Homelessness Task Force and resulting changes to homelessness legislation in the early 2000s.[142] Key stakeholders participating in this study shared this positive overall assessment of post-HARSAG Scottish homelessness policy.

Particularly important was the high priority accorded to homelessness reflected by this intense policy activity:

> **"the success of that HARSAG work, is to get housing and homelessness front and centre... over the years we've always argued that housing and homelessness was never top of the political agenda. I think it is now."**
> (Key informant, statutory sector)

Some stakeholders voiced a concern about the resourcing required to realise the Plan in practice: *"The worry is that it isn't matched with resource"* (Key informant, voluntary sector), with several highlighting its dependence on sufficient housing supply. Resource related concerns were also voiced in Salvation Army commissioned research exploring whether current investment is sufficient to achieve the Action Plan's ambitious objectives. While the study found that LAs welcomed the 'ethos' behind the plan, it also reported concerns:

> **"that the funding shortfall (and a lack of social housing) will not be sufficient to effect the radical changes sought through the Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan, and that the initial momentum around increasing social and affordable housing supply will not be sustained beyond 2021"[143]**

Some key stakeholders discussed concerns that recent homelessness policy activity in Scotland had not taken an explicitly gendered approach, and/or had neglected equalities concerns more generally, but most who raised this were of the view that there had been recent and significant steps forward in this regard, albeit that there is further to go:

> **"There was concern... that it [the Action Plan] should have had more gender lens applied to it... I think some of that has been corrected in the updates... we've seen... the working group that was co-chaired by CIH [Chartered Institute of Housing] and Women's Aid that looked at supporting women and children that had been impacted by domestic abuse**

138 Scottish Government (2018) *A Nation With Ambition: the Government's Programme for Scotland 2017-2018*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/nation-ambition-governments-programme-scotland-2017-18/

139 HARSAG published four reports over the course of nine months, containing 70 recommendations, all of which were accepted in principle by the Scottish Government. HARSAG's first set of recommendations, published in November 2017, aimed to "reduce rough sleeping during winter 2017/18", and were designed for immediate implementation. Its two subsequent reports focussed on "how to eradicate rough sleeping", and on "ways to transform TA", published in March and May 2018 respectively. See HARSAG (2018) *Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group: final recommendations report*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-action-group-final-report/

140 Scottish Government (2018) *Ending Homelessness Together: Action Plan*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-high-level-action-plan/

141 Scottish Government (2020) *Ending Homelessness Together: Annual Report*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-action-plan-annual-report-parliament/; Scottish Government (2020) *Ending homelessness together: Updated Action Plan - October 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/

142 pp. 150-152 in Anderson, I. (2019) 'Delivering the Right to Housing? Why Scotland Still Needs an 'Ending Homelessness' Action Plan, *European Journal of Homelessness*, 13(2). 131-159.

143 The Salvation Army (2021) *Homelessness in Scotland: Research for The Salvation Army*. Online: The Salvation Army. https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/2021-03/TSA%20Report%20Homelessness%20in%20Scotland%20FINAL%20%28Full%29.pdf. p.4

"and homelessness. I think that that's really been beneficial"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans
A key mechanism for the delivery of the Action Plan has been the development and implementation of 5-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTPs) by LAs. By developing RRTPs in collaboration with RSLs, Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs), and other key public and third sector stakeholders, LAs were asked to lay out how they would move away from reliance on TA, improve prevention, and extend settled housing and support options to homeless households by considering:

- the local housing market and homelessness context
- the baseline position of TA supply
- an assessment of the support needs of homeless households
- the authority and partners' five-year vision for settled housing options, TA and prevention
- the resources required to deliver the plan including any funding requests made of the Scottish Government's EHT fund[144]

All 32 of Scotland's LAs delivered a draft RRTP by December 2018 or shortly thereafter, with these plans then reviewed by and refined in dialogue with the Scottish Government. The funding requests made by in this first tranche of RRTPs was reported to be £130 million, dwarfing the £50 million of the EHT Fund from which RRTPs in addition to other elements of the Government's homelessness transformation agenda are being funded.[145] Ministers subsequently agreed to increase the £15 million funding for implementing the first three-years of RRTPs to £24 million.[146] According to analysis by Crisis, the largest share of the RRTP funding requests were made for HF provision (38% of total funding requested), followed by housing support (18%), prevention (18%) and TA conversion (18%).[147] Funding for the first year of implementing RRTPs was announced in August 2019, and calculated based on a three-year (2014/15 to 2016/17) average of homelessness assessments.[148] This formula has continued albeit with the subsequent introduction of a £50,000 funding floor for 2021/22 RRTP funding. RRTPs were updated and refreshed in Summer 2020, taking account of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic also prompted a £5 million uplift in the 2021/22 RRTP funding allocation, something recognised as an important element of the COVID-19 response by most LAs survey respondents.

Key stakeholders were in general positive about RRTPs as a mechanism for transforming homelessness responses in Scotland and about the extent of buy in to the development and early implementation of RRTPs:

"at the end of HARSAG one… every local authority produced one of these plans without any regulation and requiring them to do that, I think it was quite remarkable. We should never forget that… the plans were all good… Not excellent yet, but … That just feels like a really satisfactory starting point… They were getting the meat of what it is that this is about, which is, ultimately, reducing the time that people spent homeless and trying to prevent it in the first place."
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

"the whole RRTP process has really helped… it's helped politically to turn elected members' minds towards that approach… it's also helped to join things up a bit so that it's not just about the housing service or a part of the council, it's a more holistic view, and with partners as well"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

It was recognised that progress against RRTPs has been variable, ranging from a *"minimum compliance"* approach in some areas, to other areas where RRTPs are *"high up the political agenda"* (Key informants, voluntary sector). While one key informant was off the view that overall implementation had progressed *"slowly"* (Key informant, voluntary sector), another described *"really good progress"* (Key informant, voluntary sector) in part enabled by the exchange of ideas within Housing Hub structures. A common view was that LAs are still in the early stages of a radical transformative agenda, and that initial progress has laid positive foundations for further change:

"it's too early [to be seeing significant reductions in the time spent in TA]… the fact that local authorities got on board with it, they collaborated locally to develop one [an RRTP]… and have been implementing them is positive"
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

Nevertheless, the results of our LA survey indicate that RRTPs have led to important changes, such as triggering alterations to social housing allocations policies, reported by more than half of responding LAs (15 of 29). In another seven authorities such changes were anticipated in the near future. In most cases, these adjustments involved increasing quotas or targets for the proportion (or number) of social housing lettings for allocation to homeless households. In a survey of LAs conducted by the CIH, over half of respondent authorities (17 of 30) agreed with the statement that the implementation of RRTPs is speeding up the process of rehousing homeless households.[149]

LAs and key informants identified a number of enablers of and barriers to progress in relation to RRTPs, with three key themes emerging in this regard. First, while funding to date to support RRTP implementation was valued by LAs, there was a common view that RRTPs were under-resourced:

"The SG RRTP funding has been critical to supporting the service redesign and additional capacity levered into the service that has allowed progress with core RRTP objectives. It is important that this funding is sustained beyond the initial five year period of the RRTPs to allow the authority to complete the RRTP and redirect savings in the use of TA to community based services."
(LA, Glasgow and rest of the Clyde Valley)

144 Social Bite (2018) *Scotland's Transition to Rapid Rehousing. Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans: Guidance for Local Authorities and Partners.* Online: Social Bite. https://social-bite.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Rapid_Rehousing_Guidance1.1.pdf

145 Barratt, L. (2019) Cost of new Scottish homelessness plan assessed as eight times above budget. 19 June. Online: Inside Housing. https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/cost-of-new-scottish-homelessness-plan-assessed-as-eight-times-above-budget-61943.

146 Scottish Government (2019) *Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan minutes: August 2019.* Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/rapid-rehousing-transition-plan-minutes-august-2019/

147 Dunn, L. (2019) *Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans: A Scottish Overview.* Crisis Scotland: Edinburgh. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/241640/crisis_rapid-rehousing-report_web_spreads_v2.pdf

148 Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (2019) *Rapid Rehousing Funding Distribution.* SFHA Policy Update. 19 August. Online: SFHA. https://www.sfha.co.uk/news/news-category/policy-update/news-article/rapid-rehousing-funding-distribution

149 Chartered Institute of Housing (2021) *Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans, Temporary Accommodation and Housing Options: a survey of Scotland's local authorities.* Online: CIH. https://www.cih.org/media/yvjeyzuu/rapid-rehousing-transition-plans-research-2021.pdf

"[there is a] vast gap in what it would take compared to what was on the table… We've gone for big bang rhetoric and only a small amount of money to get there."
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

This echoes concerns raised in the aforementioned CIH survey of LAs, and in a separate survey conducted for the Salvation Army, in which participants voiced dissatisfaction with the homelessness assessment-based funding formula used to allocate RRTP funding and the short-term nature of RRTP funding to date.[150]

A second key factor concerned the availability, accessibility and affordability of settled housing:

"The obvious barrier to delivery of our RRTP is the availability of housing stock. Transformation of our… allocations policy will be a key enabler as will developing closer working relationships with the PRS"
(LA, Edinburgh and other pressured markets)

"You do require additional houses [to implement RRTPs]… We're still so far away from providing sufficient volume and quality of homes where they're needed, that there's still an element of managing the problem, rather than solving the problem"
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

Third, partnerships with wider relevant services and organisations were identified as a key enabler where they were present, and a key barrier to RRTP impact where they were not. The need for greater involvement on the part of health partners was especially emphasised:

"part of the maturing and development of the rapid rehousing plans is about getting wider engagement. We've won over local authorities, and we've won over housing convenors, and I think increasingly, we're winning over housing associations. I think the housing-led bit is there, but it's who else is going to join the party?… in some parts of the country… you see some Health and Social Care partnerships saying, 'Yes, yes, there's good mileage in this for us in terms of helping vulnerable people with complex needs, etc.'… [other areas] haven't had the engagement culture from Health and Social Care"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

More than a third of LA survey respondents (11 of 29) reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had negatively impacted local implementation of RRTPs, with only 2 saying RRTP rollout had been accelerated as a result.[151] The most frequently cited impediments to RRTP implementation due to the pandemic were: the need to cope with increased demand for TA during 2020/21; additional pressure on staff members due to pandemic-induced workload stress; and reduced ability to rehouse households out of TA due to diminished social housing letting activity:

"We have had to adapt our teams to continue delivering our day to day services. This has often required shifting staff to cover or provide essential services or devising methods to maintain service delivery. The planning and delivery of this work has detracted from the time available to deliver on the RRTP"
(LA, Edinburgh and other pressured markets)

"COVID has really got in the way… the housing system just basically closed down for that period, so all notion of rapid rehousing went straight out the window over… most of the course of the last year"
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

That being said, having RRTPs in place when the pandemic set in was seen to have supported LAs homelessness response to the pandemic according to most LA survey respondents (20 of 29), a theme also emphasised by key informants:

"Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans were a sure foundation for really doing what was required at the start of the lockdown… That was a big plus during the early stages"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

LAs identified a range of specific mechanisms through which RRTPs had supported responses to the pandemic, including that their development had: put in place partnership arrangements that allowed for a quicker pandemic response, helped LAs prioritise areas of focus and action in the pandemic context, and supported efforts to increase the percentage of social housing lets to homeless households:

"The foundations to the partnership approach that had been laid for developing and implementation [of] the RRTP allowed for a quicker partnership response in responding to COVID-19"
(LA, Edinburgh and other pressured markets)

"Having our RRTP and related action plan meant we continued focus on priority areas, I am certain we would be in a worse position at year end and more importantly service users experience of our services would have suffered without this focus"
(LA, Glasgow and rest of Clyde Valley)

"The RRTP focused our staff and services on the areas of greatest need during the pandemic. We were able to use the RRTP monitoring to demonstrate the effect of a slowdown in throughput of the homelessness process and emphasise the importance of continuing to rehouse people during the pandemic"
(LA, Edinburgh and other pressured markets)

Health and Social Care Partnership contribution

More than double the number of LAs reported HSCP's making a positive contribution to the prevention and/or alleviation of homelessness this year (17 of 29 or 59%) as compared to our 2018 survey (8 of 28 or 29%). This considerable progress is likely to reflect the dual drivers of RRTP development and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a third of responding LAs still reported that HSCPs have had little impact on their ability to prevent and/or alleviate homelessness, with several LA survey respondents noting a lack of engagement from HSCPs as a barrier to progressing their RRTP.

This indicates a relatively polarised picture in terms of HSCP engagement and support with LAs in relation to homelessness, albeit with signs of progress:

"As part of our RRTP activities we have been building a closer working relationship with the local HSCP. This includes

150 The Salvation Army (2021) *Homelessness in Scotland: Research for The Salvation Army*. Online: The Salvation Army. https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/2021-03/TSA%20Report%20Homelessness%20in%20Scotland%20FINAL%20%28Full%29.pdf; Chartered Institute of Housing (2021) *Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans, Temporary Accommodation and Housing Options: a survey of Scotland's local authorities*. Online: CIH. https://www.cih.org/media/yvjeyzuu/rapid-rehousing-transition-plans-research-2021.pdf

151 See also The Salvation Army (2021) *Homelessness in Scotland: Research for The Salvation Army*. Online: The Salvation Army. https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/2021-03/TSA%20Report%20Homelessness%20in%20Scotland%20FINAL%20%28Full%29.pdf

Housing First, and also providing more services directly to those in supported accommodation to improve outcomes across a variety of services with a view to preventing recurring homelessness"
(LA, Edinburgh and other pressured markets)

"We have had some positive contact with our Health & Social Care Partnership but generally the link between their services and housing is weak in many areas. There is a lot of good work done across the board but it would appear to be informal and done by individual workers making links between services than anything system driven"
(LA, Edinburgh and other pressured markets)

"It has helped a little as they have recruited a clinically skilled member of staff to provide support to people involved with mental health, addictions, criminal justice and/or homelessness services. However, it is not clear that they have fully understood how critical their involvement is to the success of our RRTP"
(LA, rest of Scotland).

Positive contributions were much more commonly reported in Glasgow and the rest of Clyde Valley (7 of 8 authorities) than in other parts of the country (10 of 21). Relevant here may be whether homelessness sits as a responsibility within the LA's HSCP:

"most of the country doesn't have housing and homelessness delegated to the health and social care partnerships… when it comes to [RRTP*], there's a big downside to that, because it means that it sits in the housing lens entirely and… there's an awful lot more to this solution and ending homelessness than just the housing lens."
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

Housing First
The scaling up of HF provision targeting those experiencing homelessness alongside other complex needs is a key component of the Action Plan and intended to be a core focus of RRTPs. In 2018, the Scottish Government committed up to £6.5million over three years to support the HF Scotland pathfinder programme in five areas[152] in partnership with Social Bite, Glasgow Homelessness Network and Corra Foundation. In March 2021, the Scottish Government's 20-year housing strategy articulated an aim for *"Housing First to be the default option for people with multiple and complex needs"*.[153] In the same month, Homeless Network Scotland published a ten-year national framework to start up and scale up HF in Scotland. Notably, the HF approach was endorsed by all political parties in the 2021 Holyrood election.

Pathfinder monitoring data suggests that at May 2021, 519 HF tenancies had started in the five pathfinder areas, with 85% of individuals still in their tenancies and nobody evicted from a HF tenancy.[154] This fell short of 800 HF tenancies intended to have been set up after 3 years, a delay that seems to be attributable in part to the COVID-19 pandemic and in part to difficulties setting up and/or scaling up provision in pathfinder areas in relation to the partnerships required and access to housing.[155] Despite the scale-up being slower than intended, key informants were in general positive about the progress and impacts of the pathfinder programme:

"The Pathfinders have been amazing … lots and lots of learning about capacity building and making something happen… It is phenomenal that we have as many people in tenancies… some incredible, goose bump making stories of people that you're just like… I can't believe they're in a tenancy and they're… just thriving."
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

A local government stakeholder commented that the pathfinders had overcome some scepticism about the model's efficacy:

"A lot of people thought from a housing management point of view that… 'we're going to put in really vulnerable people with complex needs. Are they really going to settle into a neighbourhood?' So there was that kind of housing management cynicism about it but I think we've had [to] look [at] the Pathfinder programme and say, 'Well, it does work. People can turn their lives around with the appropriate support.'…we've overcome that initial resistance"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

Intimations from local authority leadership that HF provision would continue, despite the tapering down of Government funding, was seen by key informants in pathfinder areas as an early sign of programme success:

"nobody's walking away from it. They're all looking to either continue as it currently stands or increase."
(Key informant, statutory sector)

"each of those areas are all committed at local authority and wider level to continue to scale up Housing First in their area. Nobody stopping here and that's great"
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

Key informants noted that the pathfinder areas had all faced challenges in the pathfinder set-up phase, with the specific nature of these varying by area, but three primary areas of concern were clear. First, there was concern regarding the ongoing resourcing of HF:

"the biggest challenge around this is money… the average cost [of a Housing First tenancy is]… way in excess of what [local authorities] normally spend on housing support, so if you're only looking at this from a housing lens, that's a huge challenge."
(Key informant, statutory sector)

Second, there was anxiety about inadequate buy-in from non-housing partners:

"the challenge is not necessarily within the housing side of things, I think that the challenge is often with bringing health colleagues and other colleagues on board."
(Key informant, statutory sector)

Thirdly, some key informants were concerned that the fidelity of HF provision in Scotland was under strain in part because of the financial challenges described above. According

152 Aberdeen/shire, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Stirling
153 Scottish Government (2021) *Housing to 2040*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2021/03/housing-2040-2/documents/housing-2040/housing-2040/govscot%3Adocument/housing-2040.pdf. p. 53
154 Housing First Scotland (2021) *Housing First Tracker: Progress to May 2021*. Online: Homeless Network Scotland. https://homelessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/HF-Scotland-Monthly-Tracker-MAY-2021.pdf
155 Homeless Network Scotland (2021) *Branching Out: A National Framework to Start-up and Scale-up Housing First in Scotland: 2021-2031. Online: Homeless Network Scotland.* https://homelessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Housing-First-National-Framework-v.210321.pdf; Housing First Scotland (2020) Housing First Check Up: Annual check-up on Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder. Online: Homeless Network Scotland. https://homelessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/HousingFirst_one_year_report_06052020.pdf

to one voluntary sector key informant, some areas are *"doing it on the cheap"* with the resulting model and support-offer to tenants in their view akin to *"beefed up visiting housing support"* rather than high fidelity HF. Other key informants were less concerned, seeing the evolution of the model as reflecting a welcome *"flex"* of the model in a new context, but emphasising that LAs are *"not wanting to move away from the evidence base"* (Key informant, statutory sector). Pathfinder monitoring data indicates that HF clients are spending considerable lengths of time in TA prior to accessing their own tenancy, albeit that this has reduced substantially from 200 days in year 1 (2018/19) to 114 days in year 2 (2019/20).[156]

Beyond the pathfinder areas, our survey of LAs suggests that HF is now operational in most areas (in 23 of 29 responding LAs), with almost all of these of view that further scale-up in their area would be welcome. Preparations to introduce HF services are underway in several of the remaining areas.

Asked about the strengths and weaknesses of HF services operating in their area, many respondents noted that with such activities being relatively recently established it was too early to comment. Among others, commonly identified positives included high rates of tenancy sustainment being achieved; the effectiveness of multi-agency partnership working; and benefits to the service user in terms of choice and control. The weaknesses of the scheme most frequently cited were a shortage of settled housing opportunities in the locations preferred by HF clients that can lead to long stays in TA:

> **"The key weakness has been obtaining secure tenancies immediately when a household, who meets the HF service criteria, presents as homeless. We are likely to need interim temporary accommodation for our HF customers whilst a secure tenancy that meets their needs is identified"**
> (LA, rest of Scotland).

> **"due to various issues, including lack of available properties, we have been unable to house the number of HF applicants currently supported… a high proportion of people supported want to be housed in the city-centre; again lack of suitable accommodation sees people competing for accommodation"**
> (LA, Edinburgh and other pressured markets)

In other areas the barrier appears to be administrative rather than relating to housing supply or access issues. One authority, for example, reported long delays to access HF due to an assessment phase which they rightly describe as counter to the HF model. Many LA survey respondents cited a lack of secure funding and competing priorities at LA level as a key barrier to HF provision and/or scale-up.

Unsuitable Accommodation Order
Among the HARSAG recommendations taken forward in the EHT Action Plan were a series of changes to Scottish Homelessness legislation. Key among these was the extension of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order (UAO) to all households. The UAO came into force in 2014, restricting the use of hotels and B&Bs for pregnant women or families with children to a maximum of 14 days. A 2017 amendment reduced the time limit to a week. HARSAG recommended that the UAO be extended to all household types, and following a consultation in 2019,[157] the Scottish Government committed to doing so within the parliamentary term (i.e., by May 2021). The onset of COVID-19 prompted the Scottish Government to bring forward the extension of the order, but to delay implementation until September 2020 by introducing temporary exemptions enabling LAs to use B&B and hotel accommodation to respond to the pandemic.[158] These temporary exceptions to the Order have subsequently been extended a number of times, with their removal planned for September 2021 at the time of writing. These extensions have received criticism from Shelter Scotland and a group of MSPs, who have called for an immediate end to the exceptions and for a TA taskforce to be set up to address demand for and supply of TA.[159]

There was a consensus among key informants from the statutory and voluntary sectors in this study that the extension of the UAO to all households was a positive, necessary and *"hugely significant and transformative"* move (Key informant, voluntary sector). Nevertheless, local government stakeholders were strongly in favour of delays to its introduction, seeing moves to expedite the UAO extension during the pandemic as *"counterproductive"* and *"the last thing local authorities need"* (key stakeholders, statutory sector. Some voluntary sector key informants were disappointed with these delays, but most – while keen to see the Order extended to all households soon - were understanding of the delays on the basis of the challenges associated with the pandemic response, as well as the acuteness of the pressures in some LA areas:

> **"It's important if we're saying that something isn't good enough for some of us, then it's not good enough for all of us…. [but] there are a lot of people in unsuitable accommodation at the moment and it's nobody's fault. It was the right decision to make at that time, so we can't suddenly start telling the local authority that they're all breaches. There has to be some mature acknowledgement of the situation that we're in… it would be good to help local authorities move some of that along and as quickly as they can and then bring [it] in."**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

Almost half of responding authorities (13 of 29) anticipated that changes to the UAO would affect their TA placement practice, with expectations of a 'significant impact' concentrated in pressured markets. Nine authorities anticipated that the extension to the UAO would pose funding and resourcing challenges, with a key concern being LA capacity to sufficiently scale back B&B placements that had expanded due to pandemic period demand pressures:

> **"The extension of the UAO will result in significant challenges for [name of authority] as it is estimated that up to 25 per cent of current temporary accommodation stock will be classed as 'unsuitable', including some of the additional accommodation brought on during COVID-19."**
> (LA, Edinburgh and other pressured markets)

156 Ibid.

157 Scottish Government (2020) *Improving Temporary Accommodation Standards Consultation: Response Analysis*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/analysis-responses-consultation-improving-temporary-accommodation-standards/

158 Jenkins, K., (2020) Unsuitable accommodation order extended. 5 May. Online: Scottish Government. https://blogs.gov.scot/fairer-scotland/2020/05/05/unsuitable-accommodation-order-extended/; Scottish Government (2021) *Policy Note: The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) (Modification and Revocation) (Coronavirus) Order 2021 SSI 2021/10*. Online: Scottish Government https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2021/10/pdfs/ssipn_20210010_en.pdf

159 Shelter Scotland (2021) *Scottish Government Back-tracks on Homeless Protections*. 14 Jan. Online: Shelter Scotland. https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/media/press_releases/scottish_government_back-tracks_on_homeless_protections; https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S5M-23862

"The extension of the UAO will place significant additional pressures on the authority… [which] has significantly extended its use of B&B type accommodation during the PHE [public health emergency]. Any premature extension of the UAO will see the authority facing significant judicial challenge and reputational damage"
(LA, Glasgow and rest of Clyde Valley)

Intentionality and local connection
Following HARSAG recommendations, the Scottish Government also made a commitment to bring into force provisions from the Homelessness Etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 on intentionality and local connection, so as to remove the role of these criteria as 'barriers' to homeless people securing assistance and accessing rehousing. Since November 2019, and following consultation on the proposals, LAs have had discretion in assessing whether households have become homeless 'intentionally', rather than being required by law to do so. Key informants were highly supportive of this move, seeing it as an *"absolutely the right thing to do"* or, more strongly, seeing the idea of intentionality as *"an anachronism that flies in the face of all the rhetoric about choice and control and letting people rebuild their lives"* (Key informant, voluntary sector). Official statistics show that during 2020/21, only 460 (1%) of homeless households were assessed as intentionally homelessness, compared to 1,130 (3%) in the 2019/20.

While provisions allowing Ministers to modify the use of local connection rules were also commenced in November 2019, no modifications have yet been introduced. Consultation with LAs raised concerns about the potential impact of removing local connection on LA capacity to meet their legal duties, as well as specific concerns in island, rural and high pressure urban areas and for prison leavers and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements.[160] In March 2021 a ministerial statement laid out general criteria by reference to which ministers would exercise such powers and committed to a range of impact assessments prior to the introduction of such changes.[161] Legal changes were intended to be introduced within the parliamentary term ending in May 2021, but were delayed owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Key informants in this study acknowledged legitimate concerns on the part of LAs regarding the management of sex offenders and prison leavers, and one statutory sector informant noted a risk that some authorities *"may have to deal with larger numbers of homeless presentations"*. A majority of key informants, however, and all voluntary sector participants, were somewhat sceptical about widespread LA concerns that changes to local connection would leave their area over-burdened with applications. These key informants emphasised the benefits of change, not least in removing a barrier that can perpetuate rough sleeping:

160 Scottish Government (2021) *Consultation on a Ministerial Statement for Modifying Local Connection Referrals in Scotland: Analysis Report.* Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/consultation-analysis/2021/02/consultation-ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland-analysis-report/documents/consultation-ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland-analysis-report/consultation-ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland-analysis-report/govscot%3Adocument/consultation-ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland-analysis-report.pdf

161 Scottish Government (2021) *Ministerial Statement: Modifying Local Connection Referrals in Scotland.* Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/speech-statement/2021/03/ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland/documents/ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland/ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland/govscot%3Adocument/ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland.pdf

"some cities talk about… what we'll attract is homelessness problems here because we've got the services and we've got the capacity and then with your rural areas, saying we're just going attract people here. Not everyone can be right, or if everybody is right, then they're likely to be right equally and therefore there will be no net difference, so let's just get on with it."
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

"Local connection is… producer-interest not consumer-interest. It's about a system to stop people rather than a system to support people"
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

3.3 The COVID-19 response

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted rapid shifts in responses to homelessness in Scotland, and we consider these here in relation to rough sleeping and other forms of acute homelessness, wider homelessness and housing responses, the RSL response, HARSAG 2 and social housing allocations.

Rough sleeping and acute homelessness
Unlike in England and Wales,[162] the majority of those sleeping rough in Scotland as the pandemic took hold had legal entitlements to accommodation following the abolition of the Priority Need criterion in 2012.[163] As such, the immediate response focused on accommodating the comparatively smaller number of rough sleepers excluded from or not accessing support via the statutory safety net into hotel or other more self-contained options, as well as on rapidly decanting 'shared air' night shelter accommodation:

"we had people in night shelters in Edinburgh and Glasgow… those were just not safe places for people to live, because there were mattresses on the floor or… bunk beds… very cramped together… the fear of COVID was just immense and about how quickly it would spread there"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

The Scottish Government made funding of £1.5m available to third sector organisations in March 2020 to help facilitate this. Rapid Rehousing Welcome Centres were established in Edinburgh and Glasgow providing immediate access single-room emergency accommodation.

"We worked very closely with Glasgow and Edinburgh councils about trying to get alternative provision for people… making sure that people could self-isolate, that they could have a degree of security and safety… they were able to purchase floors of hotels and put people in there, so that was the most immediate response to it, which was really positive, really worked well"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

A particularly important element of this initial response was the inclusion of those experiencing homelessness with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) who had previously not been entitled to assistance under Scottish homelessness legislation, with access only to a small number of voluntary sector night shelter services. The emergency accommodation funding and response was explicitly inclusive of this group, with guidance from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and emergency legislation seeking to ensure that

162 Fitzpatrick, S., Mackie, P., Pawson, H., Watts, B. & Wood, J. (2021) *The COVID-19 Crisis Response to Homelessness in Great Britain: Interim Report.* Online: CaCHE. https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/12544_UoG_CaCHE_Covid_Homelessness_Report-Final.pdf

163 For a history of homelessness policy in Scotland, see previous editions of The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland at https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/homelessness-monitor/

those with NRPF had access to support and healthcare during the pandemic. The Scottish Government distributed £278,782 further funding to organisations supporting people with NRPF to prevent destitution in November 2020.[164] These changes were seen as highly significant and positive by key informants and LA survey respondents:

> **"previously [homelessness among those with NRPF] just felt like such an insurmountable problem… all of a sudden, there was a solution because things were allowed under public health legislation in the way that they were disallowed before… That feels great. It takes, actually, a bit of collective responsibility for the problem and less on the shoulders of a few organisations."**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

> **"[Funding] to provide temporary accommodation for households with no recourse to public funds during a large portion of the pandemic… was immensely helpful in managing this group and reducing the cost to the council of providing this accommodation"**
> (LA, Edinburgh and other pressured markets).

This was seen to have brought a group of previously hidden households in serious need into the view of services, and led to positive outcomes for a proportion of the cohort who following legal advice turned out to have some recourse to statutory support after all. Several key informants also noted joint working between street outreach teams and consulates to enable non-UK nationals sleeping rough or at risk of doing so to return to their country of origin if they wished to during the early months of the pandemic.

The speed of this *"cash-first approach"* focused on *"empowering the frontline"* (key informants, voluntary sector) received considerable praise from voluntary sector key informants:

> **"they put cash into the system, and they put cash into third sector organisations who are fleet of foot enough to get things done… Scottish Government really did show some significant early leadership… that direct working with third sector… more money into the system; spirit of partnership; raising expectations… about what was possible; and encouraging that public health approach. Those were all strategic shifts that the Scottish Government led, and I think we're seeing the benefit from"**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

Key informants described this crisis-response as a 'golden opportunity' with unprecedented and intensive multi-agency working between LAs, health and social care and the voluntary sector, additional resources and accommodation available, and a dramatically changed external context enabling services to engage those with long histories of homelessness and complex needs:

> **"we… had this golden moment with these guys that we'd never had before and we were probably never going to get again… not just to keep these people safe, but to do all of the things that we wish we were always able to do week in, week out… We just focused on making that as easy as it could possibly be for people to access all of the things that would help them stay in and keep them safe… and not to return to rough sleeping or risky situations. But also, to get the maximum benefit of their time with us, in terms of it being a moment of change rather than just a place of safety"**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

164 Fitzpatrick, S., Mackie, P., Pawson, H., Watts, B. & Wood, J. (2021) *The COVID-19 Crisis Response to Homelessness in Great Britain: Interim Report*. Online: CaCHE. https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/12544_UoG_CaCHE_Covid_Homelessness_Report-Final.pdf

These measures were also agreed to have dramatically reduced rough sleeping in Edinburgh and Glasgow (where the issue is highly concentrated in Scotland) to the lowest levels ever seen by key informants:

> **"Within five days, we'd pretty much reduced to single numbers in both cities of people experiencing rough sleeping, and we had resource for all new presentations basically."**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

> **"we're at the stage now where… we've got something [like]… about six people rough sleeping in Glasgow and we've got something like 12 to 15 rough sleeping in Edinburgh. Now, you put that in the context of the fact that… in Glasgow… there was a hard core of about 30 [pre-pandemic] and in Edinburgh… it was more hitting the 80 to 100"**
> (Key informant, statutory sector)

With levels of rough sleeping *"so low"* (Key informant, voluntary sector), services were reportedly able to pursue a *"much more systematic… and in some cases, very intensive case management, so that we could really get to the understanding of individual circumstances and work out safe plans forward for each person"* (Key informant, voluntary sector).

The move away from dormitory style night-time only shelters was universally welcomed by key informants as a *"positive move"* (Key informant, statutory sector) enabled by a public-health threat that transcended previous politics in this arena and demanded that all partners *"completely rethink"* (Key informant, statutory sector) the nature of emergency provision. The Everyone Home Collective,[165] a group 35 of third sector and academic organisations established during the pandemic, have developed a route-map charting an end to the need for night-shelter and hotel provision as a response to homelessness, an ambition now committed to by the Scottish Government.[166]

The pandemic responses also coincided with an abrupt end to Glasgow City Council's longstanding failure to meet its statutory duty to offer TA to all those entitled to it.[167] According to one key informant, since Autumn 2020 *"Glasgow hasn't turned away anybody from temporary accommodation"* (Key informant, voluntary sector). This change was attributed to an injection of new staff and resources associated with the pandemic but also the working through of longer-run efforts to address gatekeeping in the City. This shift was strongly welcomed by key informants, but concerns were voiced that similar issues were now becoming clear in Edinburgh.

While key informant assessments of the initial homelessness-related response to the pandemic were overall positive, serious concerns were voiced about the wellbeing of the large

165 See https://everyonehome.scot/
166 Scottish Government (2020) *Ending homelessness together: Updated Action Plan - October 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/
167 Scottish Government (2018) *Homelessness in Scotland 2017-2018*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2017-18; Scottish Housing Regulator (2018) *Housing People who are Homeless in Glasgow*. Online: Scottish Housing Regulator. https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance/national-reports/thematic-work/housing-people-who-are-homeless-in-glasgow; Shelter Scotland (2017) *Evidence of Gatekeeping in Glasgow City Council*. Online: Shelter Scotland. https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/evidence_of_gatekeeping_in_glasgow_city_council

numbers of people[168] accommodated in hotels:

"[the] situation… now is a lot of people [are] in hotels… in a sense, what's been recreated over the last year is everything that we've decommissioned for ten years before that… if we bring together a lot of people that are having a bad day, a bad year, or longer, then problems do start to mount up. Everything that we know about why hostels don't work. That feels, in some areas in particular, and even in some hotels, in particular, tension and potential problems and some problems, of course, have happened."
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

These issues were seen to be especially acute in Glasgow in the early stages of the pandemic. One key informant explained that while in Edinburgh hotel provision there was wrap-around 24-hour support and residents tended to stay longer to *"stabilise and get… interventions in place"* (Key informant, voluntary sector), in Glasgow, there was fast throughput through the initial hotel assisting those sleeping rough or at risk of doing so into provision in which, at least initially, there was insufficient support:

"There was some in-reach going into the (HSCP-provided) hotels, but it wasn't supported on a 24-hour basis… There were massive challenges around people getting access to services, people being able to stay connected, people being at risk of exploitation and harm. Even just basic things like food became a big, big challenge… Over time, things improved, because there was more support channelled into the hotels… to address the challenges, but in the early days, it was really difficult"
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

While reluctant to make simplistic statements or generalisations about the drivers of a series of deaths in a Glasgow hotel accommodating people with experience of homelessness,[169] key informants recognised that a combination of factors, including but not limited to a lack of initial support provision within hotels, had left those accommodated at risk of harm;

"Congregating a bunch of people in a hotel at a time when there's so little access to means to manage addictions, to feed yourself, to service debts that you might have with people around you, there was no street-begging revenue, there was no access to the usual facilities… unless there's resources readily available and actively engaging to ease the stresses of all of that… the risk of harm and sadly… death is going to be much higher… I don't think anybody would say there weren't massive lessons to learn about the numbers of people in single locations with just hotel staff there largely 24 hours a day."
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

"people with severe mental health and dependency issues were not getting the support that they needed, and… that environment was certainly not helping them… These were maybe deaths that… could've happened if they were on the street or in the hostels. That doesn't mean it's okay… It's more visible when that community of people are in one place, rather than atomised across the city. That doesn't mean we then say, 'Oh well, there's nothing for us to do about it.'"
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

Concerns were also voiced by several key informants regarding the pace of move on from emergency hotel accommodation:

"the process of moving people into settled housing really has to accelerate. That really, really has to start picking up pace. It doesn't mean that people don't recognise that. I think everybody does. Local authorities, housing associations and others, but I think just absolutely more support, particularly for the areas that have the biggest challenge ahead… to enable people to move out of hotels"
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

The challenges were recognised to vary across Scotland, with the complexity of Glasgow's housing system a particular impediment and access to affordable housing the key issue in Edinburgh. That being said, it was noted that the pandemic had opened up access to the PRS, especially in Edinburgh.

Wider homelessness and housing responses

These immediate responses to the most extreme forms of homelessness ran alongside broader changes to the statutory and voluntary sector homelessness and housing responses. Shifts in strategic level collaboration and co-operation included Housing Options Hub meetings re-starting (after a pause) at more frequent intervals to share learning about statutory homelessness service responses to the pandemic. In response to the crisis, the Scottish Government set up three Housing Resilience Groups[170] to tackle housing issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and these were seen to have played an important role as forums for shared learning in relation to housing issues faced by LAs, RSLs and in the PRS.

At the frontline, services rapidly shifted to primarily online and staff to working from home, something that key informants described as challenging, and one key described the sector as *"woefully unprepared for"* (Key informant, statutory sector). Key challenges included staff having access to the right technology and equipment and the skills to use it, as well as appropriate workspace within the home. Service user access to technology and online proficiency was also a challenge and concern, and third sector key informants noted the value of Connecting Scotland programme which provides low-income households with digital devices and support. Despite initial challenges, the shift to online, phone-based and home-working was seen to have bedded in, with some suggesting that there would not be a return to the pre-pandemic presumption in favour of face to face contact.

The pandemic has also catalysed a step change in co-operation, collaboration and joint-working between homelessness services, health partners, LAs, RSLs, and community-based organisations:[171]

168 Although Scottish Government did not collect separate data on the numbers accommodated on this basis, key stakeholders reported that around 600 people were accommodated in emergency hotels in Glasgow alone at the peak.

169 BBC News (2020) 'Eight found dead at Glasgow hotel for homeless since April', *BBC news*, 30th September: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-54359972

170 See https://www.gov.scot/groups/coronavirus-covid-19-joint-housing-resilience-chairs-group/

171 See also The Salvation Army (2021) *Homelessness in Scotland: Research for The Salvation Army.* Online: The Salvation Army. https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/2021-03/TSA%20Report%20Homelessness%20in%20Scotland%20FINAL%20%28Full%29.pdf; Parkes, T., Carver, H., Masterton, W., Falzon, D., Dumbrell, J., Grant, S., & Wilson, I. (2021) 'They already operated like it was a crisis, because it always has been a crisis': a qualitative exploration of the response of one homeless service in Scotland to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Harm reduction journal*, 18(1), 1-16; Aitken, E. (2021) COVID-19: opportunity to improve crisis responses to homelessness? *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*, 51(S1): S53–62.

"there's been a big change in our approach in terms of working together across the council, different services. Certainly, a much more common purpose approach...I think that spirit of cooperation has been enhanced during the pandemic"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

The pandemic generated immense challenges to housing providers in turning around voids and allocating social homes to new tenants, including homeless households. LAs *"just had to keep going"* in relation to council house lettings according to key informants, albeit at a reduced pace given the challenges of turning around voids in the context of lockdown and social distancing measures. Several key informants noted that this had impacted on LA finances in ways not yet recognised or accounted for by the Scottish Government:

"[LAs are] putting more money into voids because of the safer working practices and slowing down work, etc., that's been a direct impact of COVID... the Government haven't recognised the important role that Housing Revenue Accounts... have played during the pandemic. That's been left to councils to worry about, and for rent-payers to pick up the tab... that's unfair... the overall mood is we've had really good support from the Government to recognise need to change working practices and different things, but they've been very critical about the lack of financial support"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

Registered Social Landlord responses
Key informants consistently emphasised that in contrast to LAs, RSLs' response to the pandemic had fallen short. As this housing sector key informant commented:

"through an abundance of nervousness, caution and precedent, many just decided to wait it out a little bit to let others go first. While local authorities were taking risky, hard decisions because they had to respond to it, RSLs chose to wait.... They weren't sure about... best practice... where[as] I don't think local authorities had as much of a choice"
(Key informant, housing sector)

"[RSLs were] largely, absent in the very early days, because lettings were suspended, maintenance was suspended, everything was suspended, so that meant the access to tenancies in terms of throughput was virtually nil for about three or four months."
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

This response from RSLs was seen to have contributed directly to the build-up of homeless households in emergency hotel and other TA (chapter 4):

"that's what created those very, very large numbers in hotels, in Glasgow in particular, [were] because we were just filling up the tank, whereas, normally, there would be a wee bit of throughput."
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

There was a consensus, however, that whilst the short-run response from RSLs had been in general disappointing, as things progressed this improved significantly, and in particular began to make accommodation available to homeless households on a temporary and permanent basis. While this is likely to in part reflect the Scottish Government's position that they wish *"to see a significant increase in the proportion of social homes allocated to people who are homeless while we are still in phase three of Scotland's route map"*,[172] several key informants made the point that this also represented a pragmatic response from RSLs who faced barriers to accommodating other groups during lockdown. It was also recognised that RSLs as well as LAs had undertaken *"proactive... very professional... and respectful engagement"* (Key informant, voluntary sector) with tenants building up arrears and at risk of eviction following the end of the evictions moratorium.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group 2
In June 2020, the Housing Minister reconvened the HARSAG to *"undertake a rapid review of Scottish Government's existing plans and provide recommendations on post-pandemic recovery"*.[173] A report detailing 105 recommendations was subsequently published,[174] with all accepted by the Scottish Government. Key informants described HARSAG 2 as a useful *"sense check"* (Key informant, voluntary sector) of Government strategy at a time of crisis and important endorsement of the principles underpinning the Action Plan as fit for purpose in the pandemic context. A number of key informants did, however, note the challenge of undertaking such a fast-paced review of Government strategy:

"it wandered across... a lot of very complex areas that it could only superficially reach... I think maybe, in a moment, when everybody was so pressured and so many demands of people's time, when there was a lot of very detailed, wordy, information that was put back out to people, but without the .... problem-solving... this is how we solve it."
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

Social housing allocations
A key recommendation made in by the reconvened HARSAG was that the allocation of social housing voids to homeless households be *"maximise[d]... for a limited emergency period to enable people to move on from hotels and other emergency accommodation"*. The report went on: *"While recognising local variation, we expect this being in the region of 80-90% or more during Phases 2 and 3 of the Scottish Government's route map through and out of the coronavirus response"*.[175] The Scottish Government did not ultimately endorse this specific numerical target in its latest Action Plan Update, following strong resistance from LAs and RSLs.[176] Key informants had mixed views on this:

"We were disappointed at the opposition from social landlords to increasing the number of lets to homeless people... we need

172 Scottish Government (2020) *Ending homelessness together: Updated Action Plan - October 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/ p.35
173 Scottish Government (2020) *Ending homelessness together: Updated Action Plan - October 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/ p. 5.
174 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (2020) *Tackling Homelessness in Scotland following the Coronavirus Pandemic - Recommendations from Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/corporate-report/2020/07/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-action-group-final-report-tackling-coronavirus/documents/harsag-final-report-on-homelessness-after-coronavirus/harsag-final-report-on-homelessness-after-coronavirus/govscot%3Adocument/HARSAG%2BCovid%2Bfinal%2Breport.pdf.
175 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (2020) *Tackling Homelessness in Scotland following the Coronavirus Pandemic - Recommendations from Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/corporate-report/2020/07/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-action-group-final-report-tackling-coronavirus/documents/harsag-final-report-on-homelessness-after-coronavirus/harsag-final-report-on-homelessness-after-coronavirus/govscot%3Adocument/HARSAG%2BCovid%2Bfinal%2Breport.pdf. p. 11
176 Scottish Government (2020) *Ending homelessness together: Updated Action Plan - October 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/

to agree to deal with the backlog in the system. That will mean, at least for a period.., we ensure that people who are homeless and have been homeless for a while get that home… That's going to need our RSLs to take a different tack"
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

"we were supportive of [a] general move towards increasing the number of lets of homeless households. However… government wanted to set a percentage… We resisted that, just because it's really difficult for a central decision to be taken on the percentage of homeless households to be prioritised… when there are varying… local circumstances, and it is a local decision. That's where the decision making should lie"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

"in the end… that was recognised as… an aspirational number or even a number that could give a sense of the urgency… The number itself never stuck… What it did do, I think was elevate the importance of a proportion of lets being made to this group"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

Ultimately, it was acknowledged by key informants that as a result of both pre-pandemic policy (see above) and specific pandemic-related drivers:

"we were starting to see higher allocations to homeless households pre-pandemic, and we certainly are now"
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

"most authorities have taken the steer from the Government and COSLA that there needed to be a step up in homeless allocations to get folk moving on from temporary accommodation… I don't think it's a surge in homeless allocations; I think it has to have been balanced, because if you don't try and pick up people from the housing list who are at risk of homelessness, you're just feeding the homeless priority system… it has been a tricky balance to maintain but most authorities are putting emphasis on homeless allocations."
(Key informant, statutory sector)

3.4 Post-pandemic homelessness services

The radical shifts to homelessness policy in Scotland described above – both those occasioned by the pandemic and those already in train post-HARSAG – look set to be followed by further significant changes in the coming months and years. Key among them is a planned long-term move away from night shelter provision. Informed by the Everyone Home Collective route map on the topic,[177] the October 2020 update to the EHT Action Plan included a new action to:

"Support our partners to modify existing night shelter provision in Edinburgh and Glasgow in winter 2020/21 and actively end the use of night shelter and dormitory-style provision in future"[178]

Key informants were highly supportive of this move, and fairly optimistic regarding the sustainability of the change, albeit that the continuing availability of hotels as a source of single room accommodation post-pandemic was a concern. It was also recognised that maintaining this approach would depend on maintaining relatively low levels of rough sleeping:

"I think we will never see the likes of winter care shelters or winter night shelters again in Scotland and indeed, I don't think we will ever need one again… If we can maintain the low numbers of rough sleeping as we have at the moment."
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

A related and highly significant planned future shift concerns the continuation of improved responses to those experiencing homelessness who have NRPF. Prior to the pandemic, the Scottish Government had committed to developing an anti-destitution strategy focused on those subject to NRPF, with the pandemic prompting crisis-response practice change as well as the development of a route map focused on this group published by the Everyone Home Collective in October 2020.[179] In March 2021, the Scottish Government and COSLA published the planned strategy, outlining plans to strengthen statutory support for the families of children and adults with care needs, as well as work with the third sector to improve the non-statutory safety-net. Key informants had mixed views on the likely sustainability of improvements in responses to those with NRPF in the context of the policy continuing at Westminster level. Some were optimistic:

"it just makes more people look at it and go, 'Right, well, if we can do it now, why would we go back?'… the developments that have resulted… that feels like something that we won't slide back on…. there will be something that is much more maybe strategic system response to the issue of the NRPF destitution".
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

"It is all about what happens now when the public health imperative around people perceived with NRPF, when that ends and the duty to accommodate ends. That's a big concern."
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

Finally, and perhaps most significantly among the planned shifts to homelessness responses in Scotland, are plans to take forward the Scottish Government commitment to introduce a new homelessness prevention duty on LA and public bodies.[180] In November 2019, the Scottish Government asked Crisis to convene an independent group of cross-sector experts[181] to make recommendations for the introduction of such a legal duty. The focus was on developing specific legal recommendations to enhance and strengthen targeted, crisis and recovery prevention.[182] The Prevention Review Group's (PRG) final recommendations were published in February 2021, and divided into two parts. The first set of recommendations focus on introducing a range of legal duties on public bodies.[183] These include a new duty on HSCPs to co-operate

177 Everyone Home Collective (2020) *Route-Map 1: Ending the Need for Night Shelter & Hotel Room Provision*. Online: EHC. https://www.everyonehome.scot/pdf/route-map.pdf
178 Scottish Government (2020) *Ending homelessness together: Updated Action Plan - October 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/ p. 12
179 Everyone Home Collective (2020) *Route-Map 1: Ending the Need for Night Shelter & Hotel Room Provision*. Online: EHC. https://www.everyonehome.scot/pdf/route-map.pdf
180 Scottish Government (2020) *Ending homelessness together: Updated Action Plan - October 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/
181 The Group was chaired by Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick, co-author of this report. Members of the group were: Cllr Elena Whitham, East Ayrshire Council and COSLA; John Mills, Fife Council and Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers; Susanne Millar, Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership; Maggie-Ann Brunjes, Homeless Network Scotland; Callum Chomczuk, Chartered Institute of Housing; Matthew Downie, Crisis; Gordon MacRae, Shelter Scotland; Sally Thomas, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations; Professor Tom Mullen, University of Glasgow; Ruth Whatling, Scottish Government; Kathy Cameron, COSLA
182 For more details on the prevention typology being used here see: Fitzpatrick, S., Mackie, P. & Wood, J. (2019) *Homelessness prevention in the UK: Policy briefing*. Online: CaCHE. https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Homelessness-Prevention-in-the-UK-Policy-Brief-July-2019-final.pdf
183 Crisis (2021) *Preventing Homelessness in Scotland: Recommendations for Legal Duties to Prevent Homelessness: A report from the Prevention Review Group*. Online: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244558/preventing-homelessness-in-scotland.pdf

with the LA to plan for the needs of applicants for homelessness assistance who may have health and social care needs. Where people needing homelessness assistance have complex needs requiring input from multiple services, the PRG propose that a case co-ordination approach should be put into place. In relation to 16 and 17 year olds who are at risk of homelessness, the group recommend that they should be assisted by children's social work services rather than adult or homelessness services. The Group also made a series of recommendations relating to domestic abuse and homelessness, including that victims should have access to support and security measures to remain safely in their own home where this is their preference.

The second set of recommendations focus on changes to current Scottish homelessness legislation that could incentivise prevention. The proposals seek to clarify, strengthen and extend a duty to prevent homelessness, and integrate it within the main statutory framework, thus resolving the current tension between LAs' statutory homelessness duties and non-statutory prevention activity. Specific proposals include extending the duty on LAs to assist anyone threatened with homelessness within the next six months, rather than the current 56 days. The Group recommend prescription of a range of 'reasonable steps' to be used to prevent or alleviate homelessness, based on the existing Housing Options framework, to be included in a personalised and tailored housing plan that maximises applicants' choice and control. Minimum provision would include housing options information, advice and advocacy; support for landlords and tenants in the PRS; welfare and debt advice and assistance, support for those experiencing domestic abuse; family mediation; and support of furniture and similar goods. Departing from the position in Wales and England following the introduction of the Housing Wales Act (2014) and Homelessness Reduction Act (2017), the Group does not recommend that LAs can discharge the rehousing duty if individuals 'fail to cooperate' with these reasonable steps.

The Group also recommend that the range of housing options into which LAs can discharge their prevention and rehousing duties are expanded (described as a 'maximal housing options' approach), subject to strict requirements in relation to stability, suitability and applicant choice. The proposed definition of stability is that the accommodation in question is available for a minimum of twelve months, with suitability assessed in relation to: affordability; the best interests of any children in the household; location and access to services, employment, caring responsibilities, and education; needs relating to health; and where abuse is a factor, proximity to the perpetrator. Social and private tenancies, and owner occupation that meet these criteria are proposed as 'standard discharge options', but discharge into a range of 'non-standard' options (e.g., lodging) will be permitted subject to the aforementioned criteria and additional safeguards including explicit, written applicant consent. The proposals thus represent a radical expansion and reshaping of the legal duties owed to homeless or at-risk households that go much further than preceding reforms in England and Wales, in particular in requiring co-operation from other public bodies.

Key informants were overwhelmingly supportive and LA survey respondents generally positive about the PRG recommendations. Almost all of our LA survey respondents (26 of 29) were familiar with them, and of these, two thirds believed that aspects of PRG proposed actions would work well in their locality. Several LAs noted that the PRG recommendations go with the grain of recent practice changes in response to the RRTP agenda, in particular in relation to strengthened multi-agency working practices. Specific aspects of the proposals that were welcomed include the proposed introduction of a prevention duty on other public bodies:

> **"PRG recommendations are a useful starting point to enhance joint working and providing a framework for the delivery of prevention services within the authority area"**
> (LA, Glasgow and rest of Clyde Valley)

The introduction of legal prevention duties on health partners was especially welcomed given the *"huge challenges"* (Key informant, housing sector) faced to date engaging them in the homelessness prevention agenda and their pivotal potential role, according to one LA, in *"supporting families to prevent relationship breakdown"* (LA, rest of Scotland). One LA respondent extended a particular welcome for the PRG recommendation that young people aged 16 and 17 at risk of homelessness be treated as children under the law and receive assistance from children's social work. One key informant especially welcomed the introduction of a six month prevention duty on LAs:

> **"the biggest issue for us is local authorities moving to a 'six months out' kind of perspective… instead of thinking about… 56 days or so, before crisis… I think that'll be really positive."**
> (Key informant, statutory sector)

Another saw the recommendations as more generally likely to enhance LAs' capacity to build partnerships supportive of RRTPs. A further aspect of the recommendations welcomed was potential to resolve the tension highlighted in the 2014 Scottish Housing Regulator report between Housing Options prevention work and people's legal entitlements to make a homeless application when they're at risk of homelessness within 56 days:

> **"when we were really pushing down the Housing Options road, it meant we had a legal barrier to some of that… the regulator came in saying, 'No, you must take an application if it's homeless within 56 days,' and we're going, 'But we do some really good work and it might prevent homelessness happening.' 'No, you need to take an application.' 'But they don't want an application.' 'You need to take an application.'… that's a really sterile horrible argument… a real barrier… so… anything that can overcome that [is] good"**
> (Key informant, statutory sector)

Key informants were clear that acting on these recommendations for legal reform was not *sufficient* to effectively prevent homelessness, with a culture shift also needed in a wide range of public bodies and other delivery partners and an emphasis on prevention work even further upstream also desirable:

> **"making sure that we've got the right access to employment… mental health support, that really upstream stuff… conflict resolution… is as important in the sense of achieving homeless prevention as making a statutory duty on a bunch of organisations who we already know are stretched… the problem we're trying to fix cannot be fixed by legislation alone"**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

Just over half of LA survey respondents (16 of 29) considered that there were aspects of the PRG recommendations that would be particularly challenging to implement in their area. Some of these anxieties were linked with uncertainty about the depth of engagement that could be expected from other public bodies in relation to a more broadly applicable 'duty to prevent'.

Others warned that practical logistics would present a major hurdle in implementing PRG recommendations:

> **"Resourcing, shared data and information sharing are current challenges to be overcome"**
> (LA, Glasgow and rest of Clyde Valley)

A more specific concern related to the proposed extension of 'duty to prevent' responsibilities as applicable to people at risk of homelessness within six months, which several respondents anticipated would be 'a real challenge' to implement. One key informant had significant concerns about the PRG recommendations, albeit that they were supportive of the broad thrust of the proposals, commenting that in their view they *"downgrade"* and *"dilute"* homelessness households' right to settled accommodation by widening the range of housing options via which LAs can discharge their legal duties.[184]

The Scottish National Party 2021 election manifesto included a commitment to introduce legislation building on the PRG's recommendations, albeit that this did not feature in the First Minister's initial statements of the new Government's following their election.[185] The Social Renewal Advisory Board, set up by Scottish Ministers to make proposals regarding renewal as Scotland emerges from the pandemic, recommended that implementing the PRG recommendations be given *"maximum consideration"*.[186] Housing to 2040 included a related commitment to comprehensively audit current housing and homelessness legislation in Scotland, with a view to realising a right to adequate housing, something that the current Scottish Government intend to embed in Scots Law along with a range of economic, social and cultural rights via a new Human Rights Bill.[187]

3.5 Key points

- LA RRTPs are a key delivery mechanism for the Scottish Government's EHT Action Plan. Progress implementing plans to date is varied, but in around half of LAs RRTPs have already prompted shifts in social housing allocations policies, primarily involving greater prioritisation of homeless households. While the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted on progress, RRTPs were seen to have supported LA responses to the crisis, not least as a result of the enhanced partnership arrangements in place after RRTP development. Despite increases in the funding committed to RRTP implementation by the Scottish Government, there are concerns that the plans remain acutely under-resourced.

- Three years into the HF pathfinder programme, over 500 tenancies have been initiated. While short of the target of 800, in part as a result of the pandemic but also challenges setting up HF services, 85% of tenancies started have been sustained and there have been no evictions to date. Key informants were positive about the impact and achievements of the pathfinder programme, emphasising intentions to continue HF provision in Pathfinder areas despite the tapering down of the Scottish Government funding. This year's LA survey indicates that HF services are in operation in two thirds of Scottish LAs, and their introduction planned in several more. Positive impacts of HF provision include tenancy sustainment, wider benefits to the choice and control of tenants, and gains in relation to partnership working, but there are ongoing challenges in relation to the resourcing of HF provision, access to housing, levels of buy-in from non-housing partners, and challenges maintaining programme fidelity.

- The planned extension of the UAO to all household types has been pushed back several times by the Scottish Government in response to COVID-19. When implemented, the amended order will mean that no homeless households can be accommodated in unsuitable B&B or hotel accommodation for more than 7 days. Key informants disagree about the justifiability of these delays. Fewer than half of LAs anticipate that the extension of the Order will impact on their TA placement practice, with significant impacts limited to pressured areas.

- The Scottish Government's response to the homelessness impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic focused on accommodating people sleeping rough and decanting night shelter accommodation by using hotel or other single-room accommodation and by making available funding to trusted third sector partners with speed and minimal bureaucratic barriers. These measures were credited with reducing rough sleeping to unprecedently low levels in Edinburgh and Glasgow and in combination with enhanced safety measures in congregate accommodation, seen to have kept COVID-19 infections rates to a minimum among the homeless and at-risk population. The crisis response's explicit inclusiveness of those with NRPF brought a group previously hidden from services into view and intensive multi-agency working occasioned by the pandemic enabled positive engagement with long histories of rough sleeping and complex needs.

- However, concerns have emerged regarding the wellbeing of the large number of individuals accommodated in hotels in response to the pandemic. These issues were seen to be especially acute in Glasgow, where less on-site support was provided to those in hotels in the early stages of the pandemic.

- Lockdown measures had a dramatic impact on social housing providers' capacity to turn around voids and ensure a continuous flow of new lets to households, including those facing homelessness. While LAs were credited with fast adaptation to these challenges, RSLs were widely recognised to have taken a more cautious and risk-averse approach with lettings almost entirely drying up from this source for the first several months of the pandemic. These issues contributed to increasing backlogs in TA. Social housing lets to homeless households were seen to have picked up in Autumn 2020.

- A key recommendation of the reconvened HARSAG was for the proportion of lets to homeless households to be maximised to 80-90% for a limited emergency period. The Scottish Government did not ultimately endorse this specific numerical target, following firm push-back from LAs and RSLs. Key informants had mixed perspectives on this, with some disappointed in the opposition from providers and

184 See also: Shelter Scotland (2021) *Do we risk diluting the rights of homeless people?* 22 Feb. Online: Shelter Scotland. https://blog.scotland.shelter.org.uk/risk-diluting-rights-homeless-people/

185 Scottish National Party (2021) *SNP 2021 Manifesto: Scotland's Future, Scotland's Choice*. Online: SNP. https://www.snp.org/manifesto/; Scottish Housing News (2021) *Urgent legislation required to prevent homelessness, warns Crisis*. 27 May. https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/article/urgent-legislation-required-to-prevent-homelessness-warns-crisis

186 Social Renewal Advisory Board (2021) *If not now, when? Social Renewal Advisory Board report, January 2021*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/not-now-social-renewal-advisory-board-report-january-2021/documents/

187 Scottish Government (2021) *Housing to 2040*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2021/03/housing-2040-2/documents/housing-2040/housing-2040/govscot%3Adocument/housing-2040.pdf; Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (2021) *The Right to Adequate Housing: are we focusing on what matters? A discussion paper commissioned by the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers: Executive Summary*. Online: ALACHO. https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/The-Right-to-Adequate-Housing_Exec-Summary.pdf

welcoming the bold marker that homeless households should be prioritised, and others defending a more flexible and less directive approach on practical and political grounds.

- The PRG, convened by Crisis on behalf of the Scottish Government, has recently published recommendations to introduce new homelessness prevention duties on a wide range of public bodies, and change homelessness legislation to incentivise prevention. Key informants were overwhelmingly supportive of the recommendations. Almost all LAs survey respondents identified aspects of the proposals that would work well in their locality, with only half identifying aspects that would be challenging. Aspects identified as likely to work especially well included the emphasis on improved joint working and obligations on wider public bodies. The challenges identified oriented around the practicalities of a six month prevention duty and the introduction of duties on wider public sector bodies.

Homelessness trends

4. Homelessness trends in Scotland

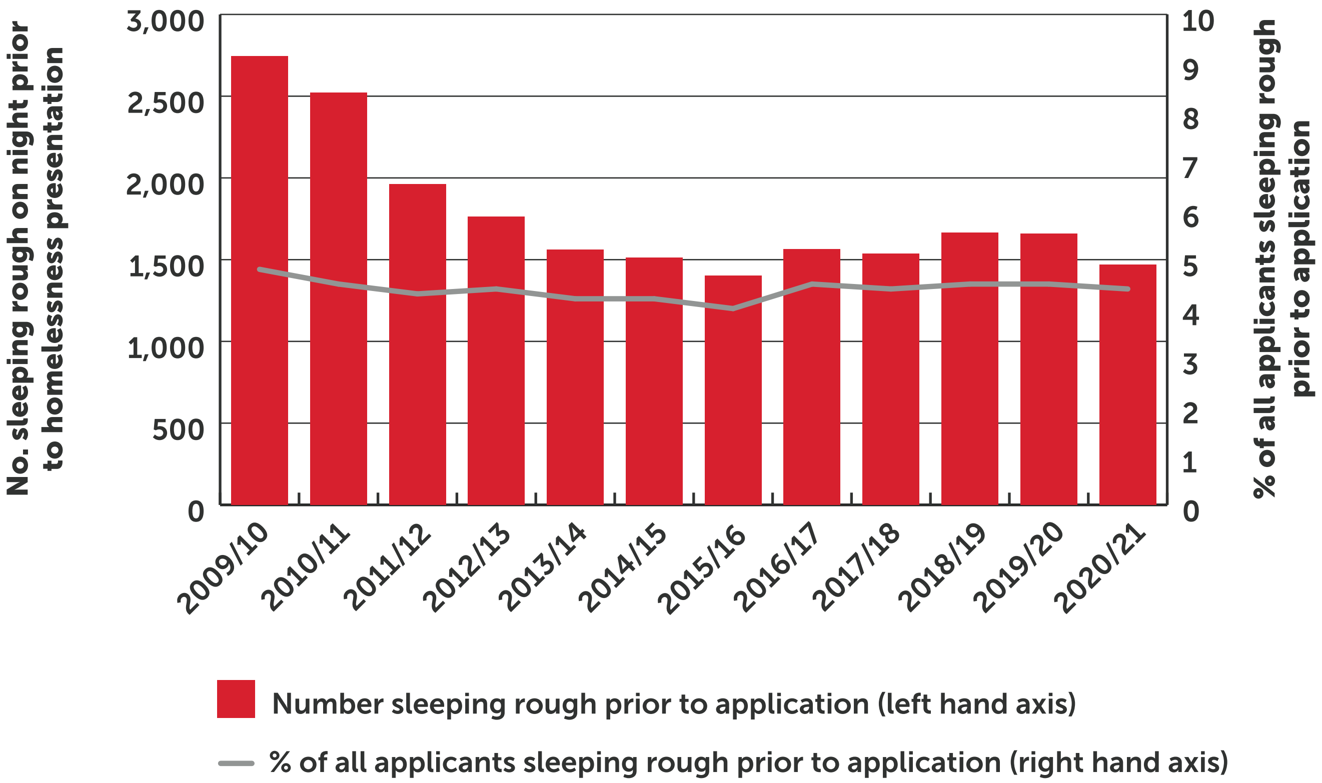
4.1 Introduction
The chapter analyses recent trends in the incidence of homelessness as these can be interpreted from the the Scottish Government's published statutory homelessness statistics.[188] The analysis focuses in particular on developments revealed by statistics for the pandemic year 2020/21. In interpreting the official figures detailed above, the chapter also draws on key informant interviews and our LA survey carried out by the research team in 2021.

The chapter is structured as follows. In Section 4.2 we analyse the statutory homelessness statistics that shed light on the incidence of rough sleeping. Next, in Section 4.3, we look at the various dimensions of statutory homelessness. Here we analyse trends in the overall incidence of homelessness, as indicated via logged applications for assistance, and via the numbers of applicants assessed as homeless. This leads on to analysis of recent trends on immediate causes of homelessness, as well as on the demographic profile of the applicant cohort. The chapter concludes by charting recent and longer-term change in the scale of TA placements.

4.2 Rough sleeping
In contrast with official practice in England, the Scottish Government maintains no regular rough sleeper point in time 'headcount'. The scale of rough sleeping can, however, be gauged from the LA homelessness recording system (HL1), as analysed below. An alternative source on the incidence of rough sleeping is provided by the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) which collects data on previous experience of rough sleeping within the household population. This is further discussed in the Chapter 5 which estimates the scale of 'core homelessness' in Scotland.

188 See https://www.gov.scot/collections/homelessness-statistics/. Another official data source with some utility in gauging the scale and nature of homelessness demand is the PREVENT1 series which records local authority Housing Options (or homelessness prevention) activity. However, partly because PREVENT1 statistics for 2020/21 remain unpublished at the time of writing, reference to these is not included in this edition of Homelessness Monitor Scotland.

Figure 4.1: Incidence of rough sleeping immediately prior to homelessness presentation

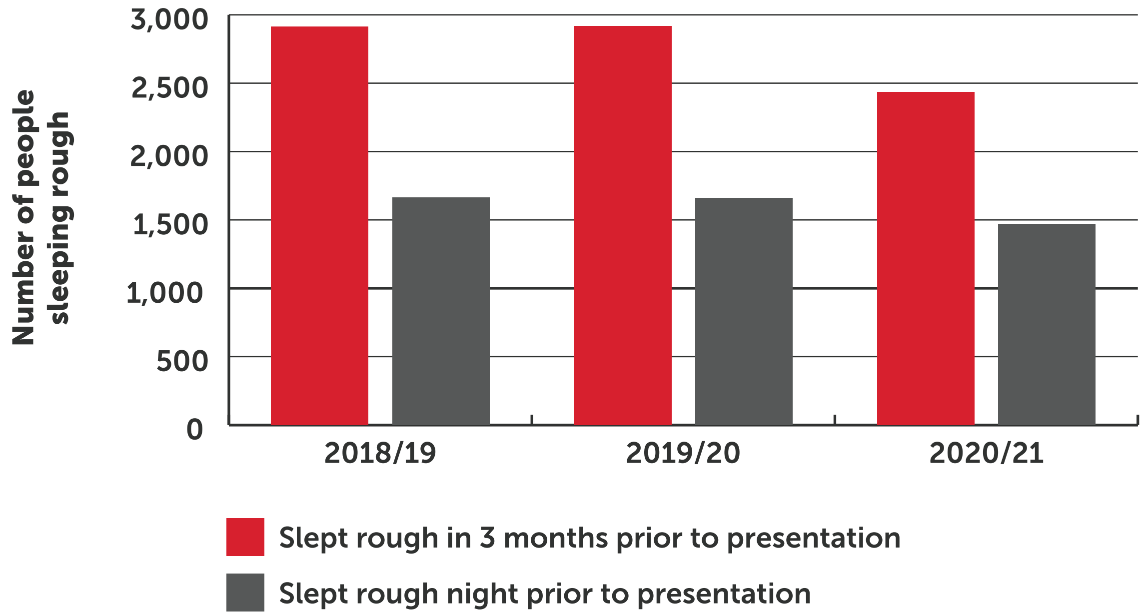


Source: Scottish Government

According to official statistical returns, some 1,470 people presenting as homeless to LAs from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 reported having slept rough the night preceding their application. As shown in Figure 4.1, rough sleeping immediately prior to presentation fell slightly in both absolute and proportionate terms during the pandemic. In numerical terms, this measure of rough sleeping fell by 11% in 2020/21 compared to the previous year (from 1,660 to 1,470) and 9% using the average figure for previous three years (1,622) as a benchmark. Calculated on this same basis, larger proportionate falls were recorded in both Glasgow (16%) and Edinburgh (44%), in line with the key informant perspectives on the efficacy of the pandemic response to rough sleeping in Scotland's two biggest cities (see chapter 3). Similarly, 2020/21 saw a drop in the national number (and proportion) of presenting households reporting having slept rough in the three months prior to presentation – see Figure 4.2. On this measure, rough sleeping dropped 16% in the pandemic year compared to 2019/20 levels.

It might be argued that the notable, but modest, decreases in rough sleeping in 2020/21 revealed by HL1 statistics (see also Chapter 5) are in tension with the radical declines described by key informants in the previous chapter. We would note here that key informants emphasised the low numbers sleeping rough in the centres of Scotland's two main cities (Edinburgh and Glasgow) on any single night, whereas HL1 data cover the full year and all LAs, and all areas within those LAs. Also relevant to understanding this apparent disjuncture are key informant perspectives emphasising that while

Figure 4.2: Incidence of rough sleeping prior to homelessness presentation



Source: Scottish Government

the numbers on the street at any one time were as low as ever seen, the 'flow' of new rough sleepers onto the street continued throughout the pandemic, albeit with swift service responses in place:

> **"[I]n both Welcome Centres... [a significant proportion of] the people that are presenting... have never used the homelessness services before in any form... the signs are that the numbers [coming on to the street] are not going away"**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

> **"In average weeks, we are resolving 28, 29, 30 people who arrive on the streets, but there is provision there for them to go to... [it's] fairly steady in terms of people needing help... a fairly steady stream"**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

This flow onto the street was in part explained by the breaking down of the previous temporary living situations of various kinds in the context of the pandemic:

> **"[W]e did quite quickly start to see people who weren't previously in need in crisis because they were losing their option to sofa surf, they were losing their option to be with family and friends, they were losing the option to, in some cases, doss down in the worst kind of accommodation that was linked to employment... Portakabins on building sites and stuff like that. We started to see people seeking help that would have been invisible to us before or who didn't perceive themselves in need before"**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

Our LA survey revealed that while most councils (21 of 29 responding) perceived that the scale of rough sleeping remained steady in 2020/21, six (including Edinburgh and Glasgow) perceived a reduction and only one reported an increase. The authority reporting an increase noted that this was on the basis of self-reported HL1 data, and did not correspond to any increase in visible rough sleeping or rough sleeping they were aware of through relevant partnerships. Authorities reporting a rough sleeping decline attributed this, at least in part, to more intensive action in support of public health objectives during the pandemic. These perceptions support administrative data and key informant testimony indicating that these reductions were concentrated in larger cities.

Several key informants were clear that the gains on rough sleeping achieved during the pandemic were somewhat fragile:

> **"The danger is... once we do get out of lockdown.... the challenge there is to try and make sure that people or numbers on the street throughout the year, not just in the winter, is kept to an absolute minimum."**
> (Key informant, statutory sector)

> **"[it] feels like is a very tense achievement insofar as how long we can keep it. How long we could hold that progress"**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

4.3 Statutory homelessness

As used in this report, the term statutory homelessness refers to LA assessments of applicants seeking help with housing on the grounds of being currently or imminently without accommodation.

While the section's main focus is the very recent past, it is useful to set this in context by first reviewing the longer term trend of statutory homelessness demand during the 2010s.

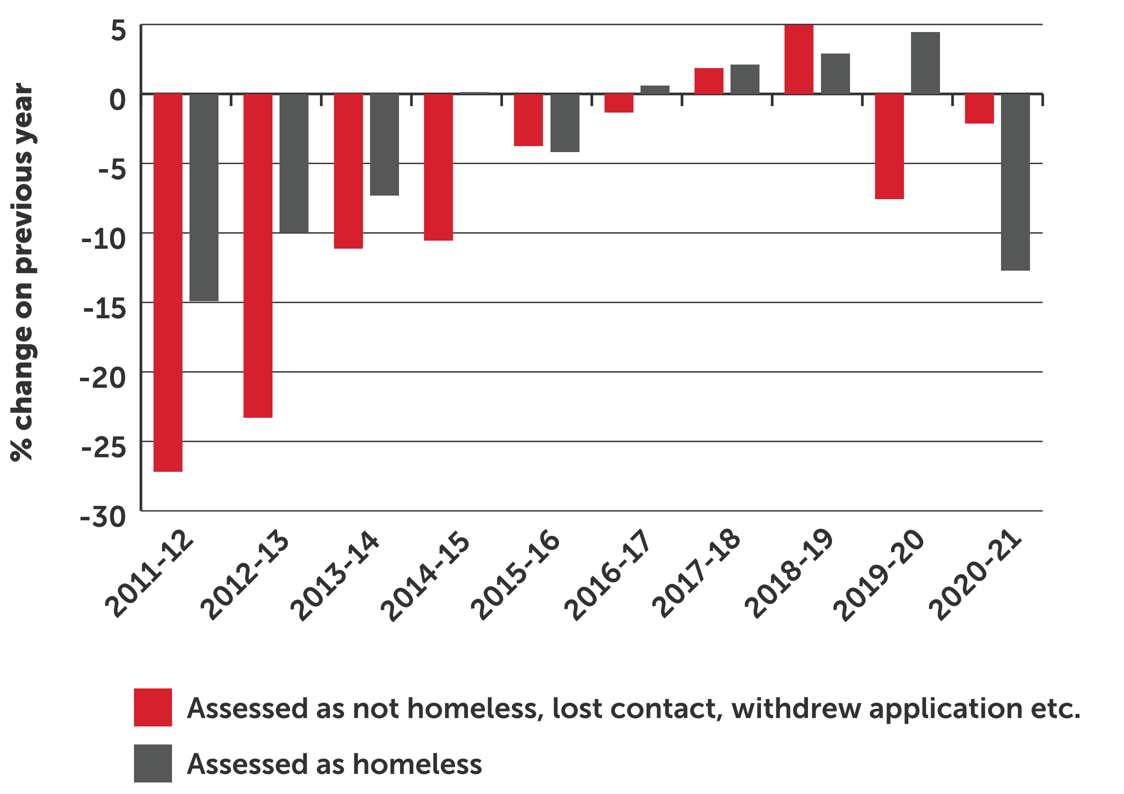
As shown in Figure 4.3 falling homelessness assessments in 2020/21 followed several years of gradually rising numbers, with the national total having grown by 10% in the period 2016/17-2019/20. In one interpretation, the disruption of 2020/21 was an interruption to a steadily rising pre-pandemic trend. Whether the previous pattern may re-assert itself in the post-COVID era is a question related to the discussion of core homelessness projections in Chapter 5.

Overview of recent trends – COVID-19 impacts

As demonstrated by Figure 4.4, the COVID-19 pandemic had a marked impact on statutory homelessness in Scotland. The first quarter of 2020/21 (April-June) saw a reduction of 17% in new homelessness applications logged by LAs, with cases assessed as homeless declining by 20% over the previous quarter. Applications and assessments remained at reduced levels throughout the financial year, with overall assessments down 11% on 2019/20 levels (from 37,535 to 33,398) and cases assessed as homeless down 13% (from 31,581 to 27,571). In line with LA survey responses, larger reductions in overall applications were seen in East of Scotland authorities classed within the 'Edinburgh and other pressured markets' group (see chapter 1 for full listing). In these areas, applications dropped by 19% in 2020/21, whereas in the 'Glasgow and Clyde Valley' group they fell by only 1%. This may reflect differences in housing market conditions that affect the composition of local homelessness applicant cohorts. For example, it would be expected that the effect of evictions protections would be disproportionately large for authorities in which the PRS traditionally tends to be a major generator of homelessness.

In contrast to these downward trends in new applications and assessments, open applications rose by 18% and TA placements by 12% in Quarter 1 2020/21 (April-June) – trajectories that peaked in Quarter 2 (July-September) – see Figure 4.4. By financial year end

Figure 4.3: Local authority statutory homelessness applications and assessment outcomes, 2011/12-2020/21



Source: Scottish Government

these 'backlogs' had been somewhat reduced, but remained far above pre-pandemic levels.

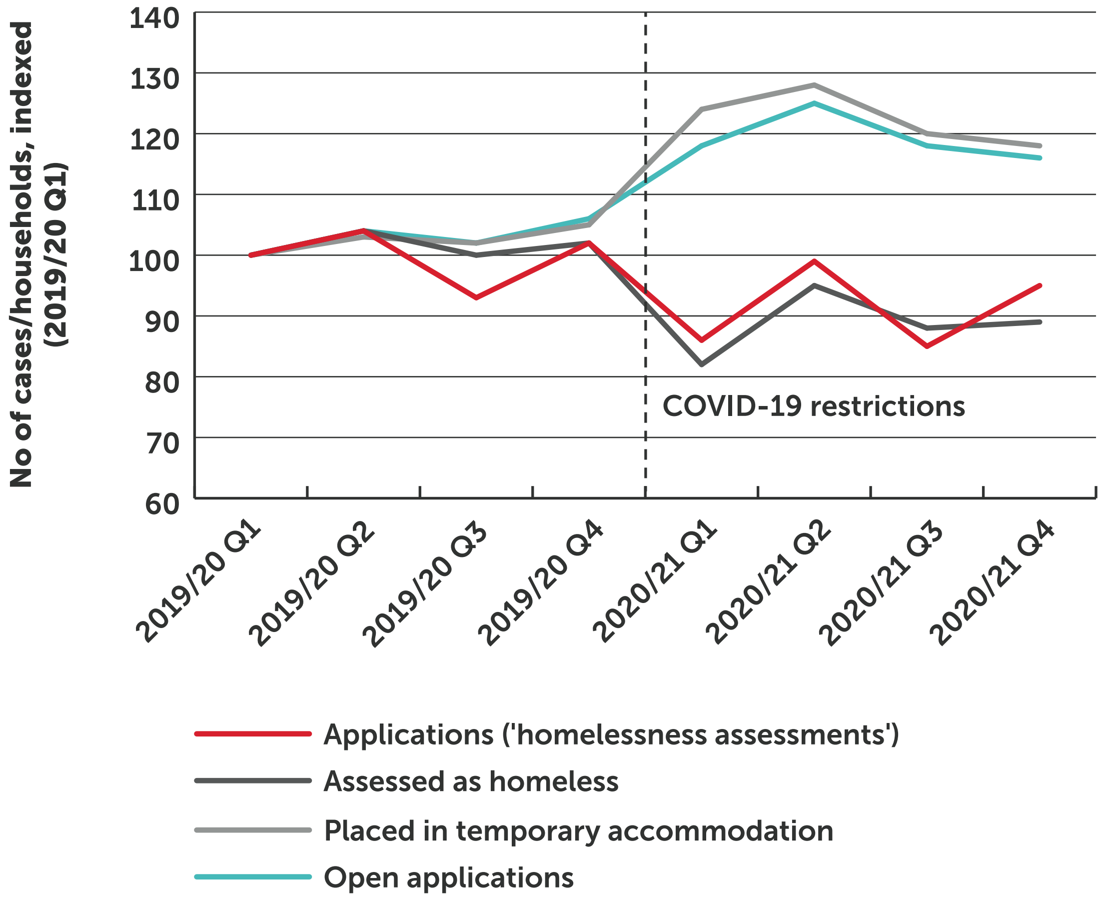
The drops in applications and assessments seen in the pandemic year were attributed to two main drivers by key informants, the first being the introduction of protections for renters to prevent and/or delay evictions (see below). Second, for those in housing circumstances that might usually have precipitated a homeless application (e.g., staying with friends and family or in otherwise unsuitable accommodation), the pandemic was seen to have incentivised staying put where at all possible:

> **"[We've seen] a decline in homelessness during the pandemic... across the country in most local authorities, where they've certainly not had an increase in homelessness but some have had an actual reduction... one could assume that people didn't feel safe leaving where they were and they wanted to stay"**
> (Key informant, statutory sector)

> **"[H]omelessness wasn't increasing [during the early stages of the pandemic] ... people were sticking with whatever situation they were in"**
> (Key informant, statutory sector)

Increased TA placements were also explained by pandemic-specific drivers. They were also seen as reflecting that households newly faced with, or already experiencing, homelessness had fewer alternative and informal options available to them as compared with pre-pandemic:

Figure 4.4: Key statutory homelessness trends, 2019/20-2020/21 – indexed (2019/20 Q1=100)



Sources: Scottish Government homelessness statistics

"If there was homelessness, then there was more of a requirement for temporary accommodation during that period ... because people didn't have the alternative solutions... family and friends... With COVID... there were no alternatives for folk. All those informal arrangements were closed down"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

"[P]eople who previously were accepted as homeless – so these are not new applications, necessarily, but previously accepted as homeless... They could no longer stay with family or friends, staying in a spare room or sofa surfing, because those households that were hosting the homeless people or homeless households really felt that they had to leave"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

Another key informant believed that the pandemic had "flushed out" homelessness that had previously been hidden from services:

"The number of people who were prepared to go into hotels, who were not prepared to countenance going to previous night shelters, should tell us something about how the system is failing to meet demands... people who are homeless have been pushed to the margins and out of sight... people who just practically couldn't stay on people's sofas any more, who just didn't want to be part of the homelessness system, just had nowhere else to turn"
(Key informant, voluntary sector)

Finally, the recorded increases in open applications are likely explained by the difficulties faced in accessing settled housing options, especially during the early stages of the pandemic:

"[A]t least initially, there was no lettings of mainstream accommodation, so what was happening was that people were just having to get folk into temporary accommodation, so it would grow because you couldn't get them [out]"
(Key informant, statutory sector)

"There's... a big backlog of void and empty properties that we haven't been able to get into to work on, which is contributing to the number of people who are still in temporary accommodation... we haven't been able to carry out work at the same rate... when you're thinking about working in ways that are COVID-safe... you're not just talking about the housing service, you're talking about a whole range of other services that need to be involved in making accommodation ready for people to move into."
(Key informant, statutory sector)

Looking beyond these overall national trends, LA survey results highlight that 2020/21 trends in the overall number of households seeking assistance from Housing Options/homelessness services differed across the country. Nearly half of responding LAs reported a reduction in the numbers seeking assistance, with a quarter reporting a 'significant' drop (see Table 1, Appendix 1). Evictions protections in place in response to the pandemic were the most frequently cited explanation, but several authorities also cited enhanced efforts to prevent homelessness and a reduced willingness of households to move away from support networks during the pandemic:

"We have seen a 20% reduction in homeless presentations in 2020/21 and would suggest the likely reasons are due to the lack of movement of people due to Covid-19 and subsequent lockdown restrictions as well as our focus around prevention and housing options. In addition, Government legislation was put in place to protect households from evictions and repossessions and will also have had an impact on reducing homelessness presentations."
(LA, Glasgow and rest of Clyde Valley)

"[A]pplicants more likely to stay where they are than progress with a homeless application during Covid, potentially uncertainty re temporary accommodation options and moving away from family/friend support networks when bubbles are very important and travelling across the city would be a concern, family accommodating during uncertain times and support bubbles, eviction ban has also assisted significantly... [we've also been] supporting people to remain in their current accommodation, by providing comprehensive advice to tenants on their rights"
(LA, Edinburgh and other pressured areas)

Nearly a quarter of authorities, however, perceived that demand had 'slightly increased', and this was considerably more common among authorities in the Glasgow and Clyde Valley grouping. Several authorities reporting an increase attributed this, at least in part, to increased levels of relationship breakdown or family conflict.

Looking forward, key stakeholders voiced concerns about the drivers of homelessness intensifying and levels increasing as a result, with particular emphasis placed on the timing and nature of the ending of evictions protections:

> **"There's absolutely no doubt… the figures of rising benefit claims, that would drive a massive increased risk of potential homelessness… there's people that were in probably precarious situations long term that the economic impacts or just the stress of lockdown has increased that risk."**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

> **"[it] all depends on the unravelling or unwinding of the… protection for evictions… If… there is no managed approach to try and make sure that people don't get served notice to quits, then we could have a homeless surge… we're in okay territory just now… but if we have a sudden insurge of people because they're being evicted or being asked to leave their tenancies, then that could tip us over the edge."**
> (Key informant, statutory sector)

Factors precipitating homelessness
Comparing 2020/21 with previous years, it is apparent that the presentation reduction during the initial pandemic year mainly reflected a fall in cases involving loss of rental housing – see Figures 4.8 and 4.9. The number of households presenting as homeless due to the loss of rental tenancies fell by 57% in 2020/21 compared to the previous year (from 4,651 to 1,999), highly likely the consequence of protections against eviction from rented housing introduced in response to the pandemic (see chapter 2). Key informants described as "critical" (Key informant, voluntary sector) in stemming homelessness demand:

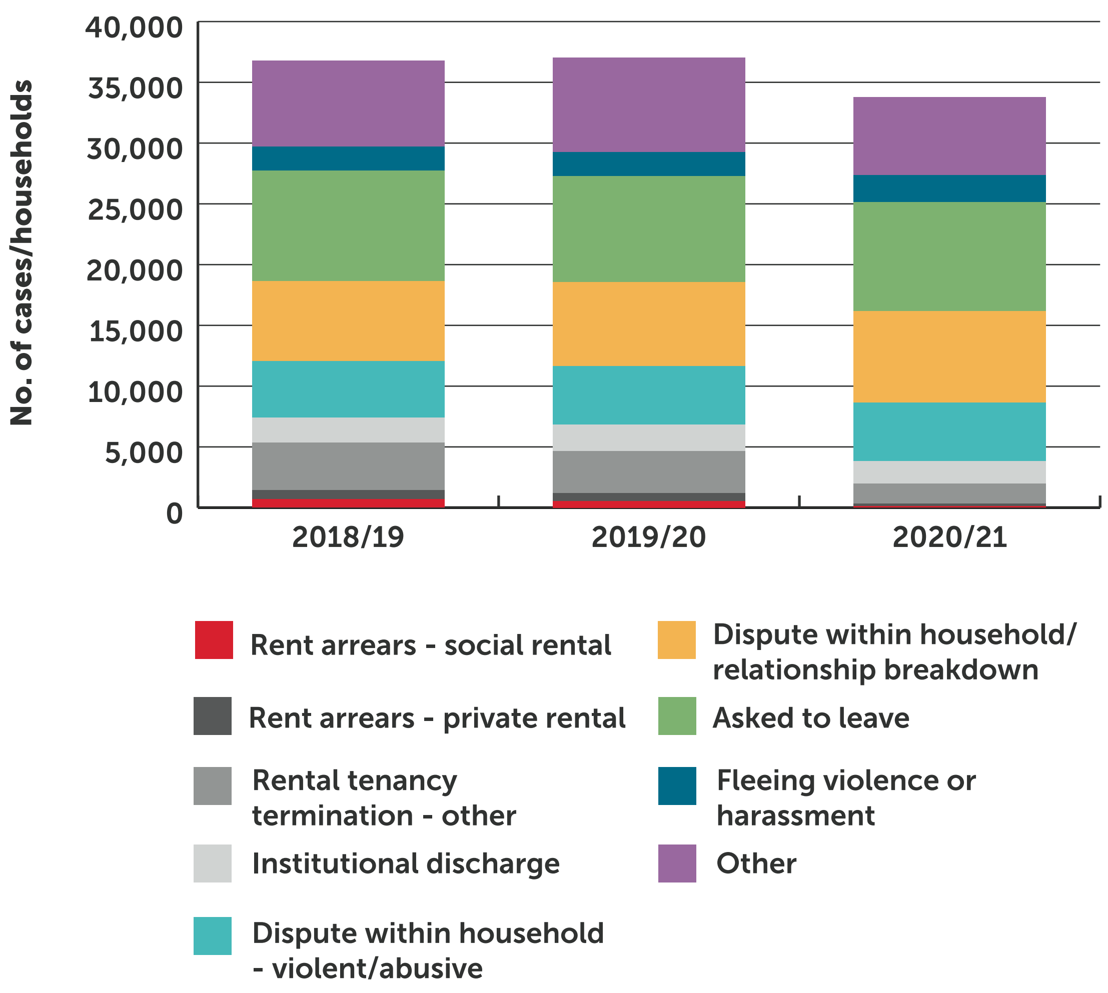
> **"[S]ecurity of tenure was massively, massively important… In that moment of crisis, that security that government gave to tenants and has continued to extend it… it's been hugely, hugely impactful… it has given people that security of tenure in their own home, irrespective of their financial circumstances… super important… that was a positive policy… it felt like tenants were being looked after"**
> (Key informant, housing sector)

While the number of applications precipitated by non-violent disputes within the households increased in the pandemic year, applications precipitated by violent or abusive dispute within the household remained broadly stable (4,811 compared to 4,845), though a handful of LA survey respondents reported efforts to improve policy responses in this area in light of the specific challenges posed by lockdown for victims of domestic abuse. In the context of reported increases in domestic abuse during lockdown, the stability in homelessness related to domestic abuse in the pandemic period lends support to concerns that women's capacity to escape perpetrators may have been compromised during the pandemic,[189] a concern emphasised by this key informant:

> **"[P]eople [experiencing domestic abuse] were now placed in an environment that was, not just undesirable, it's massively, massively unsafe, and there was no ability to people to really have that social connection that provided that kind of safety"**
> (Key informant, housing sector)

189 Scottish Government (2020) *Improving Housing Outcomes for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse: Scottish Government Working Group Report*. Online: Scottish Government. https://womensaid.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Improving-Housing-Outcomes-for-Women-and-Children-Experiencing-Domestic-Abuse-Report.pdf

Figure 4.5: Households presenting as homeless 2018-21 – breakdown according to main reason for application



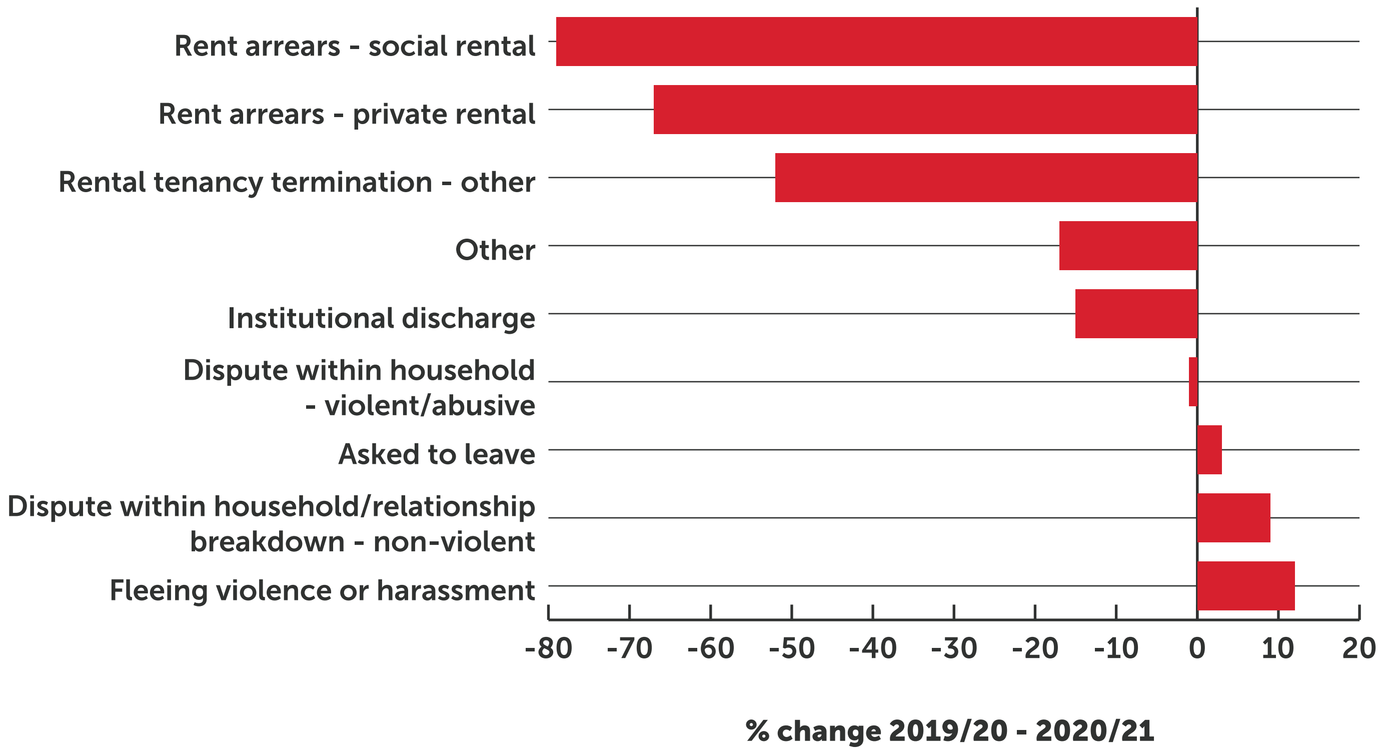
Source: Scottish Government

Figures 4.5 and 4.6 also reveal an increase in 'fleeing violence or harassment' as a main reason for presentation, and a decrease in homelessness precipitated by institutional discharge.

Statutory homelessness profiles
In terms of age and household type, the pandemic significantly altered the representation of different categories within the 'assessed as homeless' cohort. As shown in Figure 4.7, the reduction in households headed by older people (aged above 50) was substantially higher than the overall norm, whereas the 18-24 cohort fell back much more modestly, likely reflecting the greater concentration of young people in informal arrangements that broke down during the pandemic.

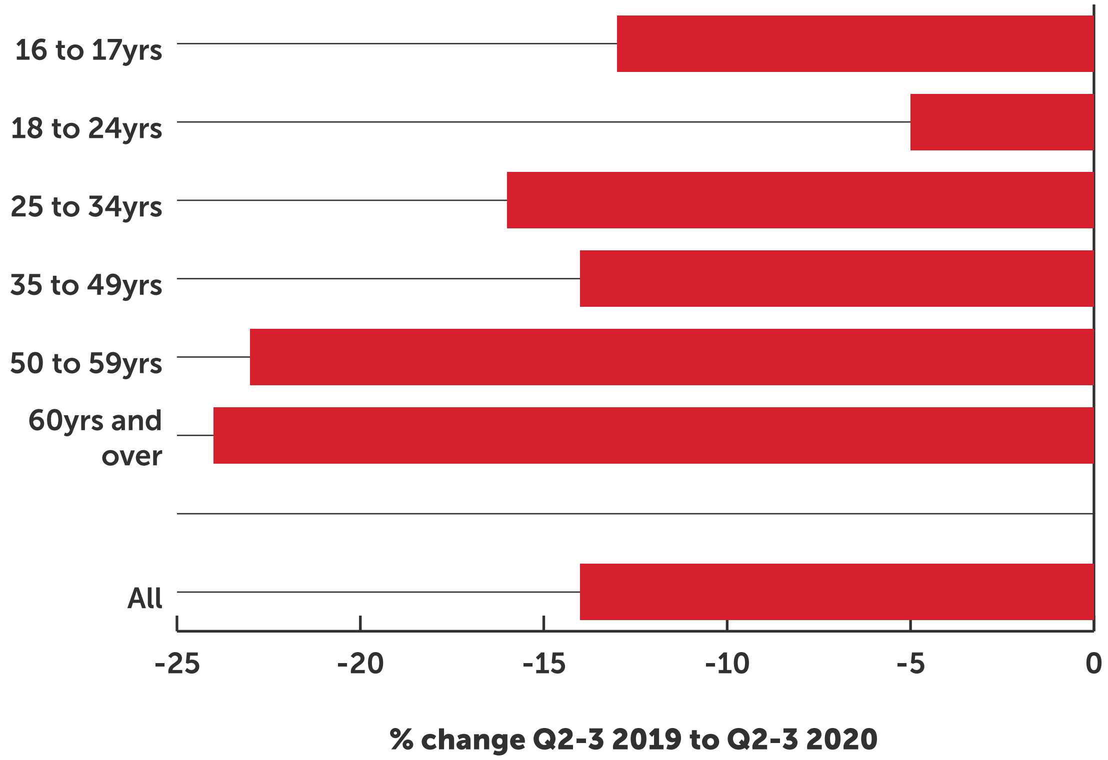
While the pandemic had little or no immediate effect on the gender distribution of 'assessed as homeless' applicants, it did impact in relation to household type. As shown in Figure 4.8, single adults continued to account for a large majority. However, their numbers declined only slightly during the initial pandemic lockdown, while the number of households with children plummeted by 30%. The reduction in all other (non-family) households was only

Figure 4.6: Homelessness applications 2019/20 – 2020/21: % change according to reason for homelessness



Source: Scottish Government

Figure 4.7: Applicants assessed as homeless, age group of main applicant: % change Q2-3 2019 to Q2-3 2020



Source: Scottish Government. Note: Equivalent data for the whole of 2020/21 unpublished

7%. This patterning might reflect the greater likelihood of single person households residing in unsustainable temporary living situations that broke down during the pandemic (see above) as compared with families' greater likelihood of residing in rental accommodation and protected from eviction during the pandemic.

Temporary accommodation placements

Prior to COVID-19, total TA placements had been running at largely stable levels of 10-11,000 for the decade to 2019 (see Figure 4.9). These high levels of TA use reflect dramatic increases, up from around 4,000 households in 2002, following the expansion of temporary and settled rehousing entitlements initiated in the early 2000s and fully implemented in 2012 on completion of the phasing out of the 'priority need' criterion.[190] Key informants were clear that these high levels of TA use represent a highly problematic aspect of the Scottish homelessness response, albeit that they are a side effect of its internationally lauded rights-based response, with the solution seen to be improved access to settled housing, as well as improved prevention:

> **"[W]e know that the Scottish problem… as an unintended consequence of universal right to housing, has been this increase in temporary housing… that's the bit that keeps the homelessness system expensive and not working. That's something that really needs to be fixed"**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

> **"[T]he biggest problem… is the bottleneck [of households in TA]… access to affordable… permanent affordable housing is still the big issue and in Edinburgh we're nowhere near solving that and that's the big worry"**
> (Key informant, voluntary sector)

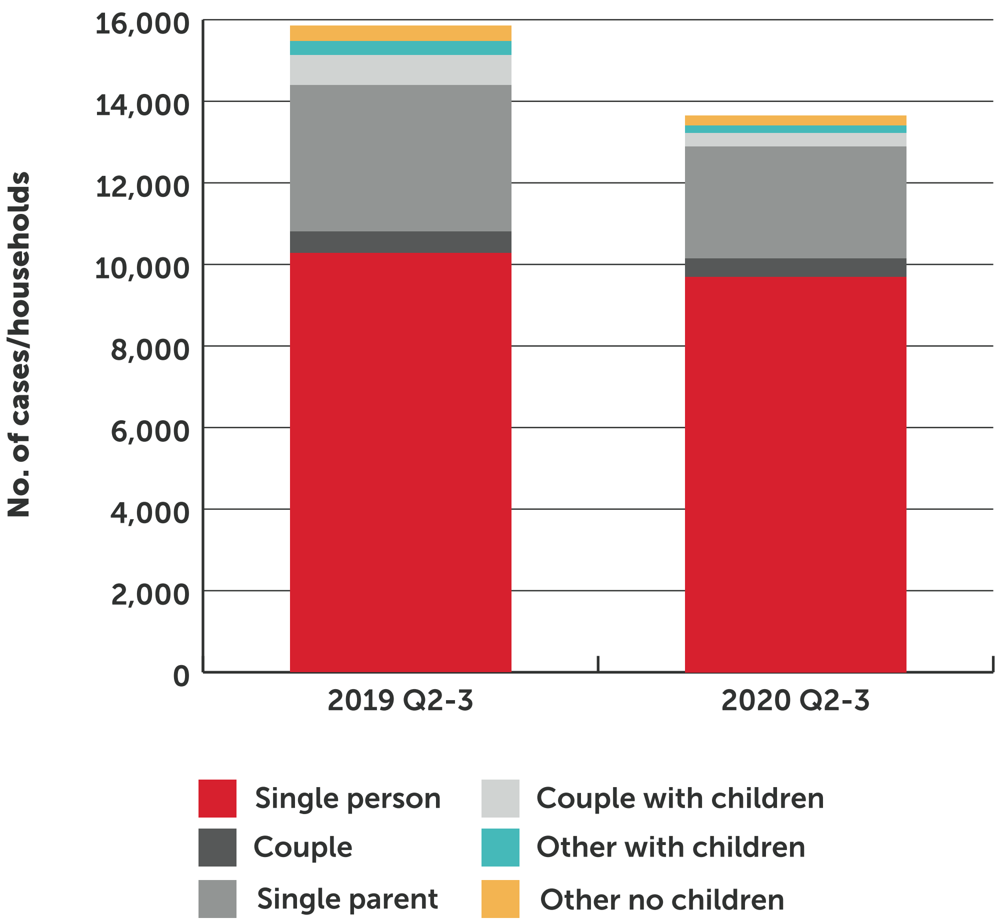
A more recent and sudden pre-pandemic discontinuity occurred in 2019 when B&B placements fell by almost half in a single quarter (from 1,137 to 649 in the period 31 March to 30 June). However, an accompanying increase of similar magnitude in 'other' placements suggests this could have involved a reclassification rather than a real change in the distribution of TA use. For example, upgrades of B&B stock in Edinburgh (an historically high B&B using authority) led to the reclassification of much of the area's TA as 'shared housing', falling into the 'other' category.[191]

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on TA placement numbers. Between 31 March and 30 September 2020, overall TA numbers grew by 21%. Within this, B&B placements rose by 79% to stand at almost double their number a year earlier (99%). Significantly, across all forms of TA, the rise in placements seen during 2020 largely involved adult-only households. While total placements rose by almost 2,500 between 31 March and 30 September, family placements at the end of this period were only 430 higher than at the start. By 31 March 2021, while somewhat reduced, total placements remained substantially higher than a

190 Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Watts, B., Wood, J., Stephens, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2019) *Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2019*. London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240002/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2019.pdf

191 Watts, B., Littlewood, M., Blenkinsopp, J. & Jackson, F. (2018) *Temporary Accommodation In Scotland: Final Report*. Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University https://social-bite.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/SB_TempAccommReport_FinalReport.pdf

Figure 4.8: Applicants assessed as homeless 2020/21 Q1-Q2 compared with equivalent period of 2019/20: household type breakdown



Source: Scottish Government. Note: Equivalent data for the whole of 2020/21 unpublished

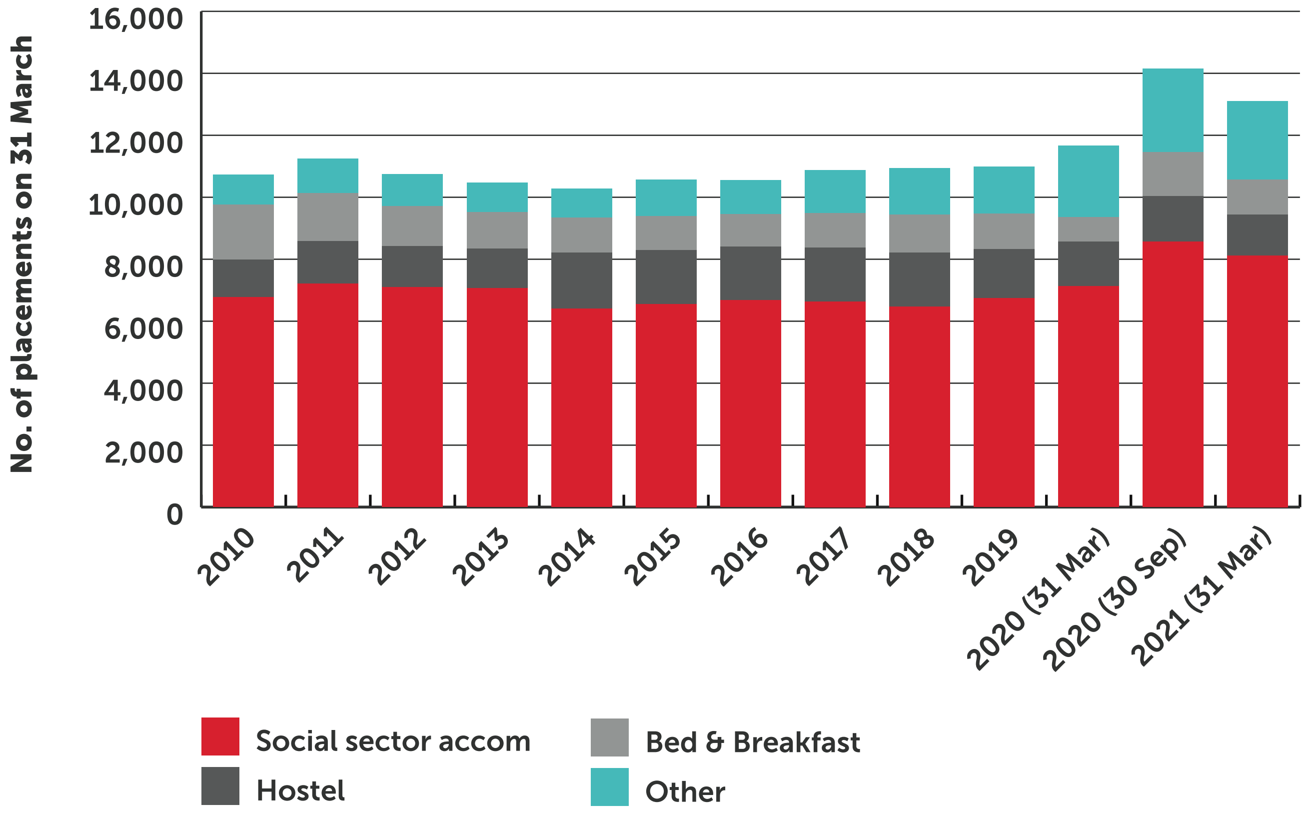
year earlier, at just over 13,000 – see Figure 4.9.

Key informants acknowledged that the pandemic had negatively impacted on LAs' capacity to reduce use of TA in line with aims of the EHT Action Plan and RRTPs (see chapter 3). One described being *"pretty worried about the increase in population in temporary accommodation"*, predicting that this will *"dominate the next two or three years in terms of making sure people are housed out of temporary accommodation as reasonably quickly as possible"* and emphasising that success in implementing RRTPs will depend on addressing the *"bulge of legacy [TA] created by the pandemic"* (Key informant, statutory sector). Another agreed:

> **"[Local authorities have] had to use accommodation that they wouldn't want to have used and the amount that they wouldn't want to have used [during the pandemic], and they will be all stepping back from that as much as they possibly can"**
> (Key informant, statutory sector)

It was noted, however, that there were some early signs of progress in terms of the transformation of TA (see Chapter 3), including much increased use of 'flipping' TA tenancies into

Figure 4.9: Homeless households in temporary accommodation – snapshot total at financial year end



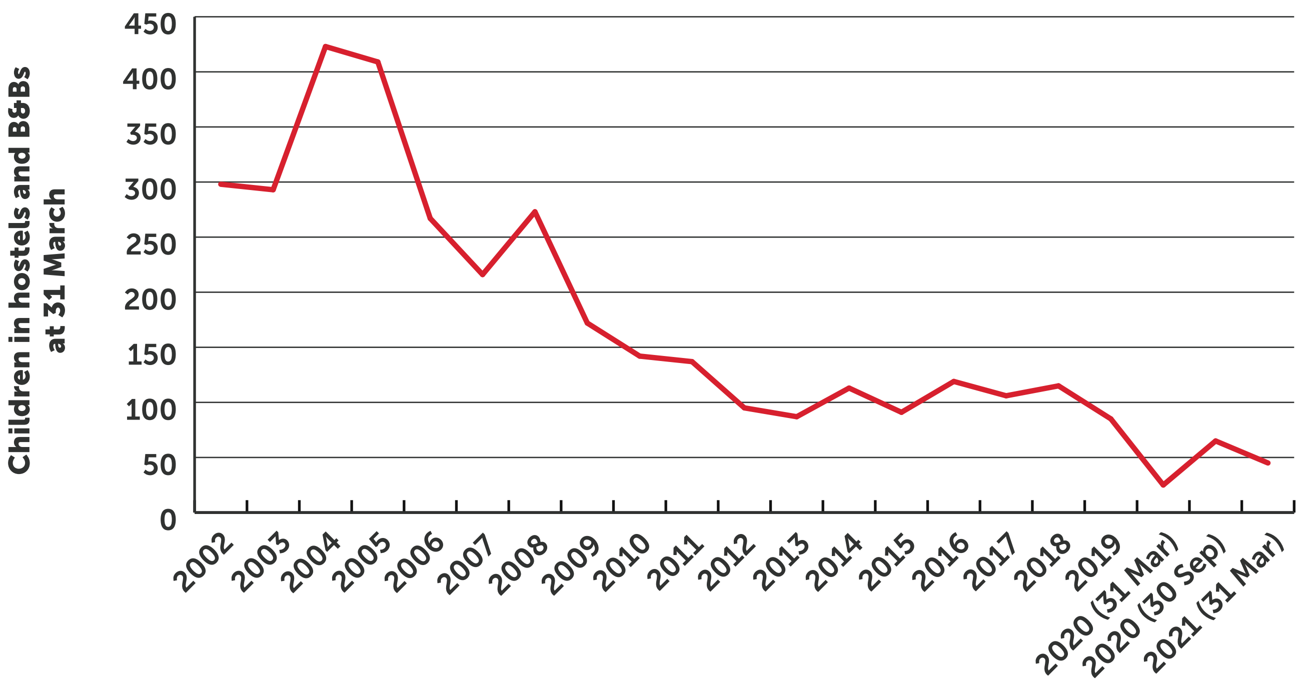
Source: Scottish Government

permanent homes, especially where households have resided there for some time.

Over recent years (up to the end of 2020/21) households have been spending an average of around six months in TA. In 2020/21 there was a slight increase – from 187 days to 199 days. Earlier research, however, showed that for one household in six, the TA placement period was over a year.[192] Placement periods vary greatly by type of accommodation – in 2020/21 ranging from 34 days for B&B to 236 days for housing association stock used on a short-term basis. Around 30% of TA placements involve family households. The most concerning aspect of this is the use of B&Bs and hostels where private space or private facilities is typically very limited.[193] Use of such accommodation for families has plummeted since a peak in the mid-2000s, despite overall TA use increasing dramatically (see above).[194] While 2020 saw a very slight increase in families in these non-self-contained forms of provision, LAs succeeded in reducing such placements in Q3-4 2020/21 (see Figure 4.10).

192 Shelter Scotland (2018) *Getting behind the Homelessness Statistics: Update for 2017-18*. Online: Shelter Scotland.https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1612298/Behind_the_Stats_2018_FINAL.pdf/_nocache
193 Watts, B., Littlewood, M., Blenkinsopp, J. & Jackson, F. (2018) *Temporary Accommodation In Scotland: Final Report*. Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University https://social-bite.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/SB_TempAccommReport_FinalReport.pdf
194 The reduction likely largely attributable to 'Unsuitable Accommodation Order' regulations introduced in the early 2000s to restrict such placements involving pregnant women and families.

Figure 4.10: Temporary accommodation placements 2002-2021 – children in Bed and Breakfasts and hostels



Source: Scottish Government

While the most acute concerns have historically oriented around children in B&B hotels, Shelter Scotland have consistently drawn attention to the impacts of residing in even self-contained TA on families with children, and highlighted the growing proportion of children in TA since the mid 2010s.[195] At 31 March 2021, 3,645 households with children or a pregnant women were in TA across Scotland, the highest number for a decade. The number of children in TA at this point in time was 7,130, down very slightly on the historic high of 7,280 recorded at March 2020.[196] One voluntary key informant argued that there is a lack of policy focus on this issue and "less energy" (Key informant, voluntary sector) directed at it than addressing homelessness among adults with complex needs.

Rehousing outcomes

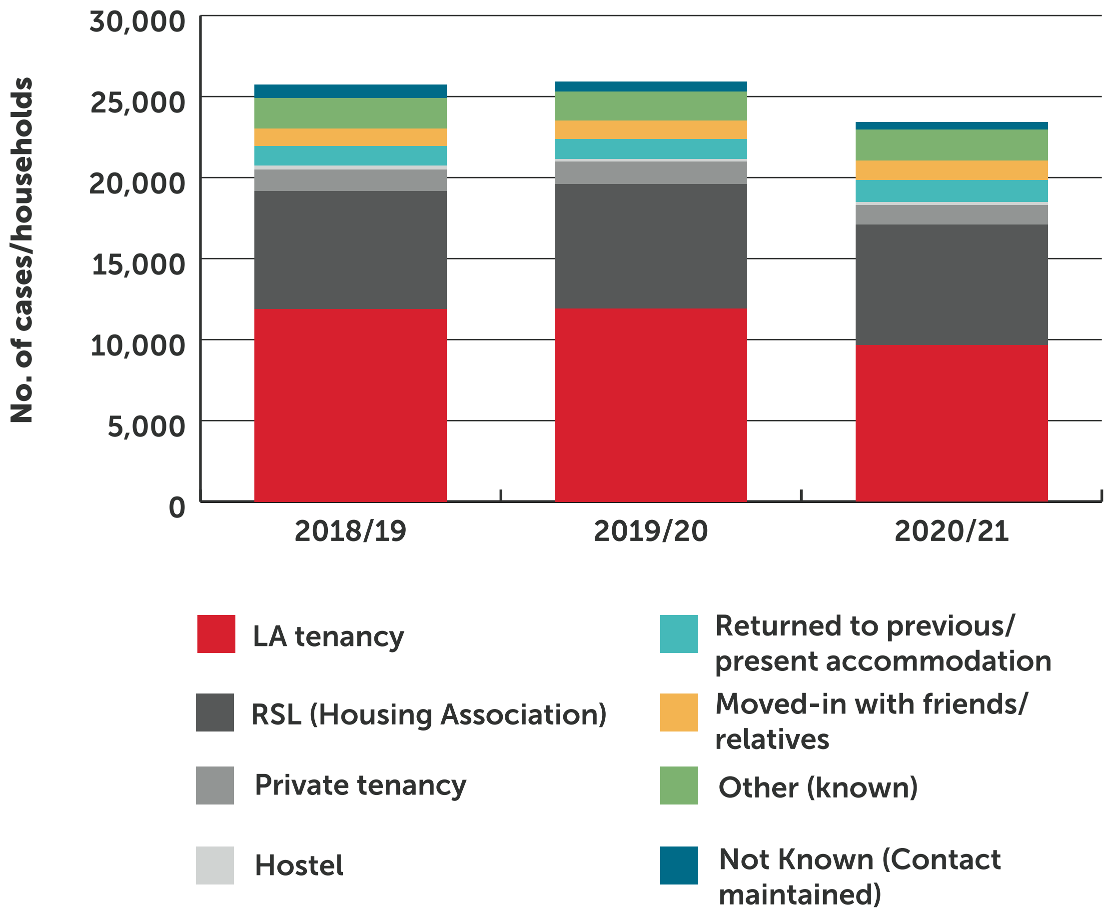
The vast majority of those accepted as homeless in Scotland are ultimately rehoused in a social tenancy (see Figure 4.11). Only 5% were rehoused in the PRS in 2020/21 (down from a peak of 8% during the 2013-15 period). This reflects the fact that – as shown by our LA survey – in most authorities (52%) this practice is very rarely or never adopted – see Figure 4.12.

Among LAs rarely, if ever, discharging duty in this way, relevant factors influencing this approach concerned the relatively insecure status of private tenancies, their cost in relation to available welfare benefits and lack of rent deposit schemes locally, the views and preferences of applicants, staff, and/or landlords, lack of links with landlords, and a perceived lack of clear

195 Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Watts, B., Wood, J., Stephens, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2019) *Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2019*. London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240002/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2019.pdf

196 Tables 27 and 28, Homelessness in Scotland: 2020 to 2021, available at https://www.gov.scot/collections/homelessness-statistics/

Figure 4.11: Households assessed as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness: rehousing outcomes (where contact maintained)



Source: Scottish Government.
Note: Lost contacts equated to 8% of outcomes in 2020/21 – down from 15% in 2013/14.

guidance on PRS discharge.

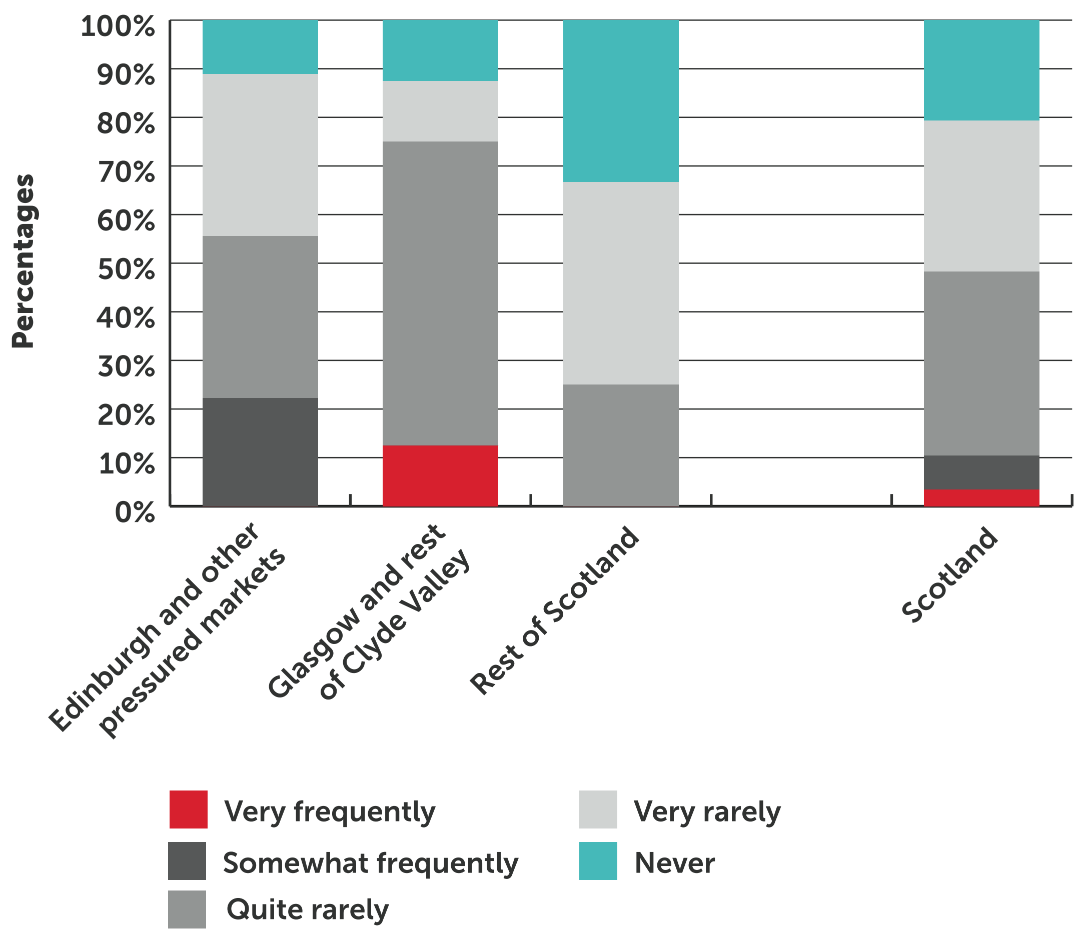
> **"There is a lack of affordable private rent locally and most private landlords will not accept tenants on benefit. There is also a widely held perception locally that a social tenancy is the most desirable outcome."**
> (LA, rest of Scotland)

> **"Generally the households in the homeless process we are dealing with view social housing as an entitlement and are unwilling to consider any alternative until this has been fully exhausted"**
> (LA, Edinburgh and other pressured markets].

> **"There is a perception amongst homeless households in [name of authority] that the PRS is of poorer quality in terms of both property conditions and management standards, than the social sector and is unaffordable as a sustainable housing choice"**
> (LA, Glasgow and rest of Clyde Valley)

One authority, noting the affordability constraints imposed by LHA rates and the Shared Accommodation Rate, suggested that the Scottish Social Security Agency might act to help bridge the existing affordability gap.

Figure 4.12: Frequency of 'main duty' discharge via private tenancy



Source: LA survey (N=29 of 32 LAs)

Despite these constraints, however, at least a third of authorities (12 of 29 survey respondents) indicated an expectation of expanding or initiating private tenancy offers to discharge the full rehousing duty. In a number of cases this was identified as the focus of the LAs' RRTP.

Among the small number of authorities already discharging the rehousing duty into the PRS relatively frequently, drivers of this practice included efforts to relieve pressure on scarce social housing, enabling applicants to opt for a tenancy in a locality close to friends and family when social housing in the area is minimal or non-existent, and enabling an applicant to fulfil property-type aspirations (e.g., house rather than flat).

Scottish councils make somewhat greater use of the PRS in their efforts to prevent – as opposed to resolve – homelessness (see Table 6, Appendix 1). Almost half of all responding authorities (14 of 29) engage in such activity 'very frequently' or 'somewhat frequently' via for example Rent Deposit Guarantee schemes or assistance to enable a renter to retain their existing tenancy.

4.4 Key points

- Rough sleeping as measured by administrative data fell in Scotland during the pandemic year 2020/21, following a number of years of relative stability. The number of presenting households reporting having slept rough in the three months prior to presentation dropped 16% in the pandemic year compared to 2019/20. Households reporting sleeping rough immediately prior to presentation fell 9% compared to the average level of the previous 3 years. On this measure, the most significant falls were seen in Edinburgh (44%) and Glasgow (16%), reflecting concerted efforts to accommodate those sleeping rough or at risk of doing so during the pandemic.

- In 2020/21, Scottish LAs logged 33,398 statutory homeless assessments, of which 27,571 (83%) resulted in a judgement that the household concerned was 'legally homeless'. Statutory homelessness fell by 13% year on year, and 20% in the first quarter of 2020/21 (April-June) compared to the previous quarter. These declines reversed a steadily rising pre-pandemic trend.

- Larger reductions in overall applications were seen in East of Scotland authorities classed within the 'Edinburgh and other pressured markets' group (-19%) compared to the 'Glasgow and Clyde Valley' group (-1%), likely reflecting different housing market conditions and the disproportionately large impact of evictions protections in authorities in which the PRS tends to be a major generator of homelessness.

- In contrast to these downward trends in new applications and assessments, open applications rose by 18% and TA placements by 12% in Q1 2020/21 (April-June) – trajectories that peaked in Q2 (July-September). By financial year end these 'backlogs' had been somewhat reduced, but remained far above pre-pandemic levels.

- Nearly half of respondents to the 2021 LA survey reported a reduction in the numbers seeking assistance in relation to homelessness, with a quarter reporting a 'significant' drop. Nearly a quarter of authorities, however, perceived that demand had 'slightly increased', and this was considerably more common among authorities in the Glasgow and Clyde Valley grouping.

- Reductions in statutory homelessness seen in the pandemic year were mainly due to a fall in cases involving loss of rental housing. The number of households citing this as the main reason for presenting fell by 57% in 2020/21 compared to the previous year. Institutional discharge as a precipitating factor also fell, while the number of households citing non-violence disputes within the household rose. Against the backdrop of reported increases in domestic abuse, the stability in homelessness presentations due to this cause bolsters concerns that lockdown measures may have made it harder for victims of domestic abuse to seek help.

- The post-pandemic year also saw shifts in the profile of those accepted as homeless by LAs. Drops in statutory homelessness were much greater among older age groups (those over 50) and families, than younger age groups and single person households. These patterns likely reflect the greater concentration of young and single person households in informal arrangements that broke down during the pandemic, as well as evictions protections disproportionately benefiting older and family households.

- Pre-pandemic, the number of households in TA had been at a stable high of 10-11,000 for a decade. At March 2021, the numbers in TA had risen to over 13,000, well above the previous peak of 11,665 a year. Around 30% of TA placements involve family households, almost all of whom are accommodated in self-contained TA. The number of families in non-self-contained B&B or hostel accommodation increased very slightly during 2020, though remaining at historically very low levels.

- At 31 March 2021, 3,645 households with children or a pregnant women were in TA across Scotland, the highest number for a decade. The number of children in TA at this point in time was 7,130, down very slightly on the historic high of 7,280 recorded at March 2020. At the same time, LAs succeeded in maintaining the number of children in B&B hotels at historically low levels during 2020/21.

Core homelessness

5. Core homelessness numbers and projections

5.1 Introduction

Having analysed statutory homelessness trends in chapter 4, this chapter examines homelessness from a different angle. In section 5.2, we present new estimates of the level, composition and geography of 'core homelessness' in Scotland in 2018-19, preceding the onset of the COVID-19 emergency, and setting this in a wider UK context. In section 5.3, building on previous work,[197] we present and consider the strengths and limitations of a forecasting model to examine the likely evolution of core homelessness in the shorter- and longer-term, including in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated homelessness responses. In section 5.4, we consider the impacts on core homelessness projections of a range of different policy scenarios. The purpose of these projections is in part to inform the planning and resourcing of services for homeless people, in part to alert the public, Government and other parties to the challenges which may lie ahead in addressing homelessness, but most important of all to highlight the likely efficacy of different policies aimed at homelessness reduction.

The core homelessness concept was introduced in research undertaken with Crisis in 2017 and updated in 2018,[198] with this Monitor representing a further major update. Its components and their definitions as applied in this study are shown in Table 5.1 below.

197 Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness Projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain. Summary Report*. London: Crisis https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237582/crisis_homelessness_projections_2017.pdf

198 Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness Projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain. Summary Report*. London: Crisis https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237582/crisis_homelessness_projections_2017.pdf; Bramley, G. (2019) Housing Supply Requirements across Great Britain for LowIncome Households and Homeless People: Research for Crisis and the National Housing Federation; Main Technical Report. Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University. https://doi.org/10.17861/bramley.2019.04

Table 5.1: Core homelessness categories and definitions

Category	Description
Rough Sleeping	Sleeping in the open e.g., in streets, parks, carparks, doorways
Unconventional Accommodation	Sleeping in places/spaces not intended as normal residential accommodation, e.g., cars, vans, lorries, caravans/motor home, tents, boats, sheds, garages, industrial/commercial premises
Hostels etc.	Communal emergency and TA primarily targeted at homeless people including hostels, refuges, shelters and special Covid provision
Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation	Homeless households placed in TA of certain types, viz Bed and Breakfast, Private Non-self-contained Licensed/ Nightly Let, and Out of Area Placements
Sofa Surfing	Individuals or family groups staying temporarily (expecting or wanting to move) with another household, excluding nondependent children of host household and students, who are also overcrowded on the bedroom standard

The development of the core homelessness concept derives from a search for a robust measurement framework that overcomes limitations in traditional approaches to homelessness calibration used in the UK. This includes the customary reliance on administratively generated statistics on people seeking LA housing assistance due to (actual or potential) homelessness, and to periodically undertaken street counts or estimates of rough sleeping. While both of these approaches are informative and important, they are also subject to shortcomings that limit their value for analytical purposes – including cross-country comparison (even within UK),[199] trend over time analysis and serving as a basis for projections on the possible future scale of homelessness. A full account of the background to and development of the core homelessness concept is provided in the 2021 Homelessness Monitor for England,[200] with the main points summarised in the Technical Report accompanying this edition.[201]

There is substantial but far from complete overlap between core homelessness and statutory homelessness. We estimate that in round terms in Scotland 35% of statutory homeless households are also core homeless, while around 50% of core homeless are also statutory homeless. Those accepted as statutory homeless but who nonetheless remain core homeless would include people staying in hostels and unsuitable TA. Examples of statutory homeless households who are not counted as core homeless are those in self-contained TA. Examples of core homeless who are not in the statutory numbers would include some rough sleepers and hostel residents who have not applied to the LA, as well as many sofa surfers.

In this round of analysis we have the benefit of being able to use a range of new or enhanced datasets, including some additions to the administrative 'HL1' and PREVENT1 returns to the Scottish Government, but also from DWP on temporary and supported accommodation, the latest Destitution in the UK Survey[202], a specially commissioned new representative panel survey (Public Voice) conducted by Kantar Public, a new suite of questions on 'Housing Difficulties' included in the Office of National Statistcs Survey of Living Conditions in 2018,[203] extended analyses of the UK Household Longitudinal Data Set (UKHLS, alias 'Understanding Society') and new analyses of the SHS over the period to 2018.

5.2 Baseline 'snapshot' estimates of core homelessness

In this section we present evidence on the level of core homelessness in Scotland, on a typical day, in the period just preceding the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2018-19.

Data sources and estimate methods

The estimates of core homelessness in Scotland presented below draw on the following data sources:

- LA statistical returns (HL1) counting and profiling households engaging with the statutory homeless system, including flows of applicants and stocks of households in TA, as well as prevention activity;
- Destitution in the UK 2019 survey of users of crisis services;
- Additional data on the incidence and duration of different kinds of homelessness experience in last two years or ever, based on Kantar Public Voice survey of a representative sample of UK adults in 2020, including a new approach to estimating the scale of unconventional accommodation asking detailed questions about specific forms of this experienced in last 2 years and ever;
- DWP Freedom of Information (FOI) dataset on Housing Benefit cases in short term, emergency or transitional[204] accommodation, including a new estimate of the scale of hostels etc. use, 2016-2020;
- A new analysis of SHS data to estimate sofa surfing (and also demographic drivers at local level) over the period 2010-18;
- A composite model-based prediction approach to rough sleeping and overall core homelessness, based on joining Destitution in UK and UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS) datasets for a common set of variables and developing logistic regression models which can predict down to LA level;
- Use of Labour Force Survey (LFS) data on concealed households to help make for more robust estimates of sofa surfing over time.

199 Office for National Statistics (2019) *UK Homelessness: 2005 to 2018. Assessment of the comparability and coherence of existing UK government data sources on homelessness*. 17 September. Online: ONS. https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/ukhomelessness/2005to2018

200 Fitzpatrick, S., Watts, B., Pawson, H., Bramley, G. Wood, J., Stephens, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2021) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2021*. London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/homelessness-monitor/england/the-homelessness-monitor-england-2021/.

201 Bramley, G. (2021 forthcoming) *Research on Core Homelessness and Homeless Projections: Technical Report on New Baseline Estimates and Scenario Projections for Scotland and Wales*. Edinburgh. Heriot-Watt University.

202 See Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., Blenkinsopp, J., Wood, J., Sosenko, F., Littlewood, M., Johnsen, S., Watts, B., Treanor, M. & McIntyre, J. (2020) *Destitution in the UK 2020*. York: JRF; Bramley, G., Fitzpatrick, S. & Sosenko, F. (2020) *Destitution in the UK 2020: Technical Report*. Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University.

203 See Hamilton, M. & Hayes, B. (2020) 'Past experiences of housing difficulties in the UK: 2018.' Office for National Statistics. 22 October. Online: ONS. https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/adhocs/12488pastexperiencesofhousingdifficultiesintheuk2018

204 Adjusted to exclude estimated numbers in certain transitional rehab-type facilities, based on Blood, I., Copeman, I. & Finlay, S. (2016) *Supported Accommodation Review: The scale, scope and cost of the supported housing sector*. Report of research carried out by Ipsos MORI, Imogen Blood & Associates, and Housing & Support Partnership for Department for Work and Pensions with Department for Communities and Local Government. DWP Research Report No. 927.

Table 5.2: Summary of sources and assumptions for baseline snapshot estimates: Scotland

Category of core homelessness	Central estimate	Low estimate	High estimate
Rough Sleeping	HL1 3-month, assume 85% apply to LA & annual=1.8x 3 month	Destitution survey-based estimate	HL1 3-month, assume. 70% apply to LA & annual=2.5x 3 month
Unconventional Accommodation	Public Voice Survey predictive formula1	0.54 x central2	1.46 x central2
Hostels etc. (incl shelters, refuges)	Higher of LA HL1 returns and DWP FOI	Average of LA HL1 returns and DWP FOI	DWP FOI returns
Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation	Average of LA HL1 return and DWP FOI	DWP FOI	LA HL1 returns
Sofa Surfing	60% weighted average of SHS, LFS & UKHLS plus estimate adjusted for temporary residents (+20%), + 30% of composite prediction of core homeless minus other elements (mid assumption)2	Equal weighted average of SHS, LFS, UKHLS, unadjusted	Composite prediction of core homeless minus sum of other elements (high assumption)

Notes
1. This formula for unconventional accommodation is mainly driven by other elements of core homelessness.
2. These figures reflect equivalent assumptions made in core homelessness estimates in England, and reflect a relatively wide margin of uncertainty about this number due to limited data sources.
3. The adjustment for 'temporary residents' is based on analysis of Survey of English Housing 2017-19 data where a new question is asked about people having stayed temporarily with main households who would otherwise have been homeless (there is no equivalent data in Scotland); this group are not covered in conventional household surveys which omit temporary residents.

Table 5.2 summarises the sources and assumptions underpinning the Scottish baseline estimate, with further detail provided in the accompanying technical report.[205]

With regard to rough sleeping, Scottish HL1 stats include a valuable indicator of homeless applicants reporting rough sleeping in the last three months, but three key assumptions are needed to get from this to a spot nightly figure: (a) the ratio of those who would have said they had slept rough in the previous year to those who said they had in the last three months (central assumption 1.8; high assumption 2.5);[206] (b) the proportion of rough sleepers/core homeless generally who apply to the LA in Scotland (central 0.85, assuming continued rise in proportion of rough sleepers applying to councils in the 2015-19 period; high 0.70 based on established SHS evidence up to 2015); (c) the annual multiplier linking nightly to annual incidence of rough sleeping.[207] It should be noted that the composite prediction of rough sleeping derived from the Destitution in the UK and UKHLS surveys in combination with HL1 data (see table 5.2) and calibrated UK wide, are scaled down significantly in Scotland, so that our central estimate is only 60% of the predicted value. This reflects the assumption that, with the policy framework and social housing supply situation in Scotland over recent years, rough sleeping is now at a lower level than it would be were UK average policies and supply conditions to apply.

In the previous estimates[208] unconventional accommodation was estimated as a simple markup on rough sleeping and hostel numbers. The approach now is based on the Public Voice survey evidence with a statistical predictive function, which is still mainly driven by numbers in the rough sleeping, hostel and UTA categories.

In Scotland, both hostel and UTA numbers are higher (overall) when based just on LA returns than when using DWP-FOI or combinations. This is partly because of the broad and evolving[209] 'other' category of TA in the Scottish statistics. In our analysis such accommodation is mostly classified as unsuitable, but further detail on the nature of accommodation within this category would usefully refine our estimates. The central estimate for hostels is based on the higher of LA or DWP-FOI numbers at LA level, whereas for UTA it is based on the average of the two.

For sofa surfing we can draw on analyses of three surveys (UKHLS, LFS, SHS), to identify trends, but place greater weight on SHS and less on UKHLS in Scotland, due to larger samples in the former and sample attrition in the latter. For the central estimate of the absolute numbers at LA level for 2018-19, we take 60% of the SHS-based figure and 30% of our composite (Destitution in the UK/ UKHLS) prediction of core homeless as a whole after subtracting the (central assumption) estimates of the other elements. Both of these sources enable estimates to be made at LA and sub-regional level, albeit with greater margins of uncertainty at the level of

205 Bramley, G. (2021 forthcoming) *Research on Core Homelessness and Homeless Projections: Technical Report on New Baseline Estimates and Scenario Projections for Scotland and Wales.* Edinburgh. Heriot-Watt University.

206 On the basis of the range of sources used in this research we know that rough sleeping episodes have widely varying durations and are frequently combined with spells in hostels, unconventional accommodation and/or other temporary accommodation, and people often apply to LAs from these other settings rather than directly from rough sleeping. This means that it is reasonable to expect rough sleeping to have been occurring for significant numbers of applicants in the period three-twelve months preceding application, even if they were not rough sleeping during the three months prior. At the same time the probability diminishes as you move to quarters successively further removed from the time of application – if there were no diminution, the multiplier could be anything up to 4.0. Thus, the figure of 1.8 is a relatively conservative assumption, since the number added for three extra quarters of exposure is less than the number counted for the one quarter immediately preceding application.

207 This is based on detailed analysis of Destitution in UK and Public Voice surveys, and other duration data. See Bramley, G. (2021 forthcoming) *Research on Core Homelessness and Homeless Projections: Technical Report on New Baseline Estimates and Scenario Projections for Scotland and Wales.* Edinburgh. Heriot-Watt University.

208 Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness Projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain. Summary Report.* London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237582/crisis_homelessness_projections_2017.pdf; Bramley, G. (2019) *Housing Supply Requirements across Great Britain for low-income households and homeless people.* Main Technical Report of Research for Crisis and the National Housing Federation.

209 Watts, B., Littlewood, M., Blenkinsopp, J., & Jackson, F. (2018) *Temporary Accommodation In Scotland: Final Report.* Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University https://social-bite.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/SB_TempAccommReport_FinalReport.pdf

smaller LAs. The low estimate is based at national level on equal weighted combination of the three surveys with no markup for temporary residents.[210] The high estimate is based on 100% of the composite prediction minus the high estimates of the other elements.

Key numbers and trends
Figure 5.1 shows levels and 7-year trends in core homelessness overall and by component for Scotland from 2012 to 2019. At 2019, we estimate that overall core homelessness in Scotland stood at 14,250 households with sofa surfing the largest component of this at 7,970 households, followed by hostels etc (3,320), UTA (1,180), rough sleeping (900) and unconventional accommodation (880). The overall trend story is largely one of stability rather than a clear up or down trajectory, although one could argue there is a slight upward trend overall from 12,050 in 2012 to 14,250 in 2019, albeit that numbers dipped from 13,800 to 12,750 between 2016 and 2017.[211]

Rough sleeping numbers are now estimated to have been around 900 in 2019 and 750-850 in 2015-17. These new estimates are slightly higher than those previously published for those years, based on additional data and revised assumptions. These estimates suggest, given the inevitable margins of uncertainty associated with them, the main story is one of stability. There does not yet appear to be evidence here of policy and practice change following HARSAG's recommendations making major inroads into reducing rough sleeping in the pre-Covid period to 2019.

Households staying in unconventional accommodation numbers are estimated to be of a similar order of magnitude, and relatively stable over this period.

Hostel, refuge and shelter accommodation appears to be on an upward trajectory through the period to 2018. UTA does appear to have fallen somewhat around 2016, and there is not the same strong rise seen in England over the last decade.

Sofa surfing is the largest category of core homelessness and has undulated somewhat over the period, but with the 2019 total significantly higher than the 2012 figure (7,950 vs 6,150).

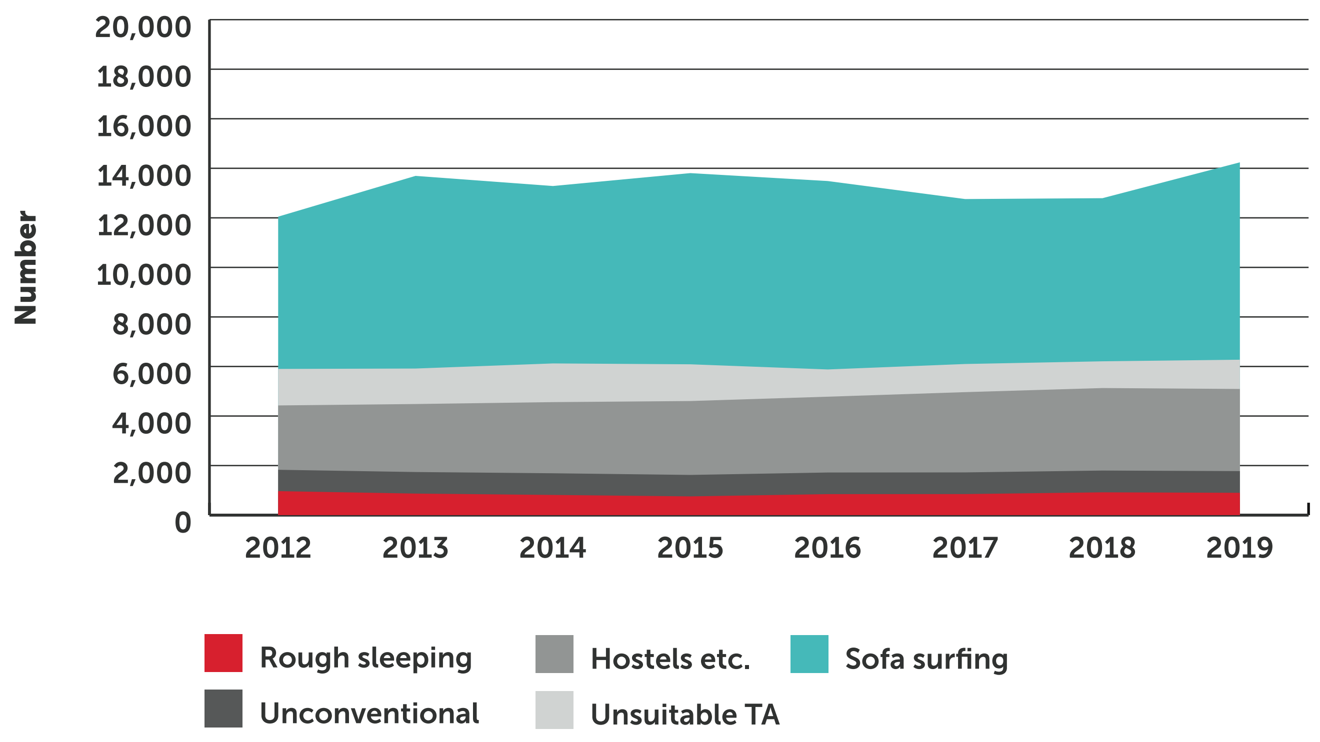
The geography of core homelessness in Scotland
The model which is used to generate the projections discussed later in this chapter uses eight geographical sub-divisions of Scotland as its main units of analysis, treating these as meaningful market areas for housing and economic/employment purposes, based on earlier research on housing affordability.[212] In this section we capture the broader picture of geographical patterns in core homelessness across Scotland focusing on these eight sub-regions.[213]

Figure 5.2 shows the regional pattern over the baseline period 2012-2019. This gives a good impression of the variations in levels of intensity of core homelessness between the sub-regions, and also of the differing trends or fluctuations experienced in different regions.

The Edinburgh-Lothian-Fife region – one of Scotland's key city regions – was at the top of the range at the beginning and end of the period, and experienced some growth in rates of core homelessness over the period as a whole. The other very large city-region, Glasgow and Clyde Valley, started from rates of core homelessness below average in 2012 but this grew over the period as a whole and is now second only to the Edinburgh-Lothian-Fife region. Three regions have seen a drop in core homelessness over the period, these being Aberdeen City & Shire, Tayside, and Stirling-Falkirk-Clackmannanshire. Different factors may lie behind these changes. For example, the Aberdeen/shire economy suffered a major and persistent economic downturn in this period relating to the oil price/industry, which reduced pressure on the housing market. The Highlands and Islands saw a sharp rise in rates of core homelessness to 2014-15, but these have since fallen back to the middle of the pack. The poorer regions of Ayrshire and Borders/Dumfries and Galloway have tended to be at or near the bottom of the table in terms of rates of core homelessness throughout the period of study, reflecting weaker housing market pressures.

210 Following the approach in the 2021 English Monitor, we use new evidence from the English Housing Survey which enumerates a previously missing group of sofa surfers, namely temporary residents in households who reported having them stay in previous year when they would otherwise have been homeless, and where there were no spare bedrooms – see Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2020) English Housing Survey 2018-19: 'Sofa surfing' and 'concealed households'; Factsheet. Online: MHCLG. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2018-to-2019-sofa-surfing-and-concealed-households-fact-sheet. We make the assumption that the proportional markup to include this group is the same for Scotland as for England. This markup is only included in the central and high estimates.
211 The differences between these new estimates and those previously published for 2015 and 2017 are not large. The new total core homeless estimate for 2017 is only 600 (5%) higher than that previously published. While the rough sleeping number is slightly higher (130 more) the unconventional accommodation number is significantly lower (520 less). Our new hostel estimate is higher (by about 870) our unsuitable TA number is less than the previous estimate (by about 1500), with sofa surfing about 1500 higher. The previous central estimate for 2017 was 12,200, a number which lies mid-way between our low and central estimates for 2019.
212 Leishman, C., Gibb, K., Meen, G., O'Sullivan, T., Young, G., Chen, Y., Orr, A. & Wright, R. (2008) *Scottish model of housing supply and affordability: final report*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government

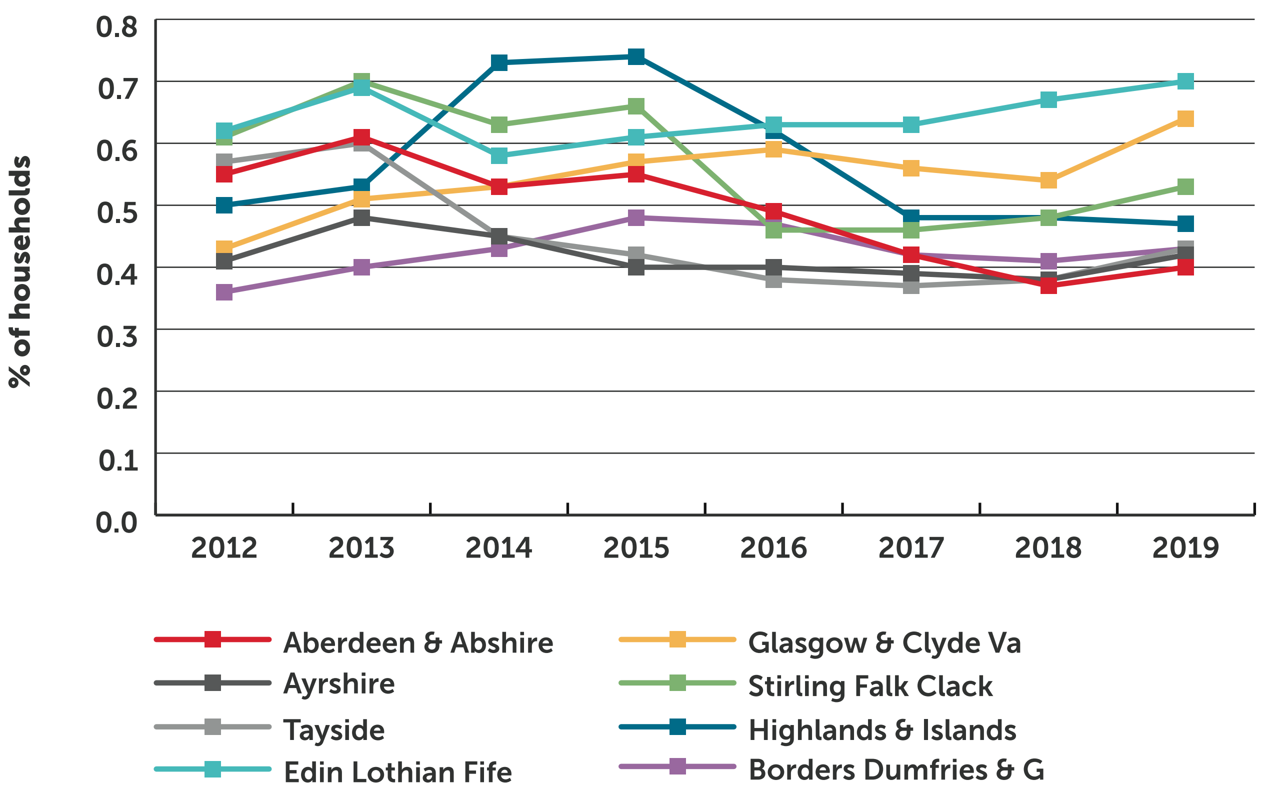
Figure 5.1: Core homeless household numbers by component, Scotland 2012-19 (snapshot estimate at point in time)



Source: Authors' estimates based on sources listed in Table 5.2

213 While it is possible to break the analysis down to LA level, margins of error given small sample sizes for some of the components mean we have more confidence reporting findings at the regional level.

Figure 5.2: Core homelessness rates per 100 households by sub-regions of Scotland, 2012-2019



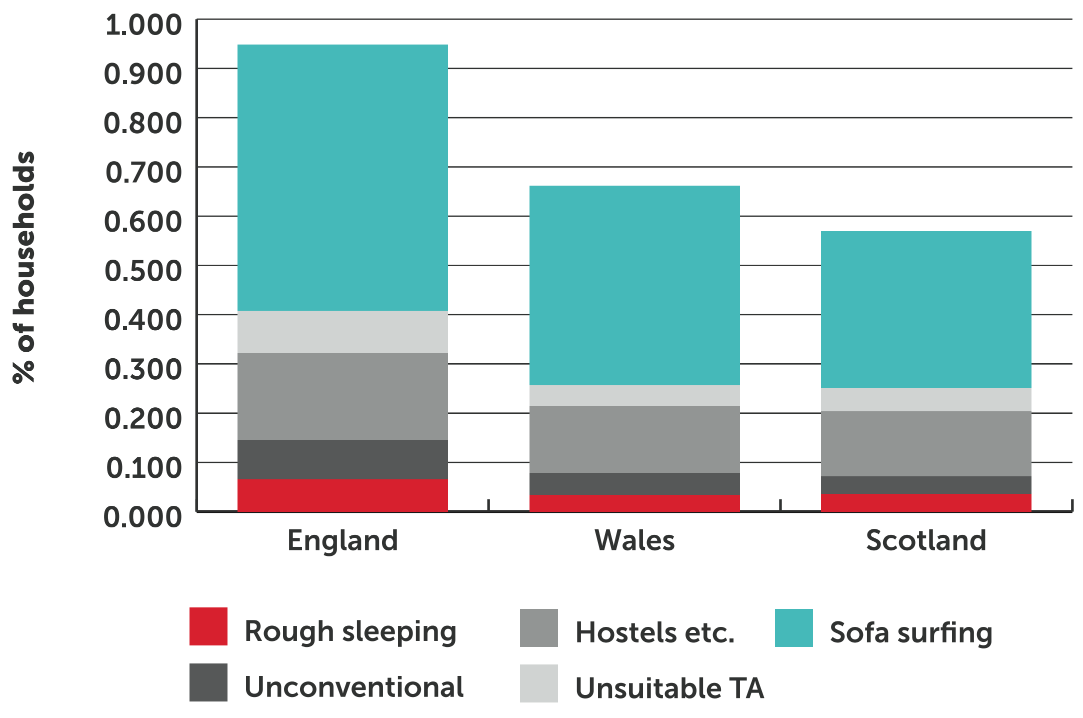
Source: as figure 5.1

Comparisons with England and Wales

In this section we compare the relative intensity of core homelessness between the three Great Britain (GB) countries using the rate per 100 households, as shown in Figure 5.3. This shows clearly that England has markedly higher core homelessness than the other UK countries, at 0.94% compared with 0.66% in Wales and 0.57% in Scotland. This reflects the different housing market supply-demand situation in the GB countries, but also to some extent the implementation of different policy approaches over time. While in general the components show a similar ranking across the three countries, Scotland appears to have slightly higher rough sleeping and unsuitable TA than Wales, although still well below English levels.

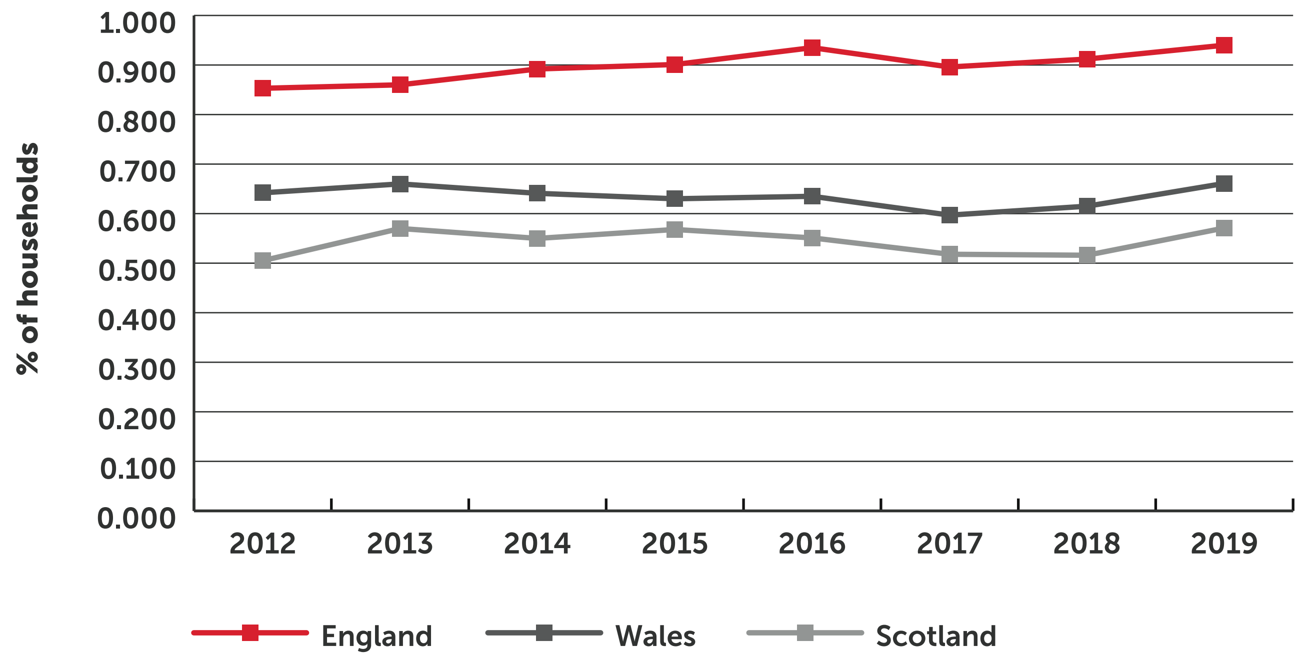
Figure 5.4 looks at the inter-country comparison of rates of core homelessness over time. This shows that England has had consistently higher rates than both Scotland and Wales, with more of an upward trend in this period. It should be noted that this analysis paints a markedly different picture of relative homelessness problems between Scotland and England than would be obtained from the statutory homelessness statistics, which appear to show much higher rates in Scotland. This illustrates the influence of the very different and more inclusive policy framework in Scotland, as well as the more favourable supply-demand situation in relation to social housing.

Figure 5.3: Comparison of core homelessness rates per 100 households by component between three countries of Great Britain, 2018-19



Source: As Figure 5.1 for Scotland; see Fitzpatrick et al (2021), ch.5 and Appendix 3 for England and Fitzpatrick et al (2021 forthcoming) for Wales.

Figure 5.4: Core homelessness overall rates per 100 households in the three countries of Great Britain 2012-19



Source: As for figure 5.3.

5.3 Projections of core homelessness

A key aim underpinning the development of core homelessness measures has been an ambition to enhance our capacity to project numbers into the future and model the impact of different policy measures and their implementation, under different contextual conditions. Such a capability enhances our ability to analyse policy options, by presenting a quantitative assessment of how much difference different measures may be expected to make to core homelessness. It also provides early warning of potential challenges which may arise from changes in the background conditions affecting demography, the labour and housing markets, financial conditions, and so forth.

This research builds on an existing modelling framework which has been used in a number of other research studies, referred to as the Sub-Regional Housing Market Model.[214] More information on this model is given in a longer Technical Report.[215] The model predicts levels of housing need and key homelessness numbers for subregional areas in England, Scotland and Wales with a major focus on time horizons of 2026, 2031 and 2041.

It has been necessary to adapt the model following the unprecedented socio-economic and policy impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns (see chapters 2 and 3), and vary assumptions about both the depth, pattern and duration of the pandemic's impacts. In addition to a 'business as usual' scenario without Covid, we have also developed a 'with-Covid' scenario. Specific future policy options are now mainly contrasted with the 'with Covid' baseline. A further ten variant policy packages have been tested by running the projection model forward over 20 years with each policy in place. These are all listed in Table 5.3.

Some of these scenarios can be broadly related to current policy agendas in Scotland and/or across UK, including proposals being actively implemented (e.g., rapid rehousing) or worked up (e.g., ending use of UTA, enhanced prevention). It should be noted in particular that while the 'rapid rehousing quotas' scenario detailed above is focused on increasing core homeless households' access to the social rented sector, similar impacts could be achieved via a 'maximal housing options' approach recommended by the Prevention Review Group (see chapter 3) involving improved access to the private rented sector, as well as and other suitable housing options, as well as to social housing. Others are more 'hypothetical', especially on welfare enhancements. There are some constraints on the ability of the model to provide forecasts of the impacts of some policies – for example we were not able to generate adequate forecasts of the impacts of measures which might be used to limit future evictions.

214 See in particular Bramley, G. & Watkins, D. (2016) 'Housebuilding, demographic change and affordability as outcomes of local planning decisions: exploring interactions using a sub-regional model of housing markets in England', *Progress in Planning*, 104, 1-35; Bramley, G. with Leishman, C., Cosgrove, P. & Watkins, D. (2016) *What Would Make a Difference? Modelling policy scenarios for tackling poverty in the UK*. Online: Heriot-Watt. https://pure.hw.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/10844984/Bramley_WhatWouldMakeaDifference_Report.pdf; and, Bramley, G. (2018) *Housing Supply Requirements across Great Britain for low income households and homeless people*. Research Report for Crisis and the National Housing Federation. Main Technical Report. Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University. https://researchportal.hw.ac.uk/en/publications/housing-supply-requirements-across-great-britain-for-low-income-h .

215 See Bramley, G. (2021 forthcoming) *Research on Core Homelessness and Homeless Projections: Technical Report on New Baseline Estimates and Scenario Projections for Scotland and Wales*. Edinburgh. Heriot-Watt University.

Table 5.3: Policy scenarios tested through projections model over period 2021-41

Shorthand name	Description
Business as usual	'Business as usual' baseline – No COVID-19 pandemic or lockdown measures, neutral/cautious economic assumptions.
With-Covid Baseline	Includes effects of Covid pandemic and lockdown and associated economic recession with heightened unemployment and destitution, also assuming application and continuance of the emergency hotel accommodation response to COVID-19 concentrated in Edinburgh and Glasgow at a reduced level for 4 more years.
COVID-19 special provision	Continuation of hotel and similar provision for rough sleepers/at risk groups for varying numbers of households over the period 2021 to 2025, concentrated in Edinburgh and Glasgow. In modelling this additional provision is classified as part of 'hostels, etc' as it is temporary congregate accommodation (see below).
Raise LHA	Raise LHA to median level in all LA areas and maintain relative level in real terms through indexing (contrast with alternatives of 30th percentile with Consumer Price Index indexing, or no indexing subject to maximum LHA gap of £100pw).
End use of Unsuitable TA	From 2023 eliminate 90% of UTA, with consequential negative impact on net available relets (in line with the UAO amendments, albeit that there is some uncertainty about timing of the Order coming into force).
Prevention	More extensive and effective prevention: raising proportion of applicants engaged with prevention to maximum; and (from 2023) using PRS options and financial advice/assistance to same level as better performing English LAs.
Rapid Rehousing Quotas	Increasing the share of all net social lettings to homeless households by 70% relative to base period (subject to max share 80%); allocating up to 20% of net social lettings to core homeless in period 2021-25, 10% thereafter.
UC & destitution measures	Maintain £20 per week enhancement to UC personal allowance, end 5-week wait for first UC payment, curb debt deductions from benefits, reduce Personal Independence Payment failed applications/reviews, improve Local Welfare Support, remove benefit cap.
Housing First & SMD reduction	Achieve a high level of HF provision, with associated increase in rehabilitation services for addictions & offending, leading to progressive reduction in hostel etc. accommodation and crime rates. Three levels of annual programme are tested, including the number of units achieved by the pathfinders to date (c.550), a level where all authorities would perform at pathfinder level, relative to need (1500), and the level recommended based on analysis of HES and 'Destitution in the UK' survey (3,500).
Housing Supply	Increase in total and social rented housing supply by approx. 50% (to 7,500 social completions per annum in Scotland), strongly concentrated in localities with a clear shortfall of supply relative to need.
Levelling Up	Raising economic growth rates in GB sub-regions beyond London & SE to reduce growth gap by approx. 70%
Large hike in UC rates	This is similar to the 'UC & destitution' scenario but with 3 times larger increase in UC personal allowances

The forecasting model
The forecasting model used as the platform on which to build scenarios to test the impact of different policies and other factors on core homelessness is essentially the same as that used in the previous core homelessness study and recent Homelessness Monitor for England.[216] This is a Sub-Regional Housing Market Model for the whole UK which tracks a wide range of variables for 114 sub-regions, eight of which are in Scotland, in annual steps from the early 2000s to 2041. Basic assumptions as well as published forecasts inform the scenarios for economic and population growth. Econometric models are deployed to predict a wide range of key variables, such as house prices and rents, housebuilding and tenure, poverty, and key measures of homelessness including our categories of core homelessness. These models have been systematically updated and recalibrated for this study. For key target variables including rough sleeping and sofa surfing, we test and deploy combinations of three or four distinct models based on different data sources and levels of analysis, each of which offers distinct insights and illuminates the influence of different factors.

The Technical Report provides some more detailed discussion of each policy scenario. Each was tested individually, and also in combination with other scenarios, with each being added in a logical sequence. We discuss the findings in two parts. In what remains of this section, we look at the 'Business as usual' (no Covid) baseline, before discussing the short-term impact of Covid and initial responses in 2020-21. Section 5.4 looks at the policy options described above and their impacts on core homelessness across time horizons from 2 to 20 years.

Figure 5.5 shows the impact of the 'Business as Usual' scenario on core homelessness in Scotland and paints a picture of continued general stability, after a dip in 2021 and a subsequent rise back to just above the 2019-20 level. Within that overall picture there is forecast to be a noticeable rise in unsuitable TA – this would be reflecting also a general rise in homeless applications, itself reflecting various factors including some increase in poverty levels. Hostels and sofa surfing would be static, the former by assumption as we treat hostel provision as supply-determined.

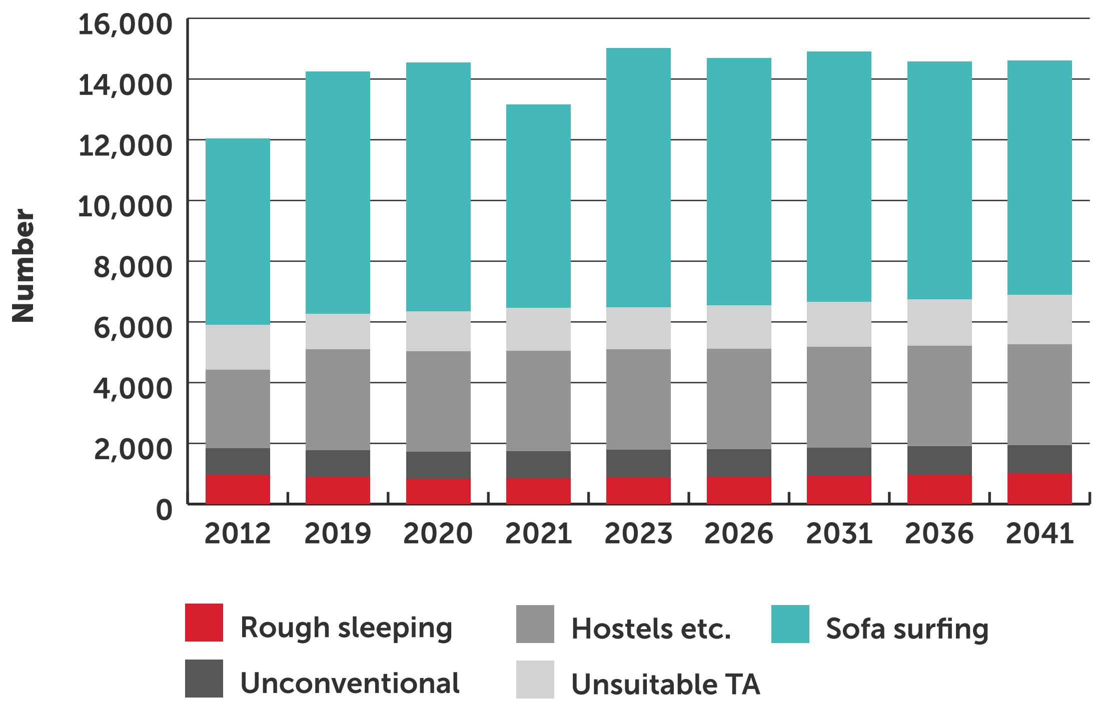
Covid impact and special measures
In modelling the impacts of COVID-19 on homelessness, we have taken into account three elements.

Firstly, the impact of the initial and subsequent lockdowns and impacts on different sectors of the economy are shown, and predicted to have impacts of a significant magnitude on economic variables through GDP changes in 2020 and gradually unwinding through 2021 and 2022. Judgements on the magnitude of these impacts draw on Treasury-compiled independent forecasts, NIESR 'NIGEM' economic forecasts, and background work undertaken in a parallel study.[217] The unprecedented reduction in GDP in 2020 (over 10% on an annual basis) and its persistence through early 2021 has a strong effect on unemployment in 2021 and several later years, with further effects on income, poverty, debt, etc.

216 Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness Projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain. Summary Report*. London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237582/crisis_homelessness_projections_2017.pdf; Fitzpatrick, S., Watts, B., Pawson, H., Bramley, G. Wood, J., Stephens, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2021) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2021*. London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/homelessness-monitor/england/the-homelessness-monitor-england-2021/

217 See Bramley, G. (2020) *Potential Destitution and Food Bank Demand Resulting from the Covid-19 crisis in the UK: Rapid Research for Trussell Trust. Modelling individual/household-level impacts and eligibility for mainstream welfare support*. Final Report. Online: Trussell Trust. https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/09/Heriot-Watt-technical-report-FINAL.pdf

Figure 5.5: Core homeless household numbers by category under 'Business as Usual' scenario, Scotland 2012-2041



Source: Authors' model-based projections.

Secondly, COVID-19 and the lockdown has led to significant increases in the incidence of destitution, with some broadening of its geographical and socio-demographic footprint. In our Trussell Trust research we have estimated these impacts and this work informs our assumptions about the magnitude of change in destitution in 2020 and in the following year or so. In simple terms, our estimate suggested a 50% rise in destitution for the year 2020 as a whole, persisting through 2021 (averaging 30% above base level) and into 2022 to a smaller extent (10%). This is net of the offsetting effect of welfare easements like the 1 year raising of the UC personal allowance by £20pw.

Thirdly, there have been the impacts of the homelessness-related crisis response to the pandemic, including the provision of additional hotel accommodation, particularly in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and also by modifying some existing hostel accommodation to create more scope for social distancing within these premises. These types of accommodation were used to accommodate anyone experiencing or at risk of rough sleeping, including those who might typically have had to move out of a 'sofa surfing' situation and in particular those formerly staying in night shelters, including those with NRPF. Efforts have subsequently been made to move people on to more longer-term accommodation. However, in the early phase of the crisis social rented lettings dropped to a low level, because of difficulties managing the process with social distancing in the first phase of the lockdown (see chapter 3). At the same time normal flows from private renting into homeless applications also fell, because of evictions protections.

Information published about the implementation of special homelessness measures in Scotland is not as clear as that published in England, partly because information was essentially collected through the normal statistical returns. This means that the special categories of accommodation provided are not clearly identified, falling across different categories, and the additional flows in and out cannot be clearly identified. Making various assumptions,[218] our interpretation of these data up to April 2021 is that the following changes happened as a result of the pandemic:

- There were increases in use of both 'suitable' TA stock i.e. social rented stock and B&B/hotel provision
- There was a reduction in both rough sleeping and sofa surfing

For the immediately following years we have made assumptions about the continuance of this special provision, targeted at rough sleeping and others at risk. The continuance of emergency hotel-type provision and its associated impacts are run forward over the five years to 2025 at half the level of impact of that in 2020/21, in our 'with-Covid' baseline. It should be underlined that the special increased provision in hotels and modified B&Bs is counted as part of 'hostels, etc' in the projections, because it is in the general category of congregate TA, for consistency with the English Monitor forecasts, and for technical modelling reasons (essentially it, like hostels, etc., is supply-determined).

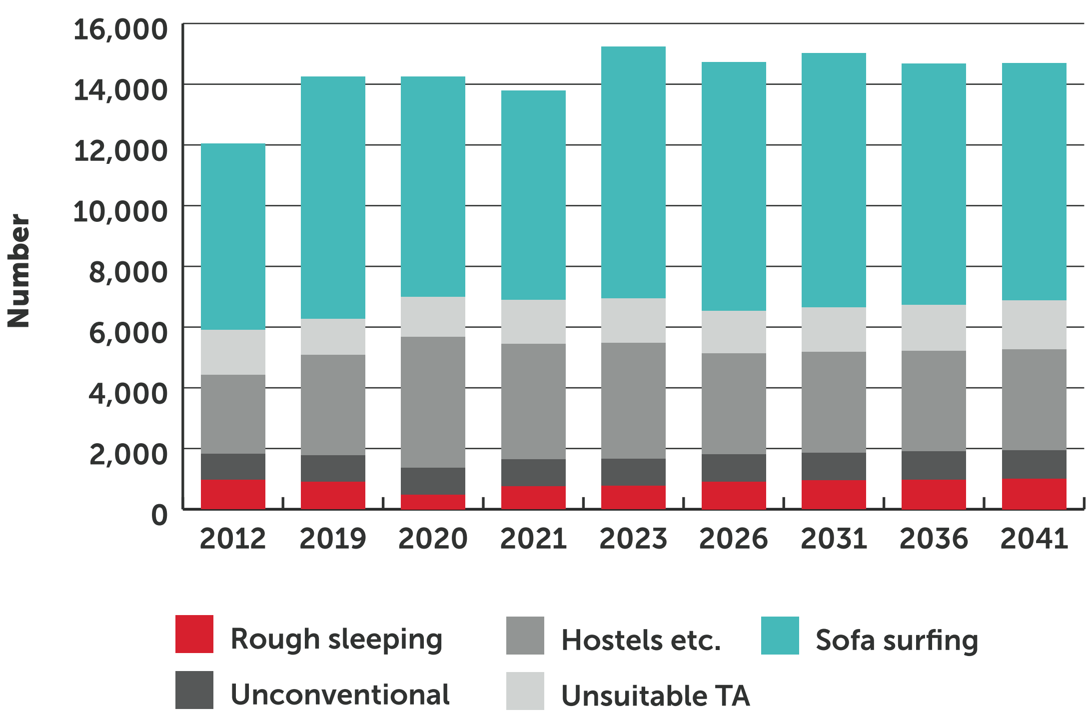
Figure 5.6 shows our resulting new 'with-COVID-19' baseline estimates and projections by category for key years. It is obviously of particular interest to focus on 2020, the first year of the crisis and special measures. For the following period we show 2023 as a representative year, then 2026 and five-yearly intervals thereafter.

As discussed in chapter 2, the Government's key economic measures in 2020 (the CJRS (furlough) scheme, self-employment and business support schemes etc.) served to insulate many workers and households from the worst effects of lockdown and the large resulting reduction in GDP. Taken in conjunction with the response to rough sleeping and other forms of acute homelessness, this meant that in 2020 core homelessness in general and rough sleeping specifically were reduced somewhat compared with the business as usual scenario, but the net reduction is only about 2%, leaving the total very similar to 2019. This is a less noticeable impact than in England, likely reflecting the lower levels of rough sleeping and other forms of core homelessness that preceded the pandemic.

The adverse economic and social impacts of Covid and the associated lockdowns and economic disruptions are particularly focused on 2021 and the subsequent couple of years, and the model predicts quite a spike in some elements of core homelessness in that year, even with the continuation of some government measures. The model projects that core homeless will be nearly 5% higher than business as usual in 2021, although most of that would be through increased hostel etc. provision (including special Covid hotel provision). By 2023 things have settled down, with somewhat lower rough sleeping and sofa surfing offset by the higher hostel, etc numbers. This is a more favourable scenario than the equivalent projection for England, which shows continuing increase in core homelessness in future years primarily reflecting the continuing likelihood of less pressure in the Scottish housing system than in parts of England.

218 These are informed by Scottish Government published homelessness data and other considerations; see Technical Report, Bramley (2021).

Figure 5.6: Core homeless household numbers by category under the 'with Covid' scenario, Scotland 2012-2041



Source: Authors' model-based projections.

5.4 Impacts of different policy scenarios

In this section we report on analysis building on the modelling framework's 'Business as Usual' and 'With Covid' scenarios to test systematically for the impact of ten different policy changes on forecast core homeless outcomes over the next twenty years. While the main emphasis is going to be on the overall impact on core homelessness as a whole, we also consider the impacts of each scenario on the five components of core homelessness separately, while briefly commenting on impacts on wider statutory homeless applications and total TA numbers.

Table 5.4 presents a summary of the impacts of each of our ten policy scenarios on each of the five core homelessness elements, after twenty years (i.e., in 2041). The numbers are the differences in percentage terms from the 'with Covid' baseline scenario.

Table 5.4 shows that ***rough sleeping*** is more sensitive to many of the policy scenarios, in proportional terms, than other elements of core homelessness. The figures in the first column of Table 5.4 highlight that the policy approach with the biggest impact on rough sleeping is the application of rehousing quotas for core homeless households within the context of enhanced rapid rehousing plans, a proportion of which would go to rough sleepers. The second biggest impact comes from increasing the scale of HF programmes to the upper end of a range of scenarios based on need estimates, and accompanying this with enhanced rehabilitation and support services, enabling a rundown of hostel capacity. Third in magnitude would be extending the special provision

Table 5.4: Impact of ten policy scenarios individually on the five elements of core homelessness at 2041 time horizon (percentage change)

Scenario	Rough sleeping	Unconv-entional	Hostels etc	Unsuitable TA	Sofa surfing
Extend CVSP	-17.0%	-0.2%	15.0%	0.0%	-5.8%
Raise LHA	-3.2%	-0.6%	0.0%	-28.2%	-9.0%
Abolish UTA	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	-89.6%	1.7%
Max Prevention	-8.5%	-0.7%	0.0%	-8.3%	-12.5%
Rehousing Quotas	-32.2%	-1.3%	0.0%	-15.7%	-18.7%
Destitution/UC/ Cap	-9.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.4%	-0.8%
HF & SMD	-26.3%	-0.7%	-47.3%	0.4%	6.4%
Housing Supply	-0.1%	-0.2%	0.0%	-9.0%	-2.0%
Levelling Up	2.4%	0.3%	0.0%	3.5%	0.6%
Larger Hike in UC etc	-11.8%	-0.5%	0.0%	-2.0%	-9.7%

made in response to Covid over the next four years, and then at a lower level indefinitely beyond that. Next in importance would be a large hike in UC personal allowances combined with other measures to reduce destitution including ending the five-week wait and the benefit cap. Just implementing the latter measures and maintaining the £20 UC uplift would also have a sizeable impact. Notably, of course, these moves are in the gift of Westminster, rather the Scottish Government, as is the option of raising LHA rates to eliminate gaps between median rents and the housing costs element of UC. Maximising prevention would also have some beneficial impact in reducing rough sleeping.

The category of ***unconventional accommodation*** is, by contrast, quite difficult to shift very much. This is the sector about which we have least information and the model used to predict it is accordingly not very informative, although it does suggest an association with other forms of core homelessness.

The ***hostels, etc*** category is, in our modelling system, supply/policy determined. Therefore, the only strategies which directly impact on it are the extension of special COVID-19-related provision, which would increase numbers, or the HF related package, which would progressively reduce numbers. Outwith the components of our model as currently configured, it might also be expected that effective implementation of RRTPs may impact on this category, insofar as these involve explicit decommissioning of congregate hostels, etc. While the planned extension of the UAO to all household types (see chapter 3) may also impact on this sector, our modelling of this option is confined to the UTA sector as defined in this model.

Unsuitable temporary accommodation (UTA) is influenced by the existing level of and changes in homelessness applications to the LA, total TA, and UTA itself in the preceding period. Experience with modelling this in England suggests that this can be the most sensitive element to imbalances of supply and demand, and this particularly reflects the experience in London. While the logic is similar in Scotland, and perhaps particularly in Edinburgh, conditions are less pressured overall and so the effects recorded here are less dramatic. The main policy impact on reducing UTA would come from largely abolishing it, through the implementation of the UAO.[219] Apart from that, raising the LHA to eliminate the gaps between market rents and the amount subsidisable through Housing Benefit / UC, which would reduce UTA by 28% in the longer term. Rehousing quotas for core homeless would also help to reduce these numbers, and raising social housing supply would also have a beneficial effect in the longer term, as would maximising prevention. The model also suggests some policy scenarios leading to modest increases in UTA numbers, namely addressing parts of the welfare package associated with destitution and with the 'levelling up' regional economic growth agenda. The latter can have the effect of pushing up prices and rents in previously lagging regions, which may outweigh the beneficial effects via employment in such areas.

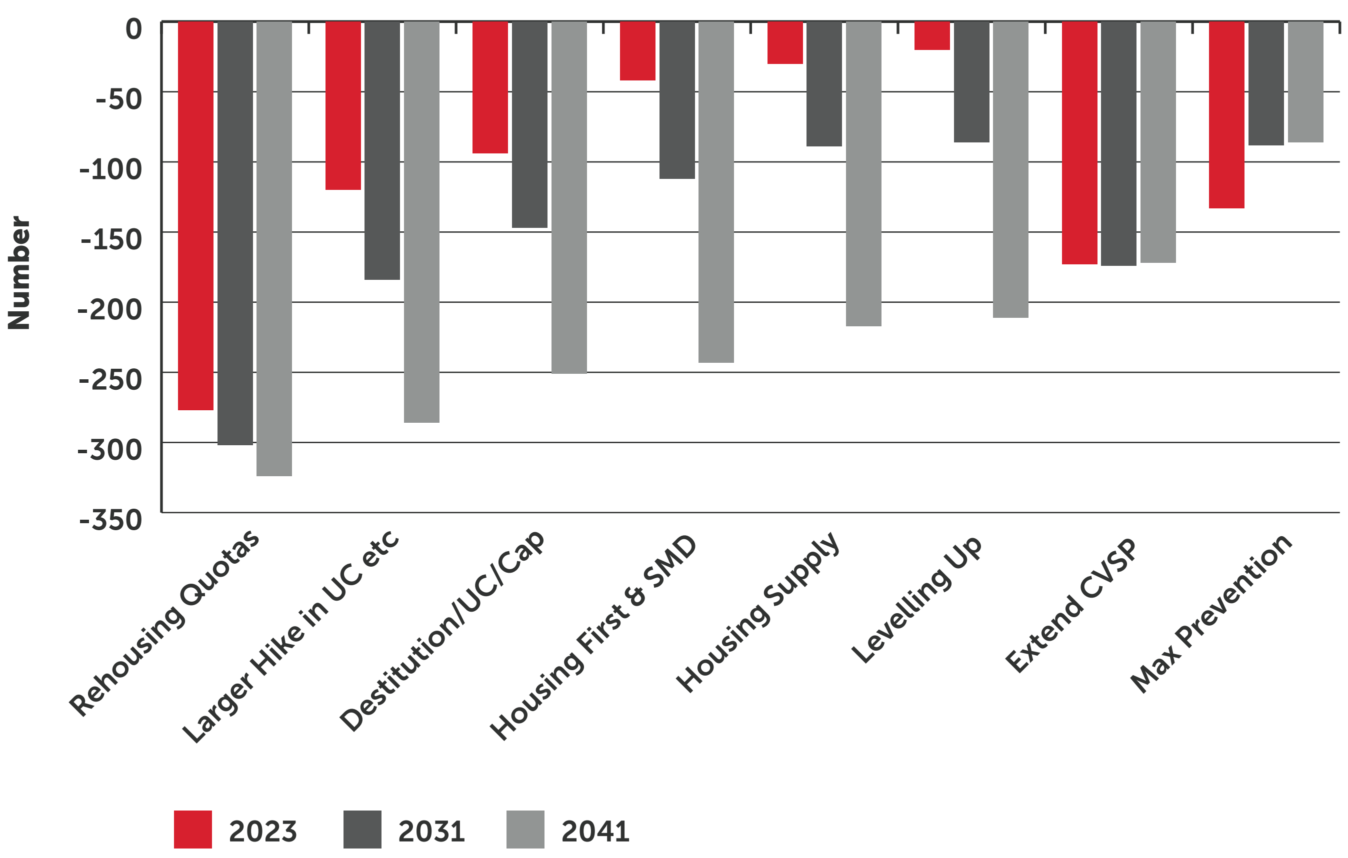
Finally, we consider impacts on ***sofa surfing***, numerically the largest category of core homelessness. The model indicates that the policies with the biggest impact in terms of reducing sofa surfing would be rapid rehousing quotas, and maximised prevention. These would be followed in importance by two UK reserved policy options, raising the LHA level and maintaining it through appropriate indexation, and by the large upward hike in UC benefit rates. More moderate reductions could stem from extending the COVID-response special provision, which has clearly benefited some of this group, and to a small extent targeted housing supply. The effects of housing supply and 'levelling up' regional economic growth appear relatively marginal or even perverse – this is probably due to additional household formation in the former case and housing market effects (i.e., increasing pressure) in the latter case.

It should be emphasised that these projections primarily concern *core homelessness, rather* than the different category of statutory homelessness. As explained above, not all core homeless people apply to the LA and core homeless make up only a minority of applications. Several of these policy scenarios may well have a large impact on homeless applications, but many of these applicants will not be core homeless and may remain in the category of 'other statutory homeless', whether by remaining 'at home' with parents or others, benefiting from 'prevention' or 'relief' measures, or being placed in TA which is 'suitable' before moving to a social or other permanent tenancy in due course.

Our model actually predicts numbers of overall homeless applications and totals in TA for every scenario. This shows that the scenarios generating the largest reductions in application would be the large hike in UC allowances, rehousing quotas and maximised prevention, with HF (at its maximum) also contributing significantly. All of these measures together would reduce total homeless applications by between one-third and two-fifths. For overall TA, the largest impacts come from maximised prevention, HF, and targeted housing supply, with an overall reduction from the whole package of between two-fifths and one-half.

219 This assumes we are only counting UTA in the form of TA placements of homeless applicants by local authorities. Insofar as there is a parallel sector of 'unsupported TA' which is similarly unsuitable, including self-referred cases in board and lodging accommodation or licensed non-self contained accommodation, this is presumed to be not covered by such an order, but is not currently included in our model either.

Figure 5.7: Scale of impacts of selected policy scenarios on rough sleeping at three time points (difference from with-Covid baseline in snapshot number sleeping rough)



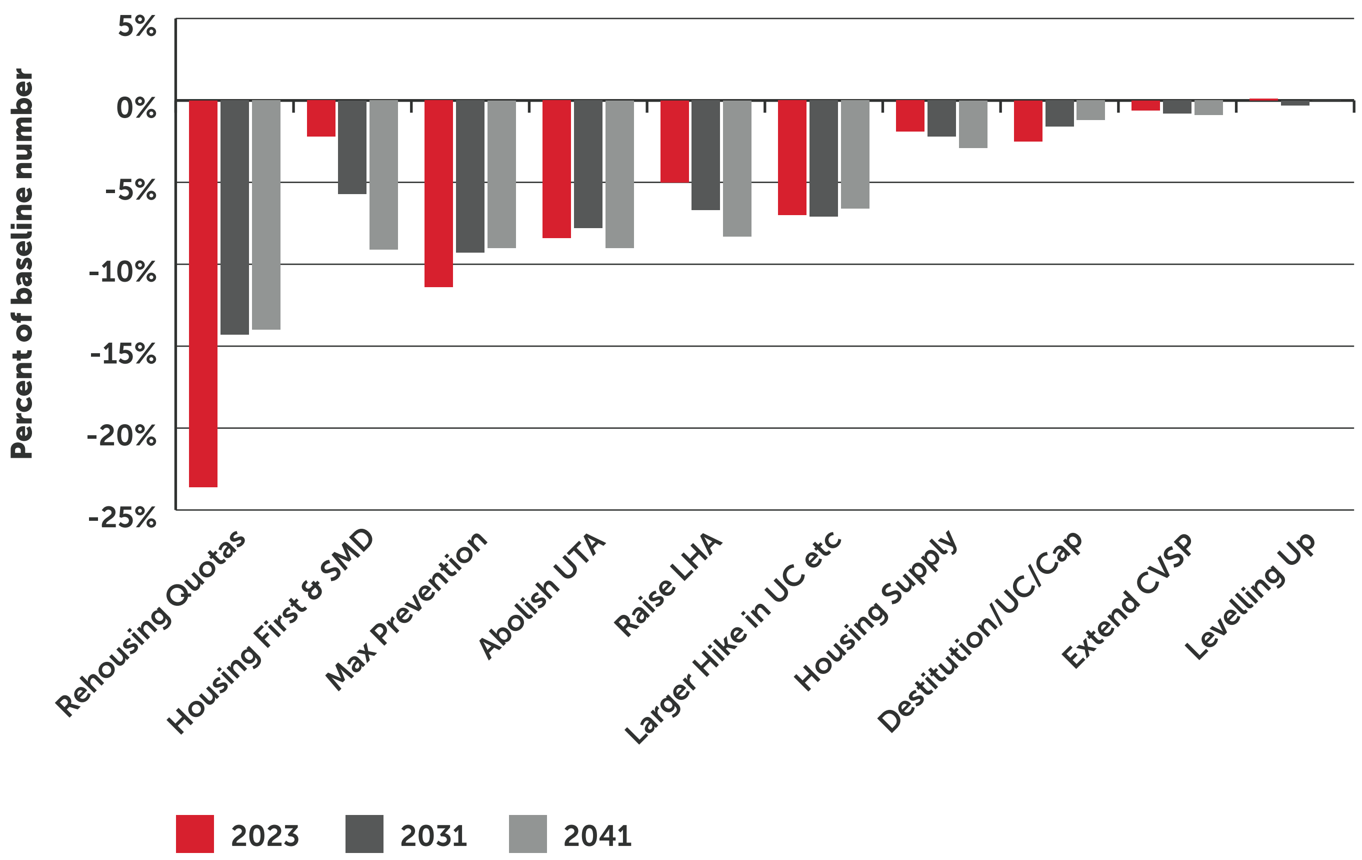
Source: Authors' model-based projections.

Scale of impacts by time horizon
This section considers the impact of the different policy scenarios on core homelessness as a whole over a series of different time horizons. Figures 5.7 and 5.8 show the impacts of key policy scenarios (those which do have noticeable effects) at three points in time – the shorter term (2023), medium term (2031) and longer term (2041). Figure 5.7 looks at rough sleeping, a key a policy priority and an element of core homelessness that is especially sensitive to our scenarios (see above), while Figure 5.8 looks at core homelessness as a whole.

From Figure 5.7 it can be seen that rapid rehousing quotas has the biggest impact on rough sleeping in both short and longer term. In the short term, the extension of Covid special provision would have the next biggest impact, followed by maximised prevention. However, in the longer term more important policies for reducing rough sleeping would include large hikes in UC allowances and associated welfare measures to tackle destitution, and these would still achieve reasonably substantial impact relatively quickly. The enhanced HF scenario, entailing associated support and rehabilitation services and progressive hostel rundown has a small initial impact but gradually builds up. Similar impacts are associated with targeted increase in supply of social housing, with useful benefits also from 'Levelling Up'. It should be noted that this Figure presents impacts of individual policies in isolation, and that there is evidently very considerable overlap, whereby the same people might be being helped by different measures. Combined scenarios are considered further below.

Figure 5.8 looks in a similar way at the wider canvas of all core homelessness. Here we see a partially different pattern of policy efficacy than in the rough sleeping-specific case. However, again the rapid rehousing to settled accommodation with core homeless quotas stands out as having the biggest impact on all time horizons, but notably in the short term. Maximised prevention also performs strongly in the short as well as longer term, as does abolishing UTA and raising UC allowances substantially. Policies which achieve a more gradual build up to long term substantial impacts include HF, raising the LHA (thus making the PRS more accessible) and (to a smaller extent) targeted housing supply. The beneficial effects of extended COVID-19 related special measures on core homelessness and the effects of the destitution related welfare measures are not very significant in the longer term. Finally, economic 'levelling up' across regions and sub-regions has a negligible effect on core homelessness in the longer term, due to the gap in economic performance between Scotland and London/South East being less than with some English regions and the interaction with housing market effects (i.e., raising demand in Scotland).

Figure 5.8: Scale of impacts of selected policy scenarios on core homelessness at three time points (percentage difference from with-Covid baseline in snapshot number of core homeless households)



Source: Authors' model-based projections.

Housing supply warrants specific comment. Deploying our model in England shows housing supply to have significant beneficial impacts on core homelessness in the longer run, but this is not so apparent in Scotland. We find that a boost to social housing supply targeted on areas where the pressure of need relative to supply of lettings is greatest,[220] primarily Edinburgh-Lothians, does have beneficial effects although these are as shown somewhat more modest than the effects of other policies (they would also include a reduction in total TA). Factors which may lie behind this modest impact include (a) the general position of Scotland in having a housing market which is generally less pressured and more affordable, unlike London and the south of England; (b) the generally higher level of social housing stock and relets supply and the existing levels of new provision in Scotland; (c) the tendency of new household formation to respond to supply and affordability in a way which may cancel out some of the beneficial effects on homelessness.

Sequential layering of policies

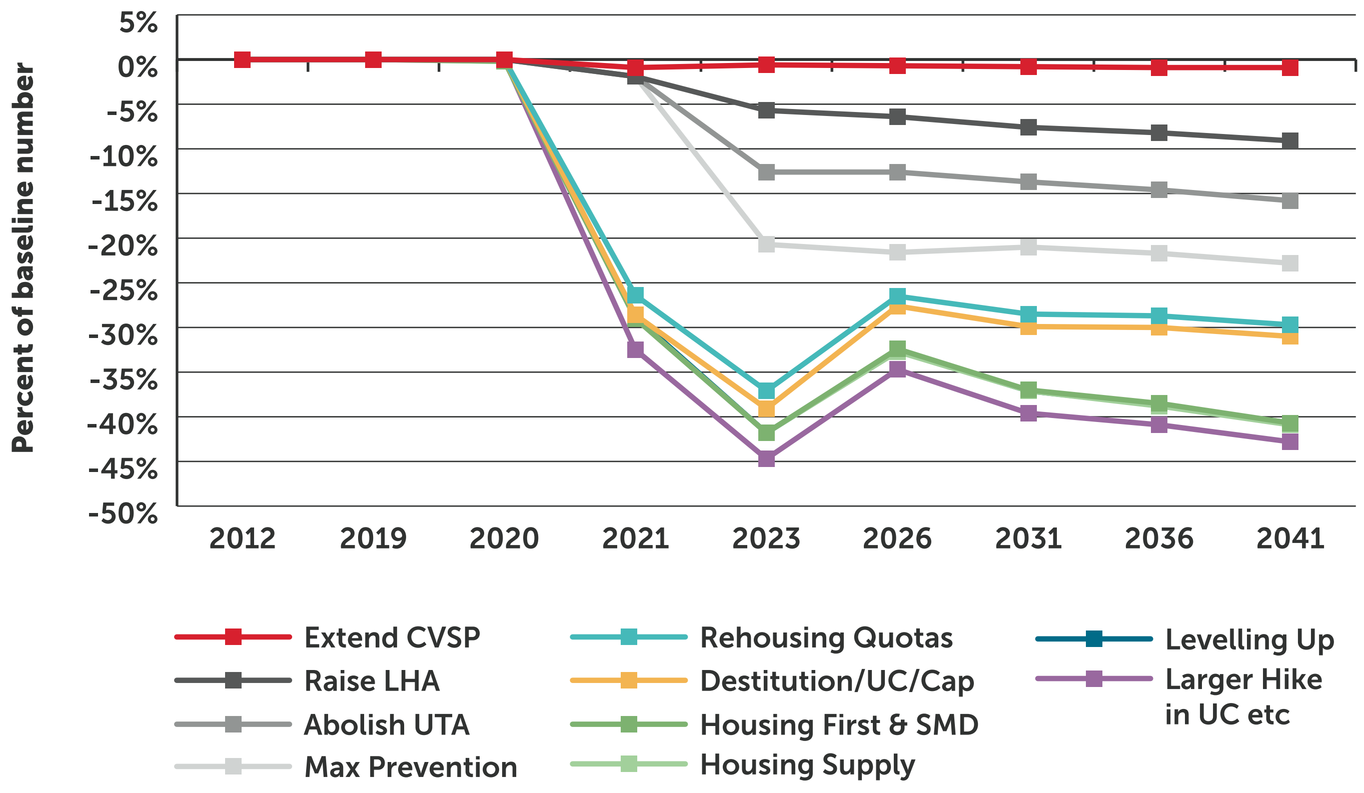
So far we have considered the impact of individual policies (or specific packages) in isolation. However, it is equally important to consider what can be achieved by implementing combinations of policy options, or indeed (if core homelessness were given a very high priority) *all feasible and effective policies*. The analysis presented above gives some initial guide to 'what works', but that is not necessarily the same as what the effect would be of adding that policy to others already in place. Sometimes, adding a fresh policy approach may work in a synergistic way to increase the impact so that it is greater than the sum of its parts. However, more commonly, the more policies you add, the less they may appear to add, relative to what might have been expected from looking at them in isolation. That may be because the different policies are to varying degrees helping the same people, and the pool of those remaining 'at risk' may get smaller the more policies are in place.

It follows that, in this 'stacking up' approach, it does matter in which order policies are added to the package. Our proposed approach would involve prioritising measures that can be implemented immediately and have swift impacts, followed by more directly housing-related policies, prioritising the simpler or more easily implemented before the more complex. Policies further back in the hierarchy would then be ones which would take longer to impact, be more complex to implement, involve a wider range of sectors, and cost most. Following those principles, we have created a sequence of ten scenarios building on our With-Covid Baseline, and run the model with each element added in turn. The results are shown in Figure 5.9, where numbers represent the percentage difference in core homeless households at each point in time compared with the baseline.

This analysis makes clear that it is possible to reduce core homelessness in Scotland by substantial margins. While some policies take time to build up progressively, others (notably rapid rehousing with core homeless quotas) can be implemented almost immediately. Implementing all the policies tested here would see a c.40-45% reduction both in the relatively short term (2023), and in the longer term. Furthermore, the 2041 number as a percentage of households in Scotland would be down by 40% relative to the rate in 2019. The proportionate reduction attributable to these policies is similar to the comparable reduction modelled for England in the 2021 Homelessness

220 For details on the needs indicator used see the technical report, Bramley, G., (2021).

Figure 5.9: Change in total core homelessness relative to 'with Covid' baseline for Scotland with the sequential addition of ten policy scenarios to reduce core homelessness in the period to 2041 (percent of baseline)



Source: Authors' model-based projections.

Monitor,[221] but because of the already more favourable (flatlining) Scottish baseline, this would take Scotland to an even lower level.

This comprehensive programme of recommended measures appears from the modelling to be capable of reducing core homelessness by 40-45% over the coming period, compared with what it would have been without any change in policies. This scenario would see core homeless 40% below the level of 2019-20. Furthermore, unsuitable TA would be down by 95%, rough sleeping would be reduced by 63%, sofa surfing down by 38% and hostels down by 31%. There would also be large reductions in wider measures of statutory homelessness, of the order of 40% in homeless applications and 50% in overall total TA.

The analysis also reveals that some policies have a bigger impact than others. The bigger wins would come from: (a) raising the LHA and indexing it effectively; (b) abolishing UTA via the UAO; (c) maximising prevention; (d) rapid rehousing with quotas for core homeless; (e) maximising HF and associated support/rehabilitation services with accompanying reduction in hostels etc. It is worth emphasizing that four of these five measures are

221 Fitzpatrick, S., Watts, B., Pawson, H., Bramley, G. Wood, J., Stephens, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2021) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2021*. London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/homelessness-monitor/england/the-homelessness-monitor-england-2021/. Figure 6.7

essentially devolved policy matters. It is also worth noting that from 2025 onwards the maximized prevention strategy, which includes facilitating access to the private rented sector, gives as large a benefit as the rapid rehousing quotas.

Policies which would have some beneficial effects but which are more marginal in scale for overall core homelessness including extending special COVID-19 provision, and welfare changes to tackle destitution-inducing features, raising allowance rates substantially and ending benefit caps, which would only make small incremental improvements beyond the above measures, given where we have placed them in the sequence. However, it should be noted from the earlier analysis that the these have much stronger specific impacts on reducing rough sleeping, which may remain a particular priority, and also achieve a strong early impact.

Continuing a theme from the previous analysis, increasing social rented housing supply, even when geographically targeted, does not appear from this analysis to have much of an additional positive effect on core homelessness, even in the longer run, once the other policies are already in place. This is a somewhat different finding from the analysis in England.[222] It may also be argued that significant investment in new provision is needed to encourage and enable LAs and housing providers to implement the policies which are shown in this analysis, and acknowledged in current policy initiatives, as being very important, namely HF and 'rapid rehousing quotas'. But this finding is also a reminder that the demographic and housing market conditions in Scotland are generally very different from those in the south of England, and that the case for further increases in social housing provision beyond present levels may be less strong than some believe.

Somewhat similar comments apply to the 'Levelling Up' regional economic growth scenario as modelled here. Scotland's shortfall in economic performance from the more favoured regions is less than that of Wales or the North East of England, for example, so that makes for a smaller impact. It seems that the tendency of this scenario to raise market prices and rents outweighs other benefits in terms of unemployment and poverty, while an effect which is particularly strong in England, of diverting population pressure away from London, is less of a factor in Scotland.

5.5 Key points

- At 2019, overall core homelessness in Scotland stood at 14,250 households, including 7,970 sofa surfers, 3,320 in hostels etc., 1,180 in UTA, 900 rough sleeping (900) and a similar number (880) staying in unconventional accommodation. These numbers have been relatively stable over the preceding 7 years.

- Rates of core homelessness in Scotland are lower than rates in England and Wales.

- If Covid had not happened and economic and demographic trends had continued in a similar fashion to the recent past, we projected future core homelessness numbers in Scotland would have run at about the 14-15,000 level throughout the projection period to 2041. Rough sleeping and UTA were projected to increase, while sofa surfing would have declined slightly.

- It is predicted that the economic aftermath of COVID-19 risks a noticeable rise in core homelessness in the current period. A range of short-term measures could alleviate this, however, including the continuance of the special provision of hotel-type accommodation, the use of social rehousing quotas, and some welfare measures. With such measures in place the impacts would be moderated by 2023, and core homelessness looks likely to be marginally lower than would have been without COVID-19 post 2026.

- Ten different policy mechanisms or changes were tested, individually and in combination, using the projection model, looking at short, medium and longer time horizons. In the shorter term, the most effective policies for reducing core homelessness would be continuation of the COVID-19 special provision (particularly in relation to rough sleeping), rapid rehousing with quotas for core homeless, maximising prevention, implementing the UAO, and large increases in welfare benefit levels and associated measures to reduce destitution.

- In the longer term, the largest projected impact on reducing core homelessness, in addition to the above rapid rehousing quotas, prevention and welfare measures, would come from raising the LHA to eliminate gaps in support with private rents and from consistent, large-scale application of HF accompanied by appropriate rehabilitation provision and a reduction of traditional hostel accommodation. While targeted social housing supply increases would have some beneficial effects in the longer term their role may be to support and reinforce the above measures, particularly rapid rehousing.

- Scotland already has a lower incidence of core homelessness than other UK countries, and baseline projections suggest continuing stability in the coming years. A comprehensive programme of the recommended measures is shown to be capable of reducing core homelessness by 40-45% over the coming period, compared with what it would have been without any change in policies. This scenario would see core homeless 40% below the level of 2019/20. Furthermore, unsuitable TA would be down by 95%, rough sleeping would be reduced by 63%, sofa surfing down by 38% and hostels down by 31%. There would also be large reductions in wider measures of statutory homelessness.

222 Ibid.

Conclusions

6. Conclusions

This edition of the Homelessness Monitor Scotland covers a period of profound transformation for national policy and practice. This reflects the dual drivers of concerted policy efforts to 'rewire' homelessness responses initiated in 2017, as well as the sudden and seismic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic from early 2020. Both independently, and in combination, these drivers have had very significant impacts on homelessness and responses to it to date.

The 2018 Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan issued by the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, charted an implementation pathway for the recommendations of the First Minister's short-life Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group. Key components included a national shift towards rapid rehousing 'by default' across the whole spectrum of homelessness, a reduction in temporary accommodation use and greater reliance upon self-contained and higher standard options. The action plan also envisaged the upscaling of Housing First provision for those with the most complex needs and new prevention duties to apply to a wide range of public bodies as well as to housing associations. Underpinning the plans was an 'integrationist' logic, seeking to move towards ordinary accommodation settings and mainstream services, rather than 'homeless' ones.

There is strong and growing support for the Action Plan's vision, as well as considerable initial progress in the pursuit of its aims. Key stakeholders in this research universally welcomed Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans, with all local authorities delivering initial and updated plans more or less on the timetable requested. A key indicator of progress is that three-quarters of Scottish councils have now seen changes to social housing allocation policies linked to Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans, or expect to do so in the near future. There is also a very broad base of support for the scale up of Housing First provision, with positive assessments of the Pathfinder programme. Despite COVID-aggravated delays in initiating Housing First services in Pathfinder areas, and the 800 tenancy target not being met by 2021, the programme appears to have convinced previously sceptical local stakeholders of its efficacy, and all Pathfinder areas have indicated intentions to continue provision after the tapering down of Government funding. Our local authority survey also indicates that Housing First services are in operation in most council areas, and far beyond the Pathfinder.

The period since the last monitor has also seen a substantial improvement in local authority assessments of the contribution of Health and Social Care Partnerships' contribution to the prevention and/or alleviation of homelessness, with most councils now identifying Partnerships as being helpful in this regard. Long mooted moves to end the compulsory assessment of intentional homelessness have finally been implemented, leading to a reduction in intentionality decisions, with little if any controversy or ill-effects reported by stakeholders.

The primary barrier seen to risk inhibiting future progress on the Action Plan's vision relates to resources. In particular, key stakeholders and local authorities voiced anxieties that the funds committed to the implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan rollouts are inadequate by quite some way, despite two funding boosts since initial budget announcements. The continued scale up and sustainment of Housing First is also seen as contingent on the availability of resources, with some local authorities highlighting a lack of secure funding and myriad competing priorities at local level as a barrier. These funding constraints are implicated in growing concerns about the fidelity of some Housing First services in operation in Scotland. These flagships rapid rehousing and Housing First elements of the Scottish Government's vision are also seen to face barriers in some areas relating to affordable housing supply and access, especially in more pressured areas. Insufficient partner involvement is also cited as a continuing challenge. Notwithstanding significant improvements in health-partner buy-in nationally, this remains a challenge in some localities.

COVID-19 has also impacted negatively on the pursuit of some elements of the transformation agenda. A significant proportion of councils report pandemic-related delays in Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan implementation, although a majority believed that having these Plans in place had supported their homelessness response to the public health crisis. The pandemic has prompted repeat delays to the implementation of the amended Unsuitable Accommodation Order that will extend provisions restricting stays in B&B and hotel-type accommodation to all household types, protecting single people now, as well as families. Lockdown measures also stalled access to social housing lettings, contributing to a bottleneck of individuals in emergency COVID-19 hotel provision in Edinburgh and Glasgow. While local authorities adapted rapidly to these challenges, housing associations were criticised for what were seen as unduly cautious approaches to restarting lettings, practice that contributed to temporary accommodation backlogs.

The wider homelessness-response to the pandemic has emerged largely positively from our analysis. In particular, the speed with which those sleeping rough or at risk of doing so were accommodated in Edinburgh and Glasgow drew praise, albeit that levels of support to those accommodated were insufficient in Glasgow at the beginning of the pandemic. As seen elsewhere in the UK, the pandemic highlighted the inadequacy of support (driven by UK Government policy) available to those with No Recourse to Public Funds, something that was rectified in the immediate crisis-response to rough sleeping and night shelters. Positively, the Scottish Government and third sector partners have now developed plans to prevent destitution and homelessness among this group on an ongoing basis. The move away from night shelter accommodation occasioned by the pandemic also looks set to continue. Finally, the pandemic provided a major stimulus to effective collaboration and joint working between local authorities and wider stakeholders. Thus, the crisis response was seen to have not only kept COVID-19 infection to a minimum among homeless and vulnerable groups, but also to have stimulated effective service provision for previously excluded people.

Supportive wider changes to welfare, housing and labour market policy were also vital in protecting homeless people and other vulnerable groups. Most important in local authority estimations were the Scottish Government evictions protections for private and social renters, UK Government's Job Retention 'furlough' scheme, and the Scottish Government boosts to Discretionary Housing Payment and Social Welfare Fund budgets. UK Government temporary increases to the Universal Credit Standard Allowance, suspension of benefit sanctions, and increases in Local Housing Allowance caps were also commended. Despite these welcome changes to Westminster welfare policy, key informants stressed the enduring inadequacy of the broader welfare safety net. Indeed, one could argue that pandemic-triggered changes to UK social security rules amount to a concession that the system's business as usual settings provide inadequate protection and the means to cover basic living costs for people faced with a sudden drop in income.

Via these policy-responses to the pandemic, as well as the wider impacts of the public health emergency on household and individual options and decision making, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the scale, profile and drivers of homelessness in Scotland. Homelessness presentations and acceptances fell significantly, especially among families and older age groups, primarily reflecting the plummeting number of households approaching local authorities due to eviction. Rough sleeping prior to approaching local authorities for assistance also fell, by almost half in Edinburgh, and to a significant but lesser degree in Glasgow, likely reflecting concerted crisis-responses in these cities. Increased temporary accommodation placements reflect challenges in accessing settled housing during the pandemic, as well as the diminished availability of informal accommodation options with friends and relatives for those facing homelessness. Homelessness associated with (non-abusive/violent) disputes within the household or relationship breakdown increased somewhat, likely reflecting the unprecedented strains faced in home environments under lockdown. Concerningly, domestic abuse-related homelessness remained stable, despite reports of increasing domestic abuse during the pandemic. Statutory homelessness reductions were smaller among younger age groups and single people, likely reflecting that these groups were more vulnerable to homelessness as a result of domestic pressures than older adults and families.

In the round, these changes in the scale, profile and drivers of homelessness in the pandemic underline a key message running through the Homelessness Monitor series, namely the central importance of policy in influencing the scale and profile of homelessness. COVID-19 related mitigation measures have not only avoided a spike in homelessness on most measures during lockdown, but decreased many key aspects of it, though key informants are concerned that the unwinding of these protections and wider post-pandemic socio-economic context could lead to spikes going forward.

The abrupt shifts in homelessness trends in 2020/21 come after a period of broad stability – or in some cases countervailing and incremental changes – in a broad range of measures of homelessness pre-pandemic. Our estimates of core homelessness and rough sleeping paint a picture of stability over at least five years preceding the pandemic, with statutory data on rough sleeping telling a similar story. Maintaining homelessness at broadly stable levels during an era of UK Government-led public service and welfare cuts likely reflects the potent combination in Scotland of a relatively more benign overall housing market context, and in particular supply of social housing, as well as a legal safety net for homeless households that is uniquely wide and deep by international and UK standards.

At the same time, it must be acknowledged that Scotland's approach to tackling homelessness has yet to incorporate a preventative component as prominent as that now embedded in England and Wales. That said, the current Scottish context provides a largely propitious setting for future progress on homelessness. Indeed, our core homelessness projections under various policy scenarios indicate the potential for dramatic reductions in rough sleeping, as well as other components of core homelessness and statutory homelessness within relatively short time scales. Crucially, while some scenarios require changes to the welfare system within the gift of Westminster Governments, four out of the five most impactful levers with respect to longer-term reductions pertain to devolved matters, i.e., ending the use of unsuitable temporary accommodation, maximising homelessness prevention efforts, introducing rapid rehousing quotas prioritising core homeless households, and maximising Housing First provision.

These changes are not only within the power of the Scottish Government, but they are also approaches largely consistent with the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan. This applies, for example, to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order extension, to the pursuit of the Prevention Review Group's recommendations, to commitments on mainstreaming Housing First, and to more strongly prioritise homeless households in social housing allocations. Rough sleeping, specifically, also emerges as highly susceptible to Scottish policy-led reduction, via reductions in hostels, increases in Housing First provision, rapid rehousing quotas explicitly inclusive of this group, and an extension of COVID-19 emergency accommodation provision. Notably, increasing housing (including social rented) supply, even when geographically targeted, has only modest additional positive effect on core homelessness, even in the longer run, albeit that new provision is needed to encourage implementation of Housing First and 'rapid rehousing quotas'.

The next Homelessness Monitor Scotland update will enable us to track the ongoing implementation of the Scottish Government's Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan and its impacts. It will also review the sustainment or otherwise of positive developments seen during the pandemic, including in relation to night shelters and those with No Recourse to Public Funds. It will also assess the medium-term homelessness-relevant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and policy responses to it, including whether the spike in homelessness feared by key stakeholders materialises or is avoided. Finally, we will be in a position to begin to assess official actions relevant the homelessness-reduction potential identified by our projections analysis.

Bibliography

Aitken, E. (2021) COVID-19: opportunity to improve crisis responses to homelessness? *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*, 51(S1): S53–62.

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Poverty (2021) *The Impact on Poverty of Not Maintaining the £20 Uplift in Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits, and of Not Extending the Uplift to Legacy and Related benefits*. Online: APPGP. http://www.appgpoverty.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/APPG-on-Poverty-20-uplift-report-FINAL.docx.pdf

Anderson, I. (2019) 'Delivering the Right to Housing? Why Scotland Still Needs an 'Ending Homelessness' Action Plan', *European Journal of Homelessness*, 13(2). 131-159.

Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (2021) *The Right to Adequate Housing: Are We Focusing on What Matters? A Discussion Paper Commissioned by the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers: Executive Summary*. Online: ALACHO. https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/The-Right-to-Adequate-Housing_Exec-Summary.pdf

Ball, M. (2021) *Budget 2021: Chancellor in Danger of Stoking Short-lived Mini Housing Boom*. Online: Henley Business School, University of Reading. https://www.henley.ac.uk/news/2021/budget-2021-chancellor-in-danger-of-stoking-short-lived-mini-housing-boom

Bank of Scotland (2020) *Number of first-time buyers in Scotland surges by more than 90% over the last decade*. Edinburgh: Bank of Scotland.

Barratt, L. (2019) *Cost of new Scottish homelessness plan assessed as eight times above budget*. 19 June. Online: Inside Housing. https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/cost-of-new-scottish-homelessness-plan-assessed-as-eight-times-above-budget-61943

Baumberg Geiger, B., Scullion, L., Summers, K., Martin, P., Lawler, C., Edmiston, D., Gibbons, A., Ingold, J., Robertshaw, D., & de Vries, R. (2021) *Non-take-up of Benefits at the Start of the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Salford: Salford University Welfare at a (Social) Distance. https://62608d89-fc73-4896-861c-0e03416f9922.usrfiles.com/ugd/62608d_602f7840f4114361a4dbf6d007d3825b.pdf

BBC News (2020) 'Eight found dead at Glasgow hotel for homeless since April', *BBC news*, 30th September: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-54359972

Bell, D., & Blanchflower, D. (2018) 'Underemployment and the lack of wage pressure in the UK', *National Institute Economic Review*, 243(1), 53-61.

Bell. D., Eiser, D. & Phillips, D. (2021) *Designing and Funding the Devolved Nations' Policy Response to COVID-19*. Glasgow: Strathclyde University. https://ifs.org.uk/publications/15406

Blood, I., Copeman, I. & Finlay, S. (2016) *Supported Accommodation Review: The scale, scope and cost of the supported housing sector*. Report of research carried out by Ipsos MORI, Imogen Blood & Associates, and Housing & Support Partnership for Department for Work and Pensions with Department for Communities and Local Government. DWP Research Report No. 927

Bourquin, P., Joyce, R. & Norris Keiller, A. (2020) *Living Standards, Poverty, and Inequality in the UK: 2020*. Report no. 170. London: Institute for Fiscal Studies. https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R170-Living-standards-poverty-and-inequality-in-the-UK-2019-2020%20.pdf

Bramley, B. & Fitzpatrick, S. (2018) 'Homelessness in the UK: who is most at risk?', *Housing Studies*, 33(1), 96-116.

Bramley, G. & Watkins, D. (2016) 'Housebuilding, demographic change and affordability as outcomes of local planning decisions: exploring interactions using a sub-regional model of housing markets in England', *Progress in Planning*, 104, 1-35

Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness Projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain. Summary Report*. London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237582/crisis_homelessness_projections_2017.pdf

Bramley, G. (2019) *Housing Supply Requirements across Great Britain for Low Income Households and Homeless People: Research for Crisis and the National Housing Federation; Main Technical Report*. Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University. https://doi.org/10.17861/bramley.2019.04

Bramley, G. (2020) *Potential Destitution and Food Bank Demand Resulting from the Covid-19 crisis in the UK: Rapid Research for Trussell Trust. Modelling individual/household-level impacts and eligibility for mainstream welfare support. Final Report*. Online: Trussell Trust. https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/09/Heriot-Watt-technical-report-FINAL.pdf

Bramley, G. with Leishman, C., Cosgrove, P. & Watkins, D. (2016) *What Would Make a Difference? Modelling policy scenarios for tackling poverty in the UK*. Online: Heriot-Watt. https://pure.hw.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/10844984/Bramley_WhatWouldMakeaDifference_Report.pdf

Bramley, G. (2021 forthcoming) *Research on Core Homelessness and Homeless Projections: Technical Report on New Baseline Estimates and Scenario Projections for Scotland and Wales*. Edinburgh. Heriot-Watt University.

Brewer, M. & Patrick, R. (2021) *Pandemic Pressures, why families on a low income are spending more during Covid-19*. London: Resolution Foundation https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/pandemic-pressures/

Brewer, M., & Handscomb, K. (2021) *Half-measures: The Chancellor's options for Universal Credit in the Budget*. Online: Resolution Foundation. https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/02/Half-measures.pdf

Brewer, M., Corlett, A., Handscomb, K., McCurdy, C. & Tomlinson, D. (2020) *The Living Standards Audit 2020*. London: Resolution Foundation. https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/07/living-standards-audit.pdf

Busch-Geertsema, V., Culhane, D., & Fitzpatrick, S. (2016) 'Developing a global framework for conceptualising and measuring homelessness', *Habitat International*, 55, 124–132.

Chartered Institute of Housing (2021) *Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans, Temporary Accommodation and Housing Options: a survey of Scotland's local authorities*. Online: CIH. https://www.cih.org/media/yvjeyzuu/rapid-rehousing-transition-plans-research-2021.pdf

Citizens Advice Scotland (2021) *Housing advice data; Comparison of April-December 2019 and April-December 2020 housing advice trends*. Online: CAS. https://www.cas.org.uk/system/files/publications/cas_housing_data_q1-3.pdf

Close the Gap (2021) *One Year On: How COVID-19 is impacting women's employment in Scotland*. Glasgow: Close the Gap. https://www.closethegap.org.uk/content/resources/1617267711_One-Year-On---How-COVID-19-is-impacting-womens-employment-in-Scotland.pdf

Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (2020) *Ethnicity and Poverty in Scotland 2020, Analysis and Reflection on the Impact of Covid-19*. Online: CRER. https://www.crer.scot/post/new-research-from-crer-ethnicity-and-poverty-in-scotland-2020

Cominetti, N., Henehan, K., Slaughter, H. & Thwaites, G. (2021) *Long Covid in the labour market: The impact on the labour market of Covid-19 a year into the crisis, and how to secure a strong recovery*. London: Resolution Foundation. https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/02/Long-covid-in-the-labour-market.pdf

Crisis (2021) *Preventing Homelessness in Scotland: Recommendations for Legal Duties to Prevent Homelessness: A report from the Prevention Review Group*. Online: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244558/preventing-homelessness-in-scotland.pdf

Department of Work and Pensions (2021) *Benefit sanctions statistics*. London: DWP. https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/jobseekers-allowance-sanctions

Donnell, R. (2021) *Hometrack Q4 2020: Rental Market Report*. Online: Hometrack. https://www.hometrack.com/uk/insight/rental-market-report/q4-2020-rental-market-report/

Dunn, L. (2019) *Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans: A Scottish Overview*. Crisis Scotland: Edinburgh. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/241640/crisis_rapid-rehousing-report_web_spreads_v2.pdf

Dunning, R., Moore, T., Ferrari, E., Hoolachan, J., Keskin, B., Powell, R. & O'Brien, P. (2020) *Affordable Housing Need in Scotland post 2021*. SFHA, Chartered Institute of Housing and Shelter Scotland. https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/affordable_housing_need_in_scotland_post-2021

Edmiston, D., Geiger, B., de Vries, R., Scullion, L., Summers, K., Ingold, J., Robertshaw, D., Gibbons, A. & Karagiannaki, E. (2020) *Who are the new COVID-19 cohort of benefit claimants? Welfare at a (Social) Distance Rapid Report 2*. Salford: University of Salford. https://hub.salford.ac.uk/welfare-at-a-social-distance/wp-content/uploads/sites/120/2020/09/WaSD-Rapid-Report-2-New-COVID-19-claimants.pdf

Everyone Home Collective (2020) *Route-Map 1: Ending the Need for Night Shelter & Hotel Room Provision*. Online: EHC. https://www.everyonehome.scot/pdf/route-map.pdf

Fenton L., Wyper G.M., McCartney G. & Minton J. (2019) Socioeconomic inequality in recent adverse all-cause mortality trends in Scotland, *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*. 73: 971–974.

Financial Conduct Authority (2021) *Financial Lives 2020 survey: the impact of coronavirus*. London: Financial Services Agency https://www.fca.org.uk/publication/research/financial-lives-survey-2020.pdf

Financial Times (2021) *UK suffers biggest drop in economic output in 300 years*. 12 February. Online: Financial Times. https://www.ft.com/content/96e19afd-88b3-4e8d-bc3e-a72bd1f60d3c

Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., Blenkinsopp, J., Wood, J., Sosenko, F., Littlewood, M., Johnsen, S., Watts, B., Treanor, M. & McIntyre, J. (2020) *Destitution in the UK 2020*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. www.jrf.org.uk

Fitzpatrick, S., Mackie, P., Pawson, H., Watts, B. & Wood, J. (2021) *The COVID-19 Crisis Response to Homelessness in Great Britain: Interim Report*. Online: CaCHE. https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/12544_UoG_CaCHE_Covid_Homelessness_Report-Final.pdf

Fitzpatrick, S., Mackie, P. & Wood, J. (2019) *Homelessness prevention in the UK: Policy briefing*. Online: CaCHE. https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Homelessness-Prevention-in-the-UK-Policy-Brief-July-2019-final.pdf

Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G. & Wilcox, S. (2012) *The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2012*. London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237059/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2012.pdf

Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Watts, B., Wood, J., Stephens, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2019) *The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2019*. London: Crisis https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240002/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2019.pdf

Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. & Watts, B. (2015) *The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2015*. London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/236831/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2015.pdf

Fitzpatrick, S., Watts, B., Pawson, H., Bramley, G. Wood, J., Stephens, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. (2021) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2021*. London: Crisis. https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/homelessness-monitor/england/the-homelessness-monitor-england-2021/

Fraser of Allander Institute (2019) *A Guide to Scottish GDP*. FAI, Glasgow: University of Strathclyde. https://fraserofallander.org/scottish-gdp-guide/

Fraser of Allander Institute (2021) *FAI Economic Commentary, 2021 Q2*. Glasgow: University of Strathclyde. https://fraserofallander.org/publications/fai-economic-commentary-2021-q2/

Giupponi, G., and Xu, X. (2020) *What does the Rise of Self-employment tell us about the UK Labour Market?* Online: The Institute for Fiscal Studies https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/15182

Hamilton, M. & Hayes, B. (2020) *Past experiences of housing difficulties in the UK: 2018*. 22 October. Online: ONS. https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/adhocs/12488pastexperiencesofhousingdifficultiesintheuk2018

HM Revenue and Customs (2021) *Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics: 6 May 2021 - data tables*. Online: HMRC. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-6-may-2021

HM Revenue and Customs (2021) *Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) Statistics: February 2021 (tables 1,2 and 6).* Online: HMRC. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/self-employment-income-support-scheme-statistics-february-2021

HM Treasury (2021) *Policy paper: the mortgage guarantee scheme*. London: HM Treasury.

Homeless Network Scotland (2021) *Branching Out: A National Framework to Start-up and Scale-up Housing First in Scotland: 2021-2031*. Online: Homeless Network Scotland. https://homelessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Housing-First-National-Framework-v.210321.pdf

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (2018) *Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group: final recommendations report*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-action-group-final-report/

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (2020) *Tackling Homelessness in Scotland following the Coronavirus Pandemic - Recommendations from Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/corporate-report/2020/07/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-action-group-final-report-tackling-coronavirus/documents/harsag-final-report-on-homelessness-after-coronavirus/harsag-final-report-on-homelessness-after-coronavirus/govscot%3Adocument/HARSAG%2BCovid%2Bfinal%2Breport.pdf

Housing First Scotland (2020) *Housing First Check Up: Annual check-up on Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder*. Online: Homeless Network Scotland. https://homelessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/HousingFirst_one_year_report_06052020.pdf

Housing First Scotland (2021) *Housing First Tracker: Progress to May 2021. Online: Homeless Network Scotland*. https://homelessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/HF-Scotland-Monthly-Tracker-MAY-2021.pdf

Jenkins, K., (2020) *Unsuitable accommodation order extended*. 5 May. Online: Scottish Government. https://blogs.gov.scot/fairer-scotland/2020/05/05/unsuitable-accommodation-order-extended/; https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2021/10/pdfs/ssipn_20210010_en.pdf

JRF (2020) *Poverty in Scotland 2020-The independent annual report*, York, JRF.

JRF (2021) *UK poverty 2020-21*. York: JRF. https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2020-21

Joyce, R., and Xu, X. (2019) *Inequalities in the twenty-first century: introducing the IFS Deaton Review*. London: Institute for Fiscal Studies https://www.ifs.org.uk/inequality/chapter/briefing-note/

Judge, L. (2021) *Getting ahead on falling behind- Tackling the UK's building arrears crisis*. London: Resolution Foundation. https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/getting-ahead-on-falling-behind/

Leishman, C., Gibb, K., Meen, G., O'Sullivan, T., Young, G., Chen, Y., Orr, A. & Wright, R. (2008) *Scottish model of housing supply and affordability: final report*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government

Leonard Cheshire (2020) *Locked out of the labour market- The impact of Covid-19 on disabled adults in accessing good work*. London: Leonard Cheshire https://www.leonardcheshire.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/Locked-out-of-labour-market.pdf

Mackley, A. (2021) *Coronavirus: Universal Credit during the crisis: House of Commons briefing paper 8999, House of commons Library*. Online: UK Parliament. https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8999/CBP-8999.pdf

Mackley, A., Hobson, F. & McInnes, R. (2021) *Coronavirus: Legacy benefits and the Universal Credit 'uplift' – briefing paper*. London: House of Common Library https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9246/CBP-9246.pdf

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2020) *English Housing Survey 2018-19: 'Sofa surfing' and 'concealed households'; Factsheet*. Online: MHCLG. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2018-to-2019-sofa-surfing-and-concealed-households-fact-sheet

National House Building Council (2020) *New home statistics review 2020*. Online: NHBC. https://www.nhbc.co.uk/binaries/content/assets/nhbc/media-centre/stats/2020-new-home-statistics-review.pdf

National Records of Scotland (2020) *Drug-related Deaths in Scotland in 2019*. Edinburgh: NRS https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/drug-related-deaths/2019/drug-related-deaths-19-pub.pdf

Office for Budget Responsibility (2020) *Economic and fiscal outlook – November 2020*. Online: OBR. https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-november-2020/

Office for Budget Responsibility (2021) *Economic and Fiscal Outlook Report*. London: OBR.

Office for National Statistics (2019) *UK Homelessness: 2005 to 2018. Assessment of the comparability and coherence of existing UK government data sources on homelessness*. 17 September. Online: ONS. https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/ukhomelessness/2005to2018

Office for National Statistics (2021) *GDP quarterly national accounts, UK: October to December 2020 (31 March 2021).* Online: ONS. https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/bulletins/quarterlynationalaccounts/octobertodecember2020

Office for National Statistics (2021) *Public Sector Finances, UK: March 2021*. Online: ONS. https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/march2021

Parkes, T., Carver, H., Masterton, W., Falzon, D., Dumbrell, J., Grant, S., & Wilson, I. (2021) 'They already operated like it was a crisis, because it always has been a crisis': a qualitative exploration of the response of one homeless service in Scotland to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Harm reduction journal*, 18(1), 1-16;

Pattaro, S., Bailey N., Williams, E., Gibson, M., Wells V., Tranmer, M. & Dibben, C. (2021) *The impacts of benefit sanctions: a scoping review of the quantitative research evidence*. Glasgow: Glasgow University. https://eprints.gla.ac.uk/234959/

PayProp (2021) *Results are in from the first ever PayProp Rental Confidence Index*. Online: PayProp https://blog.payprop.com/blog-posts/payprop-rental-confidence-index-december-2020

Poverty and Inequality Commission (2020) *Scottish Welfare Fund Briefing*. Online: Poverty and Inequality Commission. https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Scottish-Welfare-Fund-briefing-.pdf

Propertymark (2021) *Private Rented Sector Report – June 2021*. Warwick: ARLA Propertymark.

Registers of Scotland (2021) *Property Market Report 2020-21: A long-term statistical review of the Scottish property market*. Edinburgh: RoS. https://www.ros.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/189001/Property-Market-Report-2020-21.pdf

Scottish Association of Landlords (2021) *Rent arrears fear for landlords despite pandemic discounts*. Online: Scottish Association of Landlords. https://scottishlandlords.com/news-and-campaigns/news/rent-arrears-fear-for-landlords-despite-pandemic-discounts/

Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (2019) *Rapid Rehousing Funding Distribution. SFHA Policy Update. 19 August*. Online: SFHA. https://www.sfha.co.uk/news/news-category/policy-update/news-article/rapid-rehousing-funding-distribution

Scottish Fiscal Commission (2020) *Supplementary Costing: Scottish Child Payment*, Edinburgh: SFC.

Scottish Government (2018) *A Nation with Ambition: the Government's Programme for Scotland 2017- 2018*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/nation-ambition-governments-programme-scotland-2017-18/

Scottish Government (2018) *Ending Homelessness Together: Action Plan*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-high-level-action-plan/

Scottish Government (2018) *Homelessness in Scotland 2017-2018*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2017-18

Scottish Government (2019) *Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan minutes: August 2019*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/rapid-rehousing-transition-plan-minutes-august-2019/

Scottish Government (2020) *Coronavirus (COVID-19): summary of Scottish funding - 30 April 2021*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20210521121958/http://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-summary-of-scottish-funding---30-april-2021/

Scottish Government (2020) *Coronavirus (Covid-19): UK fiscal path –a new approach*. Online: Scottish Government: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-fiscal-path-new-approach/pages/4/

Scottish Government (2020) *Ending Homelessness Together: Annual Report*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-action-plan-annual-report-parliament/

Scottish Government (2020) *Ending homelessness together: Updated Action Plan - October 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/

Scottish Government (2020) *Housing options (PREVENT1): statistics - 2019 to 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-options-prevent1-statistics-scotland-2019-20/

Scottish Government (2020) *Impact of withdrawing emergency benefit measures*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/impact-of-withdrawing-emergency-benefit-measures/pages/introduction/

Scottish Government (2020) *Improving Housing Outcomes for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse: Scottish Government Working Group Report*. Online: Scottish Government. https://womensaid.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Improving-Housing-Outcomes-for-Women-and-Children-Experiencing-Domestic-Abuse-Report.pdf

Scottish Government (2020) *Improving Temporary Accommodation Standards Consultation: Response Analysis*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/analysis-responses-consultation-improving-temporary-accommodation-standards/

Scottish Government (2020) *Private Rent Sector Landlord (non-business) COVID-19 Loan Scheme questions: FOI release*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-202000115141/

Scottish Government (2020) *Private Rented Sector Resilience Group minutes: 9 November 2020. Online: Scottish Government*. https://www.gov.scot/publications/private-rented-sector-resilience-group-minutes-9-november-2020

Scottish Government (2021) *Budget Statement: 2021-22*, Edinburgh Scottish Government.

Scottish Government (2021) *Consultation on a Ministerial Statement for Modifying Local Connection Referrals in Scotland: Analysis Report*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/consultation-analysis/2021/02/consultation-ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland-analysis-report/documents/consultation-ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland-analysis-report/consultation-ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland-analysis-report/govscot%3Adocument/consultation-ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland-analysis-report.pdf

Scottish Government (2021) *Coronavirus Acts: Sixth Report to Scottish Parliament. Edinburgh: Scottish Government*. https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-acts-sixth-report-scottish-parliament/

Scottish Government (2021) *Discretionary Housing Payments in Scotland: 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/discretionary-housing-payments-in-scotland-1-april-2020-to-31-march-2021/

Sottish Government (2021) *Ending Destitution Together A Strategy to Improve Support for People with No Recourse to Public Funds Living in Scotland: 2021-2024*. Online: Scottish Government.

Scottish Government (2021) *GDP quarterly national accounts: 2020 quarter 4 (October-December) accompanying tables second update*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/gdp-quarterly-national-accounts-2020-q4/

Scottish Government (2021) *Gross Domestic Product: Quarterly Output Statistics (Open data)*. Online: Scottish Government. https://statistics.gov.scot/resource?uri=http%3A%2F%2Fstatistics.gov.scot%2Fdata%2Fgross-domestic-product-quarterly-output-by-industry

Scottish Government (2021) *Homelessness and Universal Credit*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-universal-credit/

Scottish Government (2021) *Housing statistics quarterly update: June 2021*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-scotland-quarterly-update-2/pages/5/

Scottish Government (2021) *Housing to 2040*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2021/03/housing-2040-2/documents/housing-2040/housing-2040/govscot%3Adocument/housing-2040.pdf

Scottish Government (2021) *Labour Market Statistics for Young People (16-24 year olds): Scotland and UK: Statistics from the Annual Population Survey dataset*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/labour-market-statistics-for-young-people-16-24-years-scotland-and-uk---january-2020-to-december-2020/

Scottish Government (2021) *Labour Market Trends (monthly) April 2021*. Online: Scotland. https://www.gov.scot/publications/labour-market-trends-april-2021/

Scottish Government (2021) *Ministerial Statement: Modifying Local Connection Referrals in Scotland*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/speech-statement/2021/03/ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland/documents/ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland/ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland/govscot%3Adocument/ministerial-statement-modifying-local-connection-referrals-scotland.pdf

Scottish Government (2021) *Monthly Economic Brief: March 2021*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/monthly-economic-brief-march-2021/

Scottish Government (2021) *Policy Note: The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) (Modification and Revocation) (Coronavirus) Order 2021 SSI 2021/10*. Online: Scottish Government.

Scottish Government (2021) *Scotland's Fiscal Outlook: The Scottish Government's Medium-Term Financial Strategy*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-fiscal-outlook-scottish-governments-medium-term-financial-strategy/pages/4/

Scottish Government (2021) *Scottish Housing Market Review: October - December 2020*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2020/03/scottish-housing-market-review-2020/documents/scottish-housing-market-review-q4-2020/scottish-housing-market-review-q4-2020/govscot%3Adocument/Scottish%2BHousing%2BMarket%2BReview%2B-%2BQ4%2B2020.pdf

Scottish Government (2021) *Scottish Welfare Fund and Self-Isolation Support Grant monthly management information & Discretionary Housing Payments monthly official statistics*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/swf-monthly-management-information/

Scottish Government (2021) *Scottish Welfare Fund Statistics: Update to 31 December 2020*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-welfare-fund-statistics-update-to-31-december-2020/

Scottish Housing News (2021) *Scottish Government announces £10m grant fund for tenants in arrears due to COVID-19*. 23 June. Online: Scottish Housing News. https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/article/scottish-government-announces-10-million-grant-fund-for-tenants-in-arrears-due-to-covid-19

Scottish Housing Regulator (2018) *Housing people who are homeless in Glasgow*. Online: Scottish Housing Regulator. https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance/national-reports/thematic-work/housing-people-who-are-homeless-in-glasgow

Scottish Housing Regulator (2021) *Full dataset from all landlords from April 2020 to March 2021*. Online: Scottish Housing Regulator. https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance/national-reports/covid-19-dashboards/full-dataset-from-all-landlords-from-april-2020-to-march-2021

Scottish Housing Regulator (2021) *Monthly Covid-19 dashboards – March 2021 Update. Online: Scottish Housing Regulator.* https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance/national-reports/monthly-covid-19-dashboards

Scottish National Party (2021) *SNP 2021 Manifesto: Scotland's Future, Scotland's Choice*. Online: SNP. https://www.snp.org/manifesto/; Scottish Housing News (2021) Urgent legislation required to prevent homelessness, warns Crisis. 27 May. https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/article/urgent-legislation-required-to-prevent-homelessness-warns-crisis

Scottish Parliament (2021) *Official Report of Meeting of the Parliament: Thursday 20 May 2021- Covid-19 (Protection from Eviction).* Online: Scottish Parliament. https://www.parliament.scot/api/sitecore/CustomMedia/OfficialReport?meetingId=13228

Shelter Scotland (2017) *Evidence of Gatekeeping in Glasgow City Council*. Online: Shelter Scotland. https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/policy_library_folder/evidence_of_gatekeeping_in_glasgow_city_council

Shelter Scotland (2018) *Getting behind the Homelessness Statistics: Update for 2017-18*. Online: Shelter Scotland. https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1612298/Behind_the_Stats_2018_FINAL.pdf/_nocache

Shelter Scotland (2021) *Do we risk diluting the rights of homeless people?* 22 Feb. Online: Shelter Scotland. https://blog.scotland.shelter.org.uk/risk-diluting-rights-homeless-people/

Shelter Scotland (2021) *Scottish Government Back-tracks on Homeless Protections*. 14 Jan. Online: Shelter Scotland. https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/media/press_releases/scottish_government_back-tracks_on_homeless_protections; https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S5M-23862

Social Bite (2018) *Scotland's Transition to Rapid Rehousing. Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans: Guidance for Local Authorities and Partners*. Online: Social Bite. https://social-bite.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Rapid_Rehousing_Guidance1.1.pdf

Social Renewal Advisory Board (2021) *If not now, when? Social Renewal Advisory Board report, January 2021*. Online: Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/not-now-social-renewal-advisory-board-report-january-2021/documents/

Statham, R. (2021) *Intersectionality: Revealing the Realities of Poverty and Inequality in Scotland*. IPPR: Scotland, Edinburgh, Poverty and Inequalities Commission. https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Intersectionality-Revealing-the-Reality-of-Poverty-and-Inequality-in-Scotland-May-2021.pdf

Statham, R., Parkes, H., & Gunson, R. (2021) *Securing A Living Income In Scotland: Towards a Minimum Income Guarantee*, Edinburgh: Institute for Public Policy Research Scotland.

Summers, K., Scullion, L., Baumberg Geiger, B., Robertshaw, D., Edmiston, D., Gibbons, A., Karagiannaki, E., De Vries, R., & Ingold, J (2021) *Claimants' experiences of the social security system during the first wave of COVID-19*. Welfare at a (Social) Distance Project. Salford: University of Salford.

The Salvation Army (2021) *Homelessness in Scotland: Research for The Salvation Army*. Online: The Salvation Army. https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/2021-03/TSA%20Report%20Homelessness%20in%20Scotland%20FINAL%20%28Full%29.pdf

Trade Union Congress (2020) *Fixing the Safety Net: Next Steps in the Economic Response to Coronavirus*. Online: TUC. https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/fixing-safety-net-next-steps-economic-response-coronavirus

UK Finance (2021) *Lenders continue commitment to supporting mortgage customers into 2021- online statement*. Online: UK Finance. https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/press/press-releases/Lenders-continue-commitment-to-supporting-mortgage-customers-into-2021

UK Finance (2021) *Mortgage Arrears and Possessions Update Quarter 4 2020*. Online: UK Finance. https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Data%20(XLS%20and%20PDF)/UKF-Mortgage-Arrears-Possessions-Update-11-February-2021-FINAL.pdf

Watts, B., Littlewood, M., Blenkinsopp, J. & Jackson, F. (2018) *Temporary Accommodation in Scotland: Final Report*. Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University https://social-bite.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/SB_TempAccommReport_FinalReport.pdf

Webster, D. (2021) *CPAG Briefing - Benefit Sanctions Statistics February 2021*. Online: CPAG. https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/21-02%20Sanctions%20Stats%20Briefing%20-%20D.Webster.docx

Wilson, H. & Finch, D. (2021) *Unemployment and mental health - Why both require action for our COVID-19 recovery*. London: The Health Foundation. https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/unemployment-and-mental-health

Appendix 1 Topic guide for key informant interviews (Scotland 2021)

Introduction

- Explain nature and purpose of research
- Secure consent, confirm on the record
- Their job title/role; how long they have been in that position/organisation
- Nature of organisation – connection with homelessness issues (main focus, part of broader remit, which homeless groups, etc.)

COVID-19 and homelessness trends

- What impact has COVID-19 had on…?
  - **levels** of homelessness. Probe: increased/decreased footfall in LA homelessness services and vol sector homelessness services; different kinds of homelessness (rough sleeping, city centre 'street culture' [begging, street drinking, etc.], hidden homelessness, TA etc.)
  - the **drivers/triggers/causes** of homelessness. Probe: intensification/ reduction in any specific drivers (poverty, unemployment, evictions/ landlord forbearance, relationship breakdown, family ejection, domestic abuse/violence, etc.)
  - the **profile** of those experiencing/at risk of homelessness? (household type, level of support needs, citizenship status etc.)
- What evidence/data is available on these post-COVID trends as yet (if any)? Will statutory homelessness statistics tell a clear/meaningful story about the impacts of COVID-19 on homelessness?
- Thinking about the wider policy and economic context after COVID, what do you anticipate will happen to levels of homelessness?

COVID-19 and homelessness responses/policy

- What have been the most important Scottish Government responses to manage the homelessness related impacts of and risks associated with COVID-19 been? How effective/ ineffective have they been; main strengths/ weaknesses, unintended consequences, any gaps? Probe:
  - Effectiveness in relation to (a) protecting people experiencing or at risk of homelessness from infection (b) reducing homelessness risk among groups impacting by economic downturn associated with the pandemic.
  - **Funding:** £1.5m third sector funded to support people in emergency accommodation; additional funding (£8m) for DHPs; Tenant Hardship Loan Fund (£10m); NRPF funding to prevent destitution (c£300k); £45m to Scottish Welfare Fund.
  - **Homelessness policy/law:** COSLA guidance on public health duties to accommodation NRPF group; HARSAG recommendations and government response (scaling up HF more rapidly, increase social housing allocations to homeless households; phase out night shelters); Unsuitable Accommodation Order exemptions
  - **Changes to rental sectors:** extension of eviction notice periods to six months; extension of pre-action requirements for private rental evictions due to arrears; Christmas eviction ban; social landlord practice.
  - **Increased cross-sectoral/multi-disciplinary coordination** at national level
  - Any reflections on why the COVID homelessness response in Scotland seems to have involved a less dramatic set of changes, requiring less additional investment, than many other countries across the world (including England and Wales)?
- How impactful were changes made to the **UK benefits system** in preventing homelessness among low income households/those facing a financial shock as a result of COVID-19? Probe:
  - LHA realigned with 30th percentile rents (query interaction with Benefit Cap and shared accommodation rate); Increase in UC standard allowance (note didn't apply to legacy benefits); Suspension of work-related conditionality; pause in debt deductions; anything else?
  - More impactful in some areas than others? If so, which/why?
  - Are there any areas of the UK benefits system that have been/continue to be an issue during the Covid-19 pandemic?
  - To what extent do devolved welfare benefits (e.g. carer's allowance, disability benefit and child payments) help prevent or address homelessness?
- How important were changes to **immigration policy**? Probe:
  - suspension of EU derogation relating to freedom of movement enabling LAs to accommodate EEA nationals; suspension of evictions from asylum accommodation.
  - More impactful in some areas than others? If so, which/why?
- What have been the most important homelessness-related measures taken at **local authority/organisational level** in response to the pandemic? Probe impacts (positive/negative; unintended) and variation across country/ geographic area of expertise, including in relation to:
  - Changes to nature of frontline delivery of homelessness services
  - Accommodating those sleeping rough; shutting down dorm-style night shelters and other changes to congregate accommodation provision; providing support to those accommodated (Specific probe: unintended consequences of concentration of this group in city centre hotels?)
  - Changes to social housing allocations (Specific probe: immediate impact of lockdown, etc., and longer term changes in allocation policy [driven by COVID-19 or RR agenda?]?
- Were there any significant differences in the nature/effectiveness of homelessness responses in the **second major lockdown period** (over this winter) as compared with the initial lockdown period last spring? Positive/ negative?
- Looking ahead, **how sustainable** is anything positive that has been introduced as a result of COVID? Any negative changes/ongoing challenges you are concerned will persist post pandemic? Probes:
  - Why/why not? Prompt: will the work of the Everyone Home Collective make a difference to the sustainability of any of these changes?
  - Night shelter phase out (Probe impact of EHC Route map); social housing

allocations, HF scale up (Probe impact of the national framework); NRPF response (Probe impact of Fair Way Scotland delivery plan} links with health/public health.

Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan

- What is your view on the Endling Homelessness Together Action Plan and its implementation to date?
  - Probe: on the whole positive, negative, particular areas of strength/ weakness, gaps, etc.
  - Probe: (dis)benefits for particular groups of homeless people, e.g. families, single people, young people, people with complex needs; feasibility in different LAs

- What progress has been made in relation to moving to a '**rapid rehousing by default**' approach? Probe:
  - Are you supportive of Scottish Government's vision in this respect?
  - How effective have Rapid Rehousing Transition plans been in driving change in this area? Which groups of people are RRTPs working well or less well for?
  - What are the key barriers to or enablers of change in this area?
  - How have RRTPs been impacted by COVID-19? Probe: nature of post-pandemic revisions to RRTPs
  - To what extent did RRTPs support or undermine your response to the pandemic?
  - What are the opportunities and challenges of making greater use of a broader range of housing options to prevent and address homelessness? (e.g. PRS, mid-market rent, shared housing, back to family home, supported lodgings, etc.)
  - What progress has there been in relation to increasing **social housing allocations** to homeless households in pursuit of this aim? What are the barriers/enablers here? [If not covered above: What impact, if any, has COVID-19 had on social housing allocations?]
  - Are you supportive of increasing social housing allocations to homeless households? Why/why not?

- What progress has been made in relation to scaling up a **Housing First** response for those experiencing homelessness alongside complex needs? Probe:
  - Are you supportive of Scottish Governments vision in this respect?
  - What are your views on the HF pathfinder? Strengths/weaknesses?
  - What are the key barriers to or enablers of further national scale up of Housing First?

- What progress has been made in relation to **transforming the use of temporary accommodation**? Probes:
  - Are you supportive of Scottish Government's vision in this respect?
  - How effective have national government and LA actions been in reducing overall use of TA and improving standards within it?
  - What are the key barriers to or enablers of change in this area?
  - What are your views on the legal changes made to the **Unsuitable Accommodation** Order? Probe: positive/negative about legal change, anticipated impacts.

- How familiar are you with the legal and other changes proposed by the **Prevention Review Group**? Probe:
  - Broadly positive or negative about the proposals? Why?
  - Any particular strengths or weaknesses? Do you anticipate any unintended consequences?
  - Likelihood of legislative and/or practice change in this area?

- What are your views on changes made to 'intentionality' provisions in 2019 (duty to power)? Are you aware of the proposal to narrow to a focus on limiting entitlements only where evidence 'deliberate manipulation'? If so, what are your views on it?
- What are your views on the recent ministerial statement on modifying local connection referrals under homelessness legislation? Probe: what are your views on potential future legal change in this area?

Other areas of Scottish housing/social policy

- What are your views on the vision and route map laid out in Scottish Government's "**Housing to 2040**" document? What implications for homelessness?

Thanks and close.

Appendix 2 Local authority survey 2021

Emulating similar surveys implemented as an integral component of Homelessness Monitor England fieldwork since 2014, and for the first time in Scotland in 2018, an online survey of Scotland's 32 LAs was undertaken in April-June 2021. This is the second such survey to have been undertaken in Scotland. It bore some similarity with the first Scottish survey in 2018, in seeking to collect data to complement homelessness statistics routinely published by the Scottish Government and understand LA's ability to prevent and resolve homelessness. However, it also included questions framed in relation to the incidence and management of homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as many others configured to pick up on recent policy and practice developments.

Invitations to participate in the survey were sent to the local authority Housing Options/homelessness manager in each of Scotland's 32 local authorities in April 2021. Responses were received from 29 LAs, and all of Scotland's larger and more urban councils were represented. The only non-respondents were Moray, the Shetland Islands and West Lothian.

In analysing the returns, responding authorities were classified according to a typology combining housing market conditions and geographical location detailed in the introduction to this report.

This appendix summarises in tabular form the key quantitative survey results. All survey findings, including the qualitative data generated by the extensive use of open text responses within the survey, are contained in the main body of the report.

Table A2.1: Has the overall number of household seeking assistance from your Housing Options/homelessness services changed over the past financial year?

	No - remained steady	Yes				Total
		But varied during year	Slightly increased	Slightly reduced	Significantly reduced	
Edinburgh and other pressured markets	2		1	4	2	9
Glasgow and rest of Clyde Valley	1		5		2	8
Rest of Scotland	3	1	1	4	3	12
Total	6	1	7	8	7	29

Table A2.2: Possible change in homelessness demand in the post-lockdown period: Local authority expectations

	Will increase	Remain steady	Will fall	Don't know	Total
a. People evicted from private rented sector	29				29
b. People evicted from social rented sector	20	8		1	29
c. Repossessed home owners	19	4		6	29
d. Survivors of domestic abuse	11	15		3	29
e. Young people	12	13		4	29
f. Sofa surfers	10	13	2	4	29
g. Newly unemployed people	18	7		4	29
h. People being asked to leave the family home	10	15	2	2	29
i. Prison leavers	1	25	1	2	29
j. EEA nationals lacking entitlements or access to benefits	7	8		14	29
k. All other migrants with NRPF or no access to benefits	5	12		12	29

Table A2.3: How important have the UK and Scottish Government policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis been in preventing or minimising homelessness in your area?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Not relevant in my area	Total
a. Job Retention scheme (furloughing) (UK Govt)	21	7			29
b. Eviction protections for social and private renters (Scottish Govt)	26	3			29
c. Funding for third sector orgs to support people in emergency hotel accom (Scottish Govt)	7	3	3	15	29
d. Additional £5 million provided to LAs for rapid rehousing in Nov 2020 (Scottish Govt)	18	6	3	2	29
e. Funding for orgs working with those with No Recourse to Public Funds to prevent destitution (Scottish Govt)	9	6	4	8	29
f. Suspension of evictions from asylum accommodation (UK Govt)	3	4	6	15	29
g. Suspension of the derogation to allow housing of EEA migrants not in employment (UK Govt)	5	5	8	7	29

Note: In rows (a), (c), (f) and (g) total includes 'don't knows'.

Table A2.4: How important have welfare changes made in response to the COVID-19 crisis been in preventing or minimising homelessness in your area?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Don't know	Total
a. LHA maximum raised to 30th percentile (UK Govt)	11	12	3	3	29
b. Suspension of benefit sanctions (UK Govt)	14	9	2	4	29
c. Suspension of debt-related benefit deductions (not advances) (UK Govt)	13	9	2	5	29
d. Additional £20 per week in Universal Credit standard allowance (UK Govt)	16	9	2	2	29
e. Pausing full roll out of Universal Credit (UK Govt)	7	8	9	5	29
f. Additional Discretionary Housing Payment funding (Scottish Govt)	20	8		1	29
g. Additional Scottish Welfare Fund Funding (Scottish Govt)	20	7	1	1	29
h. Hardship Loan Fund (Scottish Govt)	12	10	4	3	29

Table A2.5: How often does your local authority discharge the main homelessness duty using tenancies in the private rented sector?

	Very frequently	Somewhat frequently	Quite rarely	Very rarely	Never	Total
Edinburgh and other pressured markets		2	3	3	1	9
Glasgow and rest of Clyde Valley	1		5	1	1	8
Rest of Scotland			3	5	4	12
Total	1	2	11	9	6	29

Table A2.6: Does your local authority ever help households access private tenancies as a means of preventing homelessness?

	Very frequently	Somewhat frequently	Quite rarely	Very rarely	Never	Total
Edinburgh and other pressured markets		6	2	1		9
Glasgow and rest of Clyde Valley	1	3	4			8
Rest of Scotland	1	3	6	2		12
Total	2	12	12	3		29

Table A2.7: Anticipated impact of changes to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order on the kinds of temporary accommodation used in your local authority area?

	Significant impact	Some impact	Very little impact	No impact	Total
Edinburgh and other pressured markets	4		4	1	9
Glasgow and rest of Clyde Valley	1	1	4	2	8
Rest of Scotland	1	6	2	3	12
Total	6	7	10	6	29

Table A2.8: Familiarity with Prevention Review Group recommendations

	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not familiar at all	Total
Edinburgh and other pressured markets	2	6	1	9
Glasgow and rest of Clyde Valley	3	4	1	8
Rest of Scotland	7	4	1	12
Total	12	14	3	29

Table A2.9: Has the Health and Social Care Partnership in your area had an impact on your ability to prevent and/or alleviate homelessness?

	Yes - it has helped	No - it has had little impact	Don't know	Total
Edinburgh and other pressured markets	4	5		9
Glasgow and rest of Clyde Valley	7	1		8
Rest of Scotland	6	4	2	12
Total	17	10	2	29

Crisis head office
66 Commercial Street
London E1 6LT
Tel: 0300 636 1967
Fax: 0300 636 2012
www.crisis.org.uk

ISBN 978-1-78519-079-7

Crisis UK (trading as Crisis).
Registered Charity Numbers:
E&W1082947, SC040094.
Company Number: 4024938

Together
we will end
homelessness