

# Research

## The facts: bad housing and homelessness for children and young people in Scotland 2010

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# Shelter

# The facts: bad housing and homelessness for children and young people in Scotland 2010

## Summary

A warm, safe home is crucial to all aspects of children's well-being, yet tens of thousands of Scotland's children have to cope with waking up every day in cold, damp, overcrowded homes, or in a state of uncertainty due to homelessness or the risk of homelessness.

- More than one in ten (128,000) children is living in fuel poverty in Scotland. That is enough children to fill the stadiums of both Celtic and Rangers. The number of fuel poor households with children rose by 23 per cent in the last year because fuel costs rose faster than incomes.
- Although the number of homes which fail the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) is falling, it still remains that 60 per cent of children in Scotland are growing up in places that fall below the SHQS.
- 155,000 children live in homes which have condensation or damp, or both, putting these children at a higher risk of asthma and other respiratory problems. This is the same as if everyone in Dundee were living in places with damp or condensation problems.
- Sixty children a day become homeless somewhere in Scotland. That is enough to fill three primary one classes every day and is a total of 22,000 children a year.
- Nearly half of all homeless children (44 per cent) are under five years old.
- Despite overall levels of homelessness falling by six per cent in the last five years there has been a seven per cent rise in the number of families with children who are homeless over the same period. This highlights a need for a greater focus on preventing homelessness for families with children.
- Lone parent families are over represented within the homeless population. They are the second largest group of homeless households, accounting for 24 per cent of all homeless households despite only representing 5 per cent of all households in Scotland.
- Children live in nearly half (47 per cent) of all households made homeless due to domestic abuse or harassment outside the home.
- The number of families with children staying in temporary accommodation is rising at a higher rate than other groups in temporary accommodation. Over the last three years there has been a 37 per cent rise in the number of households with children staying in temporary accommodation, compared to a general rise of 19 per cent for other groups. This suggests increasing pressure on housing supply for suitable housing for families with children.

- An estimated 1,700 children in Scotland were in families evicted from social housing in 2008/09, usually for rent arrears. This means that approximately five children a day lose their home due to eviction.
- Approximately 20 in every 1,000 young people in Scotland become homeless.
- Young homeless people are vastly over represented in the homeless population. Young single people represent 24 per cent of all homeless households despite only three per cent of all households in Scotland being headed up by someone under 25.

In order to improve the housing situation for thousands of children and young people in Scotland, Shelter would like to see:

- The Scottish Government , as a matter of urgency, to publish and ensure the implementation of its guidance on acting in the best interests of children facing homeless to ensure children's needs are prioritised.
- More high quality housing designed for young people and families with children, in areas they want to live, to address the backlog of children living in temporary accommodation.
- An amendment to the current Housing Bill going through Parliament that would mean all homeless households would firstly, get a support assessment at the time of making an application and secondly, that services are provided which meet that assessment. This would help to ensure families and young people can keep and maintain their tenancy and help prevent repeat homelessness.
- All evictions from social tenancies for families to be a genuine 'last resort' taking into consideration the impact eviction will have on the well-being of children in the household.
- Improved quality of temporary accommodation through the introduction of minimum standards all temporary accommodation has to meet.

## Background

A warm, safe home is crucial to all aspects of children's well-being, yet tens of thousands of Scotland's children have to cope with waking up every day in cold, damp, overcrowded homes, or in a state of uncertainty due to homelessness or the risk of homelessness.

This report has been produced by Shelter Scotland's Children's Service to provide a real picture of how many children are affected by poor housing conditions in Scotland. We have tried to make sure that all the information is as up to date and accurate as possible and hope that it is a useful publication for people working to improve the lives of children and young people in Scotland. Although this report is Scotland wide we will endeavour to provide figures for local areas where available and on request. Throughout the report we have included quotes from children who have experience of homelessness on their views about where they live.<sup>1</sup>

Children's housing situation has a profound impact on the quality of children's lives and well-being.<sup>2</sup> Children who are living in sub-standard housing or who are homeless are also likely to be from deprived communities and low income households. Over half (57 per cent) of all social housing in Scotland is concentrated in 15 per cent of the most deprived areas.<sup>3</sup> Addressing poor quality housing and homelessness are key components in tackling child poverty and we must recognise the role of housing policy in eradicating child poverty by 2020.

## Children in bad housing

A home should be wind and weather tight, warm, and have modern facilities. Poor conditions are where housing is in need of substantial repairs; is structurally unsafe; is damp, cold, or infested; or is lacking modern facilities such as an effective central heating system. The problems of bad housing considered in this report are overcrowding, fuel poverty, condensation, damp and dwellings that fail the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).

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<sup>1</sup> Pseudonyms have been used throughout to retain anonymity. The quotes are from a short animation created by children supported by Shelter Scotland Support Service, South Lanarkshire, available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RW1VCbCIDmY>; Shelter Scotland (2009) *Acting in the best interests of homeless children – children and young people's views on where they live*. Available at [http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_library/policy\\_library\\_folder/acting\\_in\\_the\\_best\\_interests\\_of\\_homeless\\_children](http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/policy_library_folder/acting_in_the_best_interests_of_homeless_children)

<sup>2</sup> Barnes, M. et al (2008) *The Dynamics of Bad Housing: The impact of bad housing on the living standard of children*, National Centre for Social Research; Shelter (2006) *Against the odds: An investigation comparing the lives of children on either side of Britain's housing divide*

<sup>3</sup> Scottish Government (2008) *Scottish household survey: Annual report - results from 2007*

## Overcrowding

Living in cramped and overcrowded conditions leaves children without a quiet space to do homework, an area to play or have their friends over.

The amount of space a family has to live in is measured in two ways:

- Census data records the number of 'persons per room', irrespective of age or gender, and makes a simple comparison between the number of household members and the number of rooms, not including bathrooms, cloakrooms or toilets.
- The other, more sophisticated measure is the 'bedroom standard' which compares the actual number of bedrooms a household has with a standard number that takes into consideration the gender, ages and relationships between household members. The bedroom standard is used by the Scottish Household Condition Survey (SHCS), and by many landlords in allocating property.

*'There is nothing I like about where I live...I share the flat with my brother, and my mother and her boyfriend have to sleep in the living room'* Sushi, age 9

*'I don't like where I live because it is too small and I don't have my own bedroom'* Kelly, age 12

*'We like our new place. We've got our own room and now we have space to play and have our toys'* Whitney, age 6

Using the bedroom standard for example the standard number of bedrooms for a married couple with two boys, aged 8 and 12 and a 14 year old girl would be 3: one for the married couple, one for the two boys because they are of the same gender and under 21 and one for the girl because children over the age of 10 of different genders should not share a room.

In 2008, 43,000 children were living in overcrowded conditions.<sup>4</sup> Although this means that children live in just under half (42 per cent) of all overcrowded households it still represents enough children to fill more than 250 primary schools in Scotland.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Data from *Scottish House Condition Survey, 2008*

<sup>5</sup> Scottish Government (2009) *Pupils in Scotland, 2008*

## Fuel poverty

The term 'fuel poverty' applies to households that would be required to spend more than 10 per cent of their income on all household fuel use to heat their home to an adequate level.

In Scotland, more than one in ten (128,000) children is living in fuel poverty.<sup>6</sup> This is enough children to fill the stadiums of both Celtic and Rangers. Lone parent families are particularly affected by fuel poverty. One lone parent family in every four (24,000) is fuel poor.<sup>7</sup>

In the last year there has been a 23 per cent rise in the number of households with children who are fuel poor. This rise will largely be because fuel prices last year rose faster than peoples' incomes.<sup>8</sup> It is low income families that are at greatest risk of fuel poverty and often have to choose between essential household items or living in an adequately heated home. They tend to have to pay more for their gas and electricity because they often opt for pre-payment meters, to help with budgeting, but which means they pay 8-10 per cent more for their fuel bills than those paying by direct debit.<sup>9</sup>

## Failing the Scottish Housing Quality Standard

All social housing must pass the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015. Private owners and private landlords are under no obligation to bring their properties up to a standard which meets the SHQS. The Standard requires dwellings to be above a Tolerable Standard, free from serious disrepair, energy efficient, with modern facilities and services and healthy, safe and secure.

Although more homes are now passing the SHQS, it still remains that 60 per cent (577,000) of children are living in homes that are below the SHQS.<sup>10</sup>

*'The rooms are very dirty cos when it rains the water comes through my window even when it's closed'* Sushi, age 9

*'There are still rats in the house....when we first moved into the house we were all getting bitten by fleas..and we weren't feeling very well after being bitten'* Tammy, age 7

<sup>6</sup> Data from *Scottish House Condition Survey 2008*

<sup>7</sup> Scottish Government (2009) *Scottish House Condition Survey: Key Findings for 2008*

<sup>8</sup> Gas and electricity costs rose by about 13 per cent, compared to a rise in household income of about a 2 per cent over the same period. Scottish Government (2009) *Scottish House Condition Survey: Key Findings for 2008*

<sup>9</sup> Save the Children (2007) *The Poverty Premium: How poor households pay more for essential goods and services*

<sup>10</sup> Data from *Scottish House Condition Survey 2008*

## Condensation and damp

There are 126,000 children who live in homes that have condensation in at least one room and 61,000 children whose homes are affected by rising or penetrating damp.<sup>11</sup> These children are at a greater risk of experiencing asthma and other respiratory problems.

The number of children who live in homes that are damp, have condensation or both is 155,000.<sup>12</sup> This is the same as if everyone in Dundee were living in places with damp or condensation problems.

## Children with no permanent home

Homelessness refers to anyone who does not have a home; you do not have to be sleeping on the streets to be homeless. A homeless family may be sleeping at a friend's place, staying in a bed and breakfast hotel or hostel, living in overcrowded or unsuitable accommodation or being forced to leave their home. Homelessness figures refer to those who have been accepted as homeless by a local authority – in reality there may be others who are homeless who are not known by their local authority.

Approximately 22,000 children were homeless in 2008-09, which is very similar to the number in 2007-08. Sixty children a day are still being made homeless somewhere in Scotland, enough children to fill three primary one classes every day.<sup>13</sup>

Although figures suggest a slight decline in the number of children who are homeless over the last year the longer term picture is quite different. In the last five years the number of people becoming homeless has fallen by six per cent yet the number

Children want to live in a friendly, safe area near to school and things to do:

*'It's quite boring where we play. They should build a wee park and a community centre, ...they should do more stuff near where we live like hop scotch, games and a hall for dancing.'* Amelia, age 9

*'Children need to feel safe and happy. Make sure they are in a safe area'* Glasgow group discussion

*'School is very important to me. I really like it and it's a really good school. I don't want to leave.'* Saskia, age 9

*'I don't like that I have a long journey to school'* John, age 12

<sup>11</sup> Data from *Scottish House Condition Survey 2008*

<sup>12</sup> Data from *Scottish House Condition Survey 2008*

<sup>13</sup> Own calculation. Scottish Government (2009) *Pupils in Scotland 2008*; Data from Scottish Government (2009) *Operation of the Homeless Persons legislation in Scotland: national and local authority analyses 2008-09. Detailed Tables*. Referred to hereafter Scotland Government (2009)

of homeless families with children has risen by seven per cent in the same period.<sup>14</sup> The largest rise has been in the number of lone parent families who are homeless, rising from 9,466 families in 2003-4 to 10,249 in 2008-9.<sup>15</sup>

An explanation for this is that while there has traditionally been a strong legislative duty and policy assumption to provide permanent accommodation to homeless families with children, this has not always been the case for households without children. Most homeless households without children have only been entitled to permanent accommodation with the introduction of duties in 2002 to ensure that all unintentionally homeless households have a right to a home by 2012. This lack of rights prior to the 2012 legislation led to a focus on finding innovative responses to prevent homelessness for households without children, in a way that has not existed for households with children. Therefore this group alongside their new legal rights to housing also have the benefit of a history of prevention services in a way that does not exist for families with children. A fall in overall homelessness compared to a rise in homeless families with children suggests a need for more prevention services that focus on the issues faced by families.

Nicola and her two sons, Calum age 16 and James age 4 became homeless after her relationship with her partner broke down. He was the owner of the house and moved out. However he decided he wanted to get the property back and served notice on Nicola to leave the house so that he could sell it.

Nicola went to the council for help when she and her children became homeless and was assessed as being in priority need. With support from Shelter, Nicola moved into a privately rented flat in December 2008 until a property with the council became available. This was a very unsettling time for Nicola and the children. Towards the end of 2009 Nicola was offered a local authority flat in an area where she is close to family and friends.

Nicola said: *'Being homeless was really unsettling for my children and they had to deal with a lot of upheaval. I'm so glad we have somewhere we are settled now and can look forward to the future.'*

<sup>14</sup> Data from Scottish Government (2009)

<sup>15</sup> Data from Scottish Government (2009)



## Reason for homelessness

Children live in nearly half (47 per cent) of all households who are made homeless due to domestic abuse or external harassment.<sup>16</sup> Despite the high representation of children in these households the main causes of homelessness for families with children are a household dispute or relationship breakdown (18 per cent), being asked to leave their accommodation (17 per cent) and domestic abuse (16 per cent).<sup>17</sup> In a further seven per cent of households rent arrears or mortgage default was the main reason a family with children was homeless, accounting for nearly 1,300 families made homeless.<sup>18</sup> Financial difficulties, debt or unemployment was cited as a contributory factor for 15 per cent of families.

## Homelessness and family types

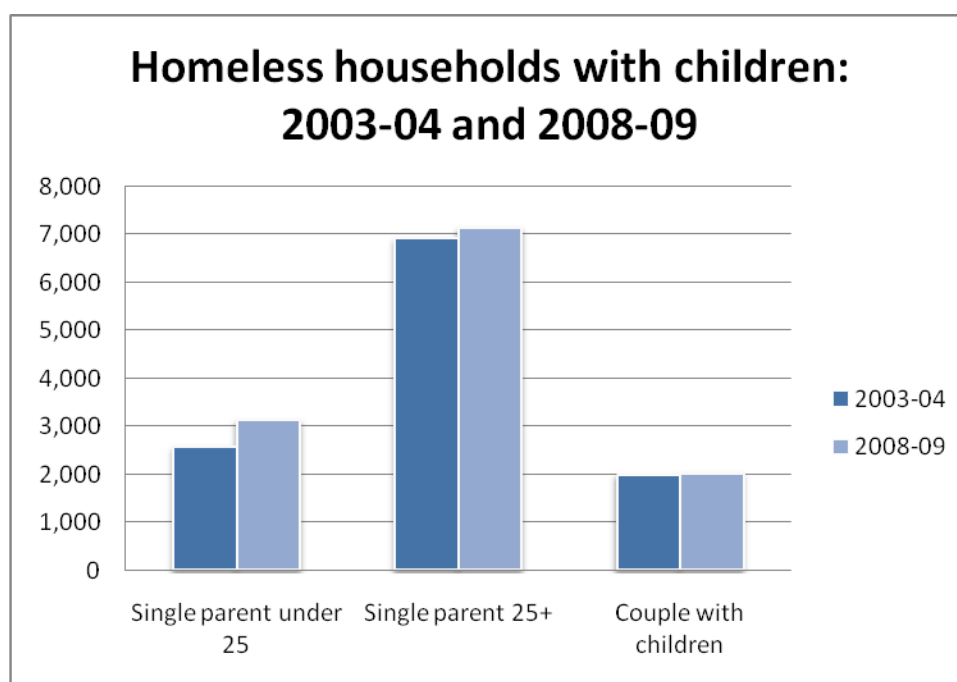


Figure 1

Figure 1 shows the types of households with children assessed as homeless and the rise in the last five years. Lone parents head up over 80 per cent of homeless households with children. Lone parent families are over represented within the homeless population. They

<sup>16</sup> Data from Scottish Government (2009)

<sup>17</sup> Data from Scottish Government (2009)

<sup>18</sup> Not all families who are evicted will present as homeless so this figure does not represent all families evicted from social or privately owned housing. Data from Scottish Government (2009)

are the second largest type of homeless household, accounting for 24 per cent of all homeless households despite only representing five per cent of all households in Scotland.

Nearly half of homeless children are under five years old. A breakdown of dependent children in families assessed as homeless shows that 44 per cent are aged 0-4, 35 per cent are aged 5-11, 16 per cent are aged 12-15 and five per cent are aged 16-18.<sup>19</sup>

### Temporary accommodation

Children often have to spend months, even years in 'temporary' houses waiting to move into a permanent home. Some families will move several times while in temporary accommodation. Temporary accommodation varies widely in type and standard. In general it will be furnished flats or houses, owned by a council, housing association or private landlord. In an emergency situation families may be placed in bed and breakfast accommodation for the short-term. Families can find themselves being placed out of their local area far from the support of families and friends, with long journeys to and from school. There are children in two (38 per cent) out of every five households in temporary accommodation.<sup>20</sup>

Children want to have a home and to move less:

*'I was sad when I had to move house'*  
Gordon, age 12

*'If we had to move I would cry. I've moved five times'* Bart, age 7

*'I dislike that since I was born I have moved eight times'* John, age 12

*'We would like to move house less as it's sad to leave friends behind who mean something to you'* Glasgow group discussion

*'I don't want a house, I want a home!'*  
Amelia, age 9

There has been a dramatic rise in the number of homeless families with children literally waiting for a permanent home. The last three years have seen a 37 per cent rise in the number of families with children living in temporary accommodation, compared to a rise of 19 per cent for all other groups over the same time period.<sup>21</sup> This means that the number of families with children in temporary accommodation is rising at a faster rate than other groups and highlights the pressure being placed on housing supply for more suitable housing for families with children.

<sup>19</sup> Data from Scotland *Operation of the homeless persons legislation in Scotland: 2008-09*

<sup>20</sup> There were 3,825 households with children in temporary accommodation on 31 March, 2009 compared with 2,785 on 31 March, 2006. Data from Scottish Government (2009)

<sup>21</sup> Data from Scottish Government (2009) *Operation of the homeless persons legislation in Scotland: 2008-09, 4 September 2009*

Using the latest snapshot figures from the Scottish Government there were 6,268 children living in temporary accommodation on 31 March 2009.<sup>22</sup> The majority (88 per cent or 5,488) were staying in local authority or housing association housing, ten per cent (608) were in private rented accommodation, two per cent (103) were in bed and breakfast hotels and a further one per cent (69) in hostels.<sup>23</sup>

### Homeless children in unsuitable temporary accommodation

Homeless children continue to stay in bed and breakfast hotels despite the introduction of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order (2004) which effectively bans its use for families with children, except in specific circumstances. Bed and breakfast hotels that accept homeless people are a specialist type of accommodation. The standard of the rooms may be poor, bathroom facilities may have to be shared and there are usually no cooking facilities.

Although there is considerable variation in the figures due to the relatively small number of breaches of this Order it is clear that the problem of children being placed in bed and breakfast hotels still persists and shows no sign of declining. A look at the average breaches over the last four years shows that at any one time there are approximately 47 homeless families with children staying in bed and breakfast accommodation that is deemed unsuitable.<sup>24</sup> On 31 March, 2009 a further 86 families with children were staying in bed and breakfast hotels but without breaching the Order.<sup>25</sup> The Order is not breached if a family is

Children want to live near friends, family and have friendly neighbours:

*'A good home is meeting new friends, having good neighbours...a good area and nothing to bother you and you feel welcome'* Michael, age 10

*'I don't like where I live...I have no friends at school and I miss my friends'* Sushi, age 9

*'It's important to be near family cos they can help us'* Lulu, age 10

*'It's important that children have a lot of friends where they are about to be living. I don't have any friends. It's important for children to have decent friends who are going out to play all the time'* Nicky, age 10

*'There's another thing that makes a good home...the people that are in it'* Zoe, age 11

<sup>22</sup> Scottish Government (2009) *Operation of the homeless persons legislation in Scotland: 2008-09, 4 September 2009*

<sup>23</sup> Scottish Government (2009) *Operation of the homeless persons legislation in Scotland: 2008-09, 4 September 2009*

<sup>24</sup> Data from Scottish Government (2009) *Operation of the homeless persons legislation in Scotland: 2008-09, 4 September 2009*

<sup>25</sup> Scottish Government (2009) *Scottish Government (2009) Operation of the homeless persons legislation in Scotland: 2008-09, 4 September 2009*

in bed and breakfast accommodation for less than two weeks or where a family has made a genuine choice to stay beyond this time rather than move into other suitable accommodation that has been offered to them by the council.

Susan\* looks after her two grandchildren and lives with them and her husband. After living in the same family home for many years, her and her family were forced to flee because of neighbour's threatening behaviour.

The family were in temporary hostel-type accommodation for 7 weeks before being housed in a temporary two bedroom flat. This was cramped for the family to stay in and there was no central heating and severe condensation, damp and even slugs in the property.

It was a very difficult and unsettling time for the children and they were unwell a lot with sickness and diarrhoea and chesty coughs. The children also had to commute to the other side of town to school and missed their friends. After 7 months in the flat and no suitable alternative accommodation being offered, the family have now had to move back to their own house but luckily have not experienced any further problems with their neighbours so far. The children are happy to be back near their school and their friends.

Susan said: *'Living in the temporary flat with terrible damp was a nightmare and especially hard on the children. I'm so glad we are out of there now and hope that we never have to live anywhere like that again. No-one should have to live in those conditions.'*

### Eviction of children and their families

Families can be evicted even if there are children in the home. In fact approximately a third of all households evicted by a social landlord have children in them.<sup>26</sup> In 2008-09 an estimated 1,700 children lost their homes due to eviction. This is the equivalent of nearly five children every day in Scotland being put at risk of homelessness because they have been evicted or forced to abandon their home by their landlord.<sup>27</sup> The majority of evictions are for rent arrears.

A best value audit conducted by Stirling Council of evictions that took place in 2008 found that children were in nearly half of all households evicted for rent arrears. The average cost of each eviction was found to be over £5,000 with costs continuing to rise the longer families

<sup>26</sup> Communities Scotland (2005) *Eviction in practice*

<sup>27</sup> Using data from Communities Scotland (2005) *Eviction in practice*; Scottish Government (2009) *Housing Statistics for Scotland*; Scottish Housing Regulator (2009) *Annual Performance and Statistical Return (APSR)*

spend in temporary accommodation. As well as being expensive eviction is not an effective method of getting rents paid or recovering arrears and can have a far reaching impact on children's lives.<sup>28</sup> These findings put into question whether the eviction of families with children is ever the right course of action to tackle rent arrears.

## Homeless young people

Despite a very slight fall in the number of young people, aged 16-24, who became homeless last year it is still the case that 20 young people in every 1000 young people in Scotland become homeless.<sup>29</sup> Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that the rate of homelessness among young people in Scotland is three times higher than in England.<sup>30</sup> Although this may highlight greater need in Scotland the report explains this can be accounted for by the wider priority need categories in Scotland compared to England.

Homelessness compounds a number of the problems faced by young people. This is particularly evident with mental health problems and/or the onset of (or exacerbation of existing) substance misuse problems. There is particularly strong evidence that homelessness impedes young people's participation in employment, education or training. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2008)

Young people are still vastly over represented in the homeless population. More than one in every three homeless households is headed by a young person under 25. Further, single young people represent 24 per cent of all homeless households but only three per cent of all households in Scotland are headed by a single person under 25.<sup>31</sup>

A higher proportion of young people are being given priority need status compared to five years ago (64 per cent in 2003-04 compared to 78 per cent in 2008-09).<sup>32</sup> This should be expected with the widening of the priority need category which means all unintentionally homeless households will have a right to a home by 2012.

<sup>28</sup> For more information see Shelter (2009) *Eviction of children and families: the impact and the alternatives*. Available at:

[http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_library/policy\\_library\\_folder/eviction\\_of\\_children\\_and\\_families\\_the\\_impact\\_and\\_the\\_alternatives](http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/policy_library_folder/eviction_of_children_and_families_the_impact_and_the_alternatives)

<sup>29</sup> Data from *Operation of the homeless persons legislation in Scotland: 2008-09, 4 September 2009*; GROS (2009) *Mid-2008 Population Estimates Scotland*

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2008) *Youth and homelessness in the UK*

<sup>31</sup> Data from Scottish Government (2009) *Operation of the homeless persons legislation in Scotland: 2008-09, 4 September 2009*; SCROL (2001) *S05 Age of Household Reference Person (HRP) by sex and living arrangements*. Available at [www.scrol.gov.uk](http://www.scrol.gov.uk)

<sup>32</sup> Data from Scottish Government (2009)

## Reason for homelessness

The most common reason for homelessness among young people is relationship breakdown, typically with parents or step-parents. For many this is a consequence of long-term conflict within the home and often involving violence.<sup>33</sup>

Nearly half (48 per cent) of young homeless people were living with their parents or family before becoming homeless.<sup>34</sup> In 2008, 39 per cent of young people, aged 16-24 become homeless because they were asked to leave their accommodation, another 17 per cent due to a household dispute or relationship breakdown and nine per cent because of domestic abuse.<sup>35</sup>

## Homeless young people and household type

There tends to be a view that the majority of homeless young people are men when in fact if you consider homeless young people who have children then most households are headed up by a woman. More than half (58 per cent) of young homeless households are headed by a woman. This is illustrated in figure 2 which also shows that the most homeless young people are single (65 per cent), 22 per cent are lone parents and five per cent are young couples with children.<sup>36</sup>

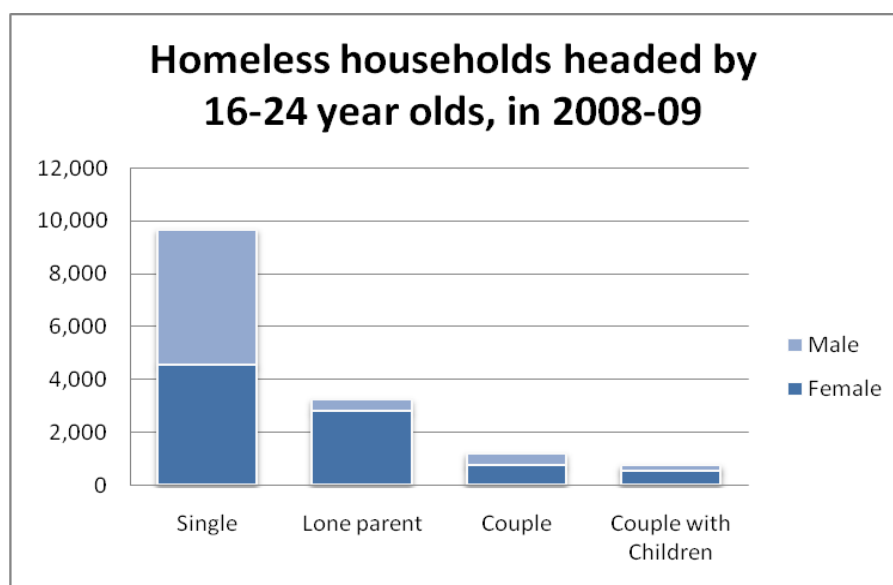


Figure 2

<sup>33</sup> JRF (2008) *Youth and homelessness in the UK*

<sup>34</sup> Scottish Government (2009) *A National Statistics Publication for Scotland, 4 September 2009. Operation of the Homeless Persons Legislation in Scotland: 2008-09*

<sup>35</sup> Data from Scottish Government (2009)

<sup>36</sup> Data from Scottish Government (2009) *Operation of the homeless persons legislation in Scotland: 2008-09, 4 September 2009*

## What can be done?

It does not seem much to ask that every child and young person has a decent home to live in, yet the stark reality is that while some progress has been made there are still thousands of children and young people without a warm, safe or permanent home.

Shelter believes it is morally right and economically sensible to invest now in addressing bad housing and homelessness to remove the disadvantage caused by poor housing and help lift children out of poverty.

There are five areas of action Shelter Scotland would like to see for children and young people in Scotland:

- Ensure that as a matter of urgency the Scottish Government publish and ensure the implementation its guidance on acting in the best interests of children facing homeless to ensure children's needs are prioritised
- More high quality housing designed for young people and families with children, in areas they want to live, to address the backlog of children living in temporary accommodation.
- An amendment to the current Housing Bill going through Parliament that would mean all homeless households would firstly, get a support assessment at the time of making an application and secondly, that services are provided which meet that assessment. This would help to ensure families and young people can keep and maintain their tenancy and help prevent repeat homelessness.
- All evictions from social tenancies for families to be a genuine 'last resort' taking into consideration the impact eviction will have on the well-being of children in the household and a look at the effectiveness of dealing with the problems leading to eviction.
- Improved quality of temporary accommodation through the introduction of minimum standards all temporary accommodation has to meet.

For further information please contact Jessie Crawford, Children's Service Policy and Practice Coordinator, on 0344 515 2472 or at [Jessie\\_Crawford@shelter.org.uk](mailto:Jessie_Crawford@shelter.org.uk)

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