
HOW DO PEOPLE LEAVE HOMELESSNESS SERVICES?

Key points:

- 68% of households assessed as homeless go on to secure settled accommodation.
- Contact is lost with 14% of households assessed as homeless.
- Outcomes vary considerably between households assessed as intentionally homeless and those assessed as unintentionally homeless.

The official statistics record the outcomes of all households assessed as homeless: the situation of the household at the point at which the local authority decides it has fulfilled its statutory duty to provide support.

Intentionality

Local authorities have different duties to households that are assessed as unintentionally homeless, compared to those that are assessed as intentionally homeless. A household is assessed as either intentionally or unintentionally homeless, based on whether or not they are deemed to have **“deliberately done or failed to do anything which led to the loss of accommodation.”**²⁷ Households that are deemed *intentionally* homeless have a right to a lower level of support than those that are deemed unintentionally homeless. If a household is assessed as unintentionally homeless, they have a right to settled accommodation. If a household is assessed as intentionally homeless, the local authority has a duty to provide them with temporary accommodation, advice and assistance to help them secure alternative accommodation.

²⁷ Scottish Government (2018) [Homelessness in Scotland 2017-18. 'Summary of current legislation'](#)

Outcomes vary significantly by intentionality decision

With far higher rates of lost contact among intentionally homeless households

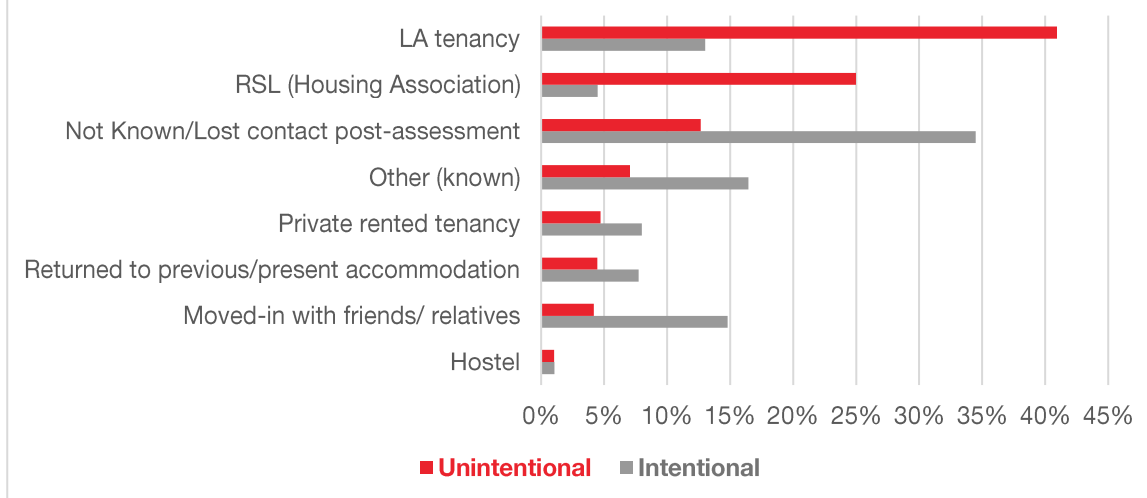


Chart 51: Percentage of households assessed as intentionally and unintentionally homeless who recorded each outcome, 2018-19.

The chart above shows, unsurprisingly, that households assessed as unintentionally homeless have far higher rates of social housing as an outcome. It also shows that local authorities are far more likely to lose contact with households assessed as intentionally homeless; perhaps because the household knows the local authority has no duty to provide permanent accommodation.

Chart 51 shows that 8% of households found to be intentionally homeless, and 4% of households found to be unintentionally homeless, **return to their previous accommodation**. The statistics on their own don't tell us whether this is the best outcome for the household. For example, it could be considered a positive outcome for the households if rent arrears are sorted, or if a dispute within the households has been permanently and safely resolved and therefore that prevention of homelessness has worked well. However, for others, it might mean returning to unsafe or unsuitable accommodation for example a household where there is domestic abuse or overcrowding.

It is also concerning that 1% of households (309 households in 2018-19) have an outcome recorded as 'hostel'. 293 of these related to households who were found to be unintentionally homeless; a hostel outcome for these households is not in line with the local authority's duty to provide permanent accommodation. Councils can only record 'hostel' as a final outcome for a household found to be unintentionally homeless if this is a permanent accommodation or if the accommodation was arranged by the applicant themselves. Regardless, Shelter Scotland would not consider a hostel to be a positive long- or short-term

outcome for a client making a homeless application. 86% of these 309 'hostel' outcomes were recorded by Glasgow City Council.

Settled accommodation

The proportion of outcomes which show that the household has secured settled accommodation (meaning a local authority or housing association tenancy or a private rented sector property) is increasing, and now stands at 68% of all households who are assessed as homeless. However, this varies greatly by intentionality.

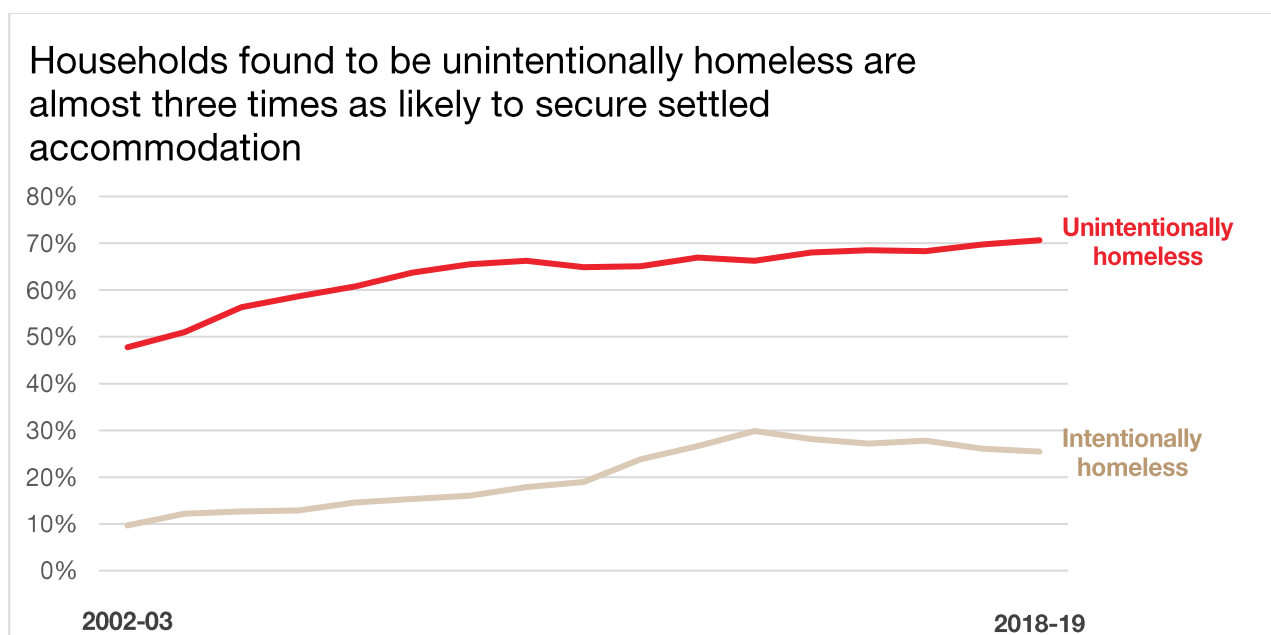


Chart 52: Percentage of households who secure settled accommodation, broken down by intentionality decision

In April 2019, the Scottish Government consulted on the future of intentionality in the homelessness system, and in July 2019, announced that the duty on local authorities to investigate whether households were 'intentionally' homeless will be replaced by a discretionary power at the end of 2019. Shelter Scotland welcomes this change, but advocates for the removal of the intentionality test in its entirety.²⁸

²⁸ Shelter Scotland (2019) [Response to the Scottish Government's Consultation on Local Connection and Intentionality](#)

The above charts therefore show the material change in outcomes the removal of the intentionality clause could bring about for households currently assessed as intentionally homeless.

How does this vary across the country?

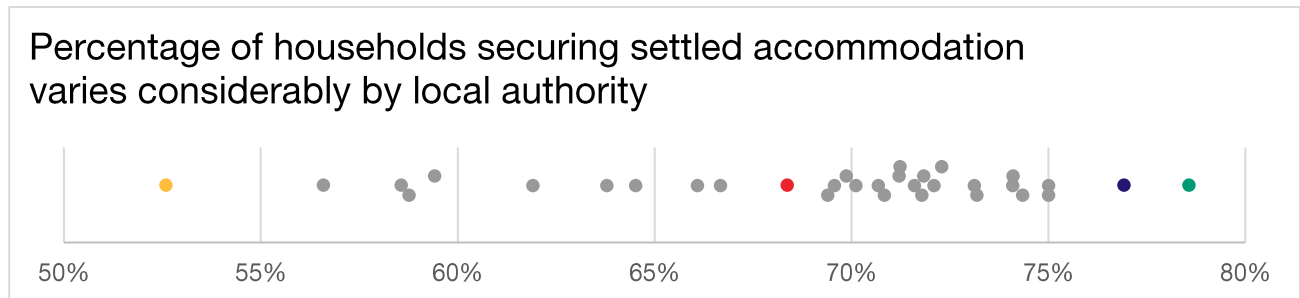


Chart 53: Percentage of households assessed as homeless who secured settled accommodation, by local authority, 2018-19.

Among individual local authorities, **North Ayrshire** has the lowest rate of households securing settled accommodation at 53%. The **Scottish Borders** and **Perth & Kinross** have the highest proportions, at 77% and 78% respectively.

Lost contact

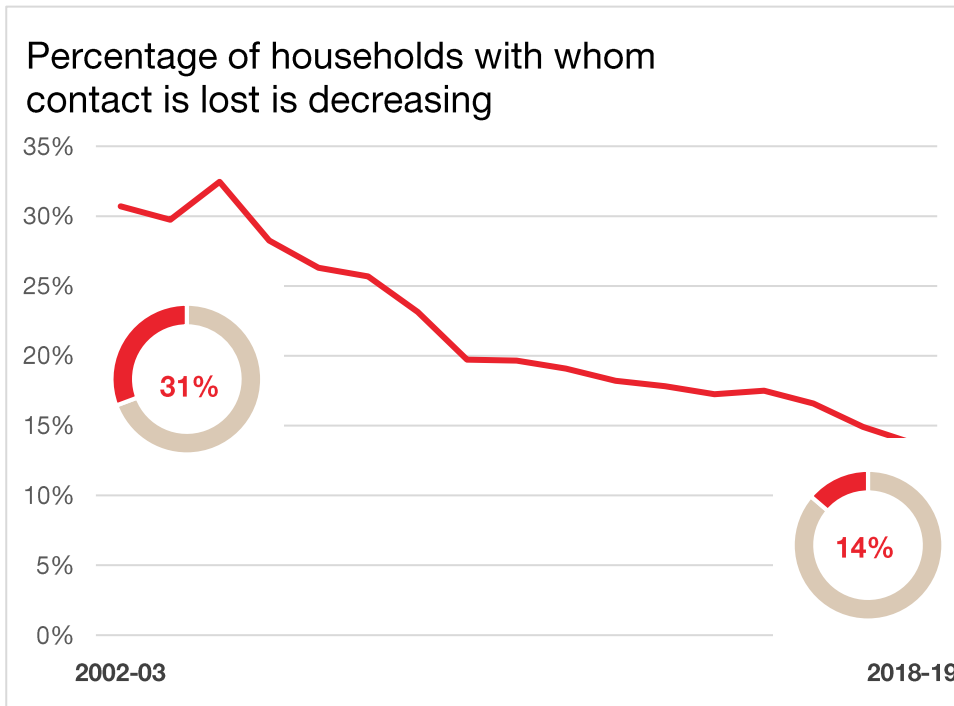


Chart 54: Percentage of households assessed as homeless with whom contact was lost, 2002-03 to 2018-19.

Contact was lost with 14% of households assessed as homeless in 2018-19. This proportion has halved since 2002-03.

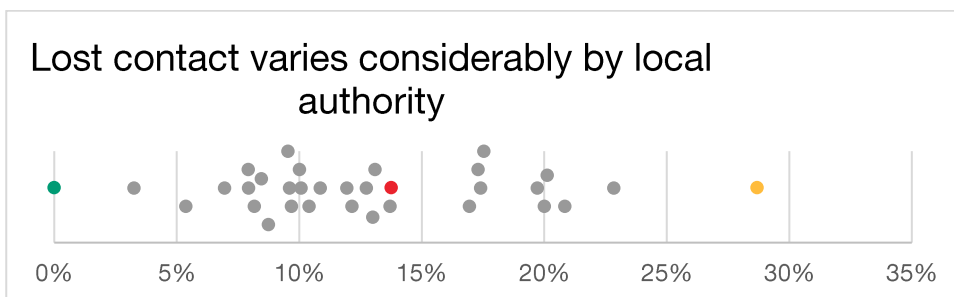


Chart 55: Proportion of households assessed as homeless with whom contact was lost, 2018-19, by local authority.

However, there is considerable variation by local authority. In **Orkney**, contact was lost with no households, whereas in **Midlothian**, contact was lost with 29% of households. This is concerning, as early intervention is key when addressing housing issues in order to prevent those issues from worsening, and it is impossible to know whether contact was lost following the household resolving their housing issue of their own accord, or whether the housing issue continues and/or worsens.