

Impact analysis of existing homelessness legislation in Wales

A report to inform the review of homelessness legislation in Wales

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Introduction

Recent statistics indicate increases in the number of people presenting and being accepted as homeless by Welsh local authorities and there is major concern that this trend is likely to accelerate given the wider economic context, including the austerity measures. Therefore it is timely that the Welsh Government has commissioned a review of homelessness legislation in Wales in order to explore whether and how the existing legislative framework might be changed in order to minimise homelessness. The Welsh Government commissioned Cardiff University and partners to lead on this review which has been divided into three key stages:

Stage One: An assessment of the impacts of the existing legislative framework

Stage two: Development of improved legislative framework options

Stage three: Assessment of the impacts of improved legislative framework options

This report presents the findings of the first stage of the review: the assessment of the impacts of the existing legislative framework. The purpose of this early report is twofold: 1] to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the existing framework and 2] to provide a baseline against which any proposed changes can be compared.

Research methods

The impact assessment of the existing legislation primarily draws upon the analysis of secondary data, both qualitative and quantitative. This brief section provides a summary of the methods used; namely a literature review and analysis of various sources of administrative data. It was determined that no new primary qualitative research was needed at this stage as much is already known from the existing literature.

Literature review

A considerable volume of largely qualitative research already points towards some of the main strengths and weaknesses of the existing legislative framework in Wales. Hence, a basic review was undertaken of twenty one existing studies on homelessness in Wales.

Administrative data analysis: homeless households

In order to quantify the impacts of the existing legislative framework, data was sought on all households experiencing homelessness in Wales. Whilst Welsh Government statutory homelessness statistics constitute the main and most widely cited source of information on homelessness in Wales, it is recognised that this data does not account for all homeless households; many others will not present to the local authority or they will present and only basic information will be returned to Welsh Government because they are not in priority need.

In response to this challenge, administrative data was drawn from three different sources, each providing an insight into a particular group of homeless households. When compiled the three data sets provided a clear overview of the characteristics and experiences of homeless households in Wales. The following table illustrates which sources of data were used and for which households. It also comments on the validity of these imperfect data sources.

Data source	Households represented in the data	Data validity
WHO 12 statutory homelessness data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Households in priority need and not intentionally so	This data is returned to Welsh Government by local authorities. It only includes households for whom a statutory decision was made
Case file data from six local authorities (cases closed Apr 11 – Sep 11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All households for whom a homelessness decision is madeHomelessness prevention cases	Whilst data was requested from all local authorities, only six authorities returned data including all necessary variables. The authorities

		include: 4 rural/2 urban; 2 north/2 south/1 west/1 mid
Sample of case file data from a direct-access non-statutory homeless day centre (cases closed Apr 11 – Sep 11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Households not in priority need, the majority of whom are not accounted for in statutory data 	The day centre case files are opened for service users whose needs are either more time consuming or more demanding, therefore more vulnerable households are likely to be over represented

Administrative data analysis: legal challenges

Additional administrative data was also analysed from a housing advocacy organisation in Wales. Their case files were reviewed for the same sample period (Apr 11 – Sep 11) and cases were recoded depending on the level of any challenge made against a local authority homelessness decision.

Chapter 1

Literature review

Key findings

- Whilst studies appear to show the general legislative framework to be effective in dealing with homelessness for many households, there are concerns that the framework leads to the allocation of resources on processing decisions rather than meeting the needs of individuals.
- Despite strong evidence on the value of a wide range of homelessness prevention interventions, there is some concern that the legislation does not effectively support prevention activity.
- Studies suggest that current priority need groups are largely appropriate, although there is some concern that vulnerable single adults are often left without appropriate accommodation and support and there is also concern about the effectiveness of including prison leavers as a priority need group.
- There is some qualitative evidence to support the claim that being found intentionally homeless is detrimental to the household and this is perceived to disproportionately affect some households such as young people.
- There appears to be some consensus that the Local connection test should remain and perhaps be extended to establish a connection of 12 months. There is some concern that the test is used as a gatekeeping tool and that it restricts the ability of a homeless person to move to seek employment.
- There are strong concerns about how legislation is interpreted and applied differently across Wales, particularly in relation to homelessness prevention, priority need and intentionality.
- Studies generally note that there is a lack of suitable accommodation for homeless households and that particular groups such as prison leavers, and those found intentionally homeless, face poor housing outcomes. Studies found that there is some appetite in Wales for making use of a wider range of accommodation, including private rented housing.
- Appropriate housing-related support is perceived to be key to successful housing outcomes for many households.
- Many studies emphasise the need to look at homelessness in the context of other forms of social exclusion and wider support needs because they are inextricably linked. There are concerns that homelessness lies largely with the housing department of local authorities and there is limited interaction with other departments.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This literature review highlights what is already known about the impacts of the existing homelessness legislative framework in Wales, identifying its key strengths and weaknesses. Whilst the review focuses on the impacts of the legal framework, wider policy and practice-related findings are also examined as they may provide lessons for future legislative developments. Twenty one studies were examined (a summary of each study can be found in Appendix 1) and the findings are presented under eight key themes:

- Broad perspectives on the impacts of the legislation
- Homelessness prevention
- Priority need
- Intentionality
- Local connection
- Guidance, interpretation and consistency
- Housing outcomes
- Support

1.2 Broad perspectives on the impacts of the legislative framework

1.2.1 A number of studies concluded that one of the key strengths of the existing legislative framework is that it provides a safety net for the most vulnerable homeless people (Mackie and Hoffman 2011). Equally, most studies also indicate that there are areas of the legislation that require considerable improvement.

1.2.2 One key area of concern with the legislation is the way it and its implementation often lead to inappropriate allocation of resources, frequently in the direction of processes rather than to meet the needs of the people it is designed to help (Mackie & Hoffman 2011, Stirling ongoing, Stirling 2004, Pritchard 2007, NAFW Social Justice and Regeneration Committee 2007, Humphreys *et al* 2007). In particular these views related to prevention of homelessness, the definition and interpretation of priority need categories, and intentionality.

1.2.3 Many of the studies suggested that there needs to be an improvement in the links between homelessness legislation and other statutes such as Health, Mental Health, Criminal Justice and Social Care (Mackie & Hoffman 2011, Humphreys & Stirling 2008, Mackie 2008). Homelessness is repeatedly shown to be more than just a housing issue (Fitzpatrick *et al* 2011) and as such more joint working and links between different areas of legislation are advocated (Mackie & Hoffman 2011, Fitzpatrick *et al* 2001, Stirling 2004).

1.3 Homelessness prevention

1.3.1 Many of the studies reviewed emphasise the need for well planned prevention interventions in order to reduce homelessness and yet studies claim that current legislation does not encourage early intervention (Mackie & Hoffman 2011, Stirling ongoing, Mackie 2008, NAFW Social Justice and Regeneration Committee 2007, Quilgars *et al* 2008).

1.3.2 Wilcox *et al* (2008) suggest that since the introduction of the 'housing options' approach there has been a drop in statutory homelessness acceptances which would indicate the more prevention focused approach adopted in England and Wales is working. However, concerns have been raised about whether these figures actually represent a reduction in homelessness or if they arise at least in some part because Local Authorities are 'gatekeeping' which may lead to denial of applicants' legal rights.

1.3.3 Education has been identified in a number of studies as a way of preventing homelessness at an early stage (Mackie & Hoffman 2011, Stirling 2004, NAFW Social Justice and Regeneration Committee 2007, Humphreys *et al* 2007). Education could include elements of the curriculum on homelessness as well as teaching essential life skills such as money management, meal planning and hygiene.

- 1.3.4 Early identification of housing problems and mediation have also been highlighted as successful methods of preventing homelessness particularly for young people (NAfW Social Justice and Regeneration Committee 2007, Humphreys et al 2007).
- 1.3.5 Mortgage rescue schemes appear to have been successful in preventing homelessness on a small scale in Wales, allowing home owners to convert their owner occupied homes into social housing tenancies (Wilcox et al 2008). Despite the successes of mortgage rescue schemes, Pritchard (2008) claimed that more could be done to prevent homelessness amongst home owners by improving advice for people with mortgage arrears. The importance of high quality, timely advice has also been identified as particularly important in the prevention of homelessness amongst those leaving institutional care (Welsh Government 2004, Humphreys & Stirling 2008, Mackie 2008).
- 1.3.6 Stirling (ongoing) assessed a number of time-limited approaches to the prevention of homelessness, concluding that successful projects need to be mainstreamed and findings need to be disseminated nationally from these projects to enable good practice nationwide.

1.4 Priority need

- 1.4.1 Priority need categories have been examined in several research studies. Mackie & Hoffman (2011) found that most of the stakeholders in their study felt that the current priority need categories were acceptable, with the frequent exception of prison leavers. Many stakeholder sin the study also aspired to be able to help everyone but there were concerns about resource implications (Mackie & Hoffman 2011). Some stakeholders in the study were concerned that the current legislation on priority need incentivises appearing to be vulnerable in order to receive help.
- 1.4.2 Prison Leavers are one group where priority need status is especially controversial. A number of the studies report that many people in the public, as well as some of those within stakeholder organisations, do not feel this group should be given priority for housing over others; alternatively they should perhaps only be provided with accommodation with conditions attached (Mackie & Hoffman 2011). However, there are a number of studies providing evidence in support of maintaining the prison leaver priority need category as a way of reducing reoffending (Humphreys & Stirling 2008, Sykes 2011). Evidence has shown that if prisoners are able to feel settled and supported in suitable accommodation then they are less likely to offend (Humphrey's & Stirling 2008, Sykes 2011, Mackie 2008). The research also suggests that greater information and earlier intervention provided to prisoners prior to leaving prison could ensure homelessness is avoided once they are released (Humphreys & Stirling 2008, Mackie 2008).
- 1.4.3 A high proportion of the literature reviewed here relates to homelessness faced by young people. Many of these studies have reported views indicating that provision of services and help for young people experiencing homelessness, or who are at risk of experiencing homelessness, is not sufficient (Mackie & Hoffman 2011, Quilgars et al 2008, NAfW Social Justice and Regeneration Committee 2007).
- 1.4.4 Some studies have also commented on the lack of provision for other groups such as single homeless people (Mackie & Hoffman 2011, McDonagh 2011, Buchanan et al 2010) and for migrants (Radcliffe & Campbell 2010, Fitzpatrick et al 2011). Not all suggested they should necessarily be given priority status but that these groups may require more assistance than is currently available to them.

1.5 Intentionality

- 1.5.1 The reports have identified a number of issues with the definition and interpretation of the intentionality test. Moreover, there is agreement between most studies that being found intentionally homeless is detrimental to the household (Mackie & Hoffman 2011, Campbell 2011, Pritchard 2007).
- 1.5.2 In research carried out by Campbell (2011) and by Pritchard (2007) a number of stakeholders, including those from Local Authorities, felt that finding a person intentionally homeless was unhelpful and not only

has a negative impact on the household but could have financial impacts on other services in particular Social Services, Criminal Justice, Health, Emergency Accommodation and the Voluntary sector.

- 1.5.3 A number of reports have suggested that young people, up to the age of 25, and vulnerable people, should be exempt from intentionally homeless decisions because of their potential vulnerability (NAFW Social Justice and Regeneration Committee 2007, Buchanan et al 2010, Pritchard 2007).
- 1.5.4 The approach used in Scotland whereby people found intentionally homeless are given support for up to 12 months is viewed positively in a number of the studies reviewed here (Wilcox et al 2008, NAFW Social Justice and Regeneration Committee 2007). The provision of short-term accommodation for this group in Scotland removes the punitive element of the legislation and means that certain groups are not disproportionately negatively affected. Pritchard (2007) states reforming intentionality would enable Local Authorities to act more flexibly and proactively to help individuals.

1.6 Local connection

- 1.6.1 A few studies looked at the impact of the local connection test (Mackie & Hoffman 2011, Milbourne, Hughes & Hartwell 2006, and Inkson 2009). In a study by Mackie & Hoffman (2011) key stakeholders felt the local connection test was important however it should not be used to 'gatekeep'. Those interviewed for the study also felt that the most vulnerable people should continue to be exempt from the test. A few people interviewed remarked on the fact that the local connection test disproportionately affects homeless persons as compared to their housed counterparts with regard to their ability to move for employment purposes.
- 1.6.2 Inkson (2009) found that key stakeholders in six rural authorities thought that the period to establish local connection was too short and should be made longer (12months). Differences in opinion were found between Housing Officers who felt that recent migrants had little impact on the allocation of social housing and Assembly members who felt recent migrants had prevented local people from accessing social housing. The findings of this work are echoed in the report by Milbourne et al (2006); rural homelessness is primarily viewed as a 'non-local' problem although numbers of homeless amongst local verses non-local populations are roughly equal.

1.7 Guidance, interpretation and consistency

- 1.7.1 The literature repeatedly identifies incidences of different interpretations of legislation. Stirling (2004) found areas of concern in a number of authorities where people were being denied their legal rights by a number of factors including poor advice, misuse of exclusion policies and non-compliance with codes of guidance.
- 1.7.2 Studies particularly noted a need for a unified approach across Wales with regard to the prevention of homelessness and interpretation of priority need status and intentionality (Mackie & Hoffman 2011, Stirling 2004, Mackie 2008, Pritchard 2007 NAFW Social Justice and Regeneration Committee 2007).
- 1.7.3 With regard to Local Connection, Inkson (2009) found that although the six rural local authorities felt they need to take guidance into account; some degree of freedom is necessary and a blanket policy would restrict discretion.

1.8 Housing outcomes

- 1.8.1 Many studies report that there is a significant lack of appropriate and affordable accommodation available to re-house homeless people. Stakeholders in Mackie & Hoffman's (2011) study suggest that accommodation entitlements should be more flexible and should include the private rental sector but with close monitoring of standards and sustainability of the provision.
- 1.8.2 Accommodating people in B&B is largely perceived to be unsuitable for vulnerable homeless people and not a long term solution (Stirling 2004, Humphreys et al 2007). Quilgars et al (2008) report that there is a

major lack of suitable accommodation for young people. Humphreys and Stirling (2008) found that the accommodation and support accessed by offenders/ ex-offenders is also often inappropriate, not in the right place and not of the right type.

- 1.8.3 Campbell (2011) found that intentionally homeless households often experience negative housing outcomes. Forced to access the private rental sector, intentionally homeless households are more vulnerable to accepting substandard accommodation or to face issues of affordability. Failure to meet support needs of this group can obviously lead to repeat homelessness.
- 1.8.4 Opinions on the use of the private rental sector are mixed; some reports felt it had to be used in order to meet the needs of homeless people (Mackie & Hoffman 2011). However other reports noted it was not suitable for certain groups of homeless people such as young people (NAfW Social Justice and Regeneration Committee 2007, Quilgars et al 2008).
- 1.8.5 Suitability of accommodation is a major factor in reducing homelessness. If people can feel safe and at 'home' in a place it significantly resolves homelessness. Furthermore, for some vulnerable homeless households appropriate support was determined to be the key factor for positive outcomes (Welsh Assembly Government 2004, Mackie & Hoffman 2011, Sykes 2011, Mackie 2008).

1.9 Support

- 1.9.1 Many studies emphasise the need to look at homelessness in the context of other forms of social exclusion or other support needs because they are inextricably linked (Pritchard 2008, Mackie & Hoffman 2011, Campbell 2011, Mackie 2008, Fitzpatrick et al 2011, McDonagh 2011, Quilgars et al 2008, Buchanan et al 2010, Sykes 2011, Welsh Assembly Government 2004). Mackie & Hoffman (2011) report that current legislation does not put in place sufficient requirement for relevant and wider support to be provided.
- 1.9.2 Humphreys & Stirling (2008) found that there are gaps in provision of support for offenders/ex-offenders with high or complex needs. Without this alongside appropriate accommodation there are more likely to be negative outcomes in terms of community safety. This is supported by the work of other researchers such as Mackie (2008) and Sykes (2011).
- 1.9.3 Homelessness in all forms is repeatedly linked to the worsening of mental health, physical health and substance misuse. Fitzpatrick et al (2011) and McDonagh (2011) discovered that there was a huge overlap of people who had experienced homelessness and people who had experienced other forms of deep social exclusion such as institutional care and substance misuse. This supports the idea that responses to homelessness must be coordinated in order to succeed.
- 1.9.4 Mental health and substance misuse issues are also thought to worsen after a decision of intentional homelessness has been made; these issues are compounded by the lack of support available for people in this situation (Campbell 2011, Buchanan et al 2010).
- 1.9.5 A number of studies have remarked on the plight of young people who had not had the chance in life to develop skills necessary to live independently such as budgeting, meal planning and hygiene (Buchanan et al 2010). Supported accommodation has shown to be one solution to these issues.

1.10 Conclusion

- 1.10.1 This literature review provides a largely qualitative insight into the impacts and the limitations of the current legislation. It shows that the safety net provided by the legislation is perceived to be of significant value in meeting the needs of vulnerable homeless households. Despite this clear strength there are clearly identifiable deficiencies. Firstly, the legislation is not perceived to work effectively alongside homelessness prevention activity. Secondly, households who are not in priority need or who are found to be intentionally reportedly face negative housing outcomes. Moreover, prison leavers frequently lose their tenancies despite their priority need status.
- 1.10.2 One of the tensions underlying most studies is the resource limitations. Studies identify a lack of suitable accommodation for homeless households, with some suggesting that greater use might be made of the private rented sector in order to more effectively meet housing needs. The review also highlights the importance of wider support for households and the lack of clear linkages between housing and other local authority departments.
- 1.10.3 Whilst this review provides a useful starting point from which possible improvements can be developed, the vast majority of these studies are small-scale in their sample sizes and often focus on very particular groups of homeless people. In the remainder of this review of the impacts of the current homelessness legislation in Wales we aim to fill this knowledge gap by analysing administrative data on all forms of homelessness across Wales.

Chapter 2

Statutory homelessness decisions

Key findings

- In 2004/05 the number of homeless decisions increased significantly which reflects the introduction of additional priority need groups. As a result of increased prevention work, the homeless decisions then fell until recently when the number of decisions again began to rise.
- In 2010/11 nearly half of all households were owed an accommodation duty. However, one in five were homeless but not in priority need and were therefore owed no accommodation duty.
- Most households making a homeless application are older than 25 and white, whilst the gender split was roughly equal.
- A relatively high proportion of 16-17 year olds and females were determined to be in priority need and this reflects the impact of the priority need categories included in the legislative framework.
- Most households in priority need fall into a relatively small number of priority need categories; households with dependent children or a pregnant woman (46%), prison leavers (14%) and households fleeing domestic violence or threatened violence (11%).
- The most populated priority need groups are dominated by particular genders; females are more likely to be in priority need because of dependent children, or they are threatened with violence. Men form the majority of households where the priority is a mental illness/learning disability, leaving the armed forces, or leaving prison.
- Couples with dependent children predominantly become homeless due to the loss of rented or tied accommodation (48%). Single parent households face a wider range of causes (loss of rented accommodation, relationship breakdown, and parents/other relatives/friends no longer willing or able to accommodate). Nearly half of all single males in priority need became homeless as a result of leaving institution or care.
- Approximately 48% of priority need households were accommodated temporarily, whilst 53% of households in priority need but intentionally so were accommodated temporarily.
- There was a peak in bed and breakfast use and households homeless at home in 2004/05, which reflects the introduction of new priority need groups. Significant decreases in the use of these temporary accommodation types are evident after 2004/05 and to some extent this is likely to be the result of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2006. The reverse trend is seen in the use of private sector accommodation leased by local authorities and RSLs.

- Single person households (male and female) are more likely than those with dependent children to be accommodated in hostels and bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 79% of households spent less than six months in temporary accommodation and a further 13% spent less than one year there.
- More than 60% of households temporarily accommodated had settled accommodation when they left their temporary accommodation.
- Since 2004/05 approximately one quarter of all new social lettings have been made to homeless households.

2.1 Introduction

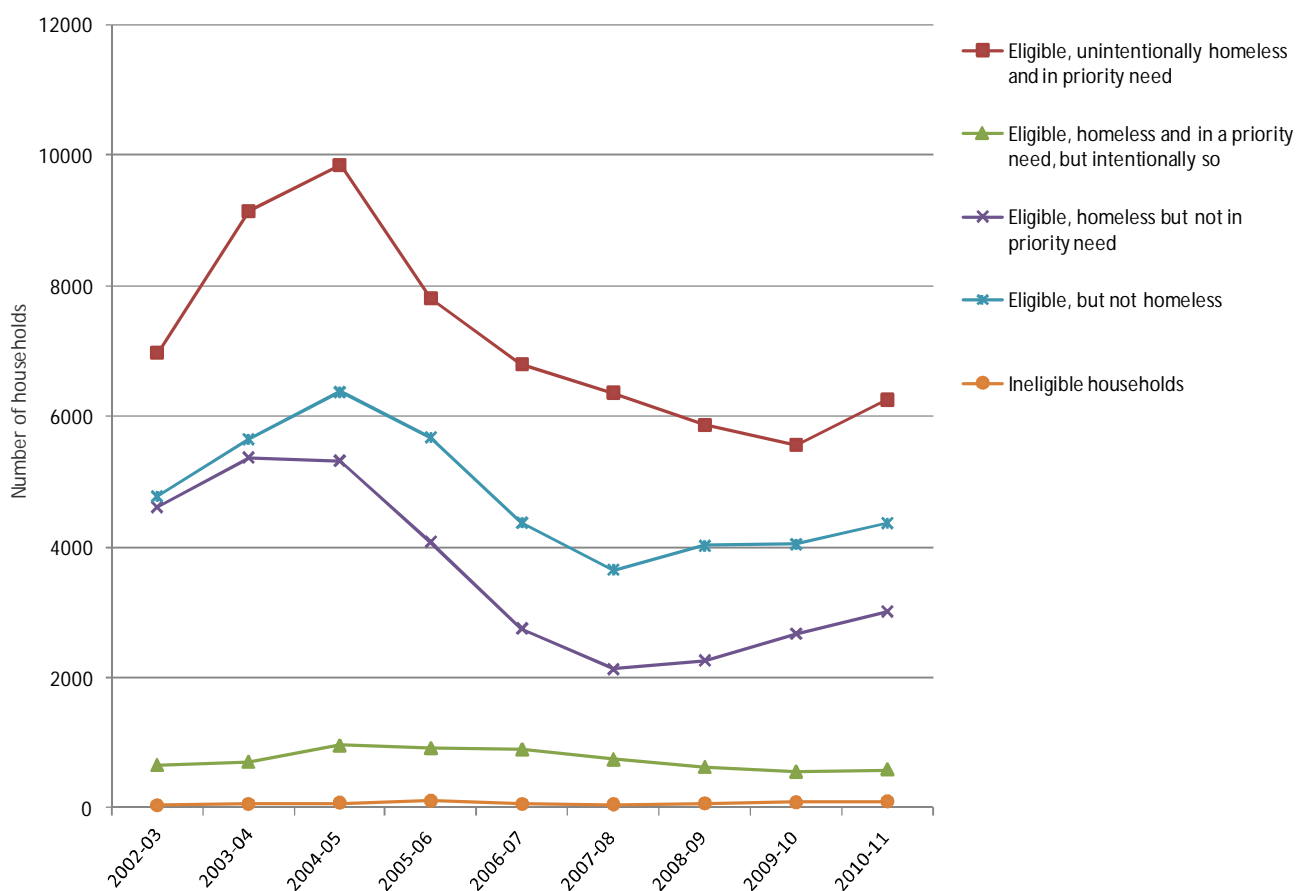
2.1.1 This chapter analyses WHO12 statutory homelessness data returned to the Welsh Government by all 22 local authorities in Wales. The data is used to determine who is presenting to local authorities as homeless, and what decisions are made about the assistance they will receive. Additional data is available on households found to be in priority need and this will be analysed to show their experiences in more detail.

2.2 Trends in homelessness

2.2.1 Figure 1 illustrates trends in local authority homelessness decisions between 2002/03 and 2010/11. There is a clear upward trend in the number of households eligible, homeless and in priority need, reaching a peak in 2004/05. This increase reflects the introduction of additional priority need categories in the legislation. The subsequent downward trend in decisions is almost certainly the result of increased homelessness prevention activity which, as will be discussed later, does not always result in a decision being made for a homeless household. The poor economic conditions currently faced in Wales and across the world, resulting in higher levels of unemployment are likely to be the cause of a recent upturn in the number of households determined to be in priority need.

2.2.2 In 2010/11, the period upon which the remainder of this chapter will focus, 44% of households were determined to be in priority need and a further 4% were in priority need but intentionally so. Therefore nearly half of all households were owed an accommodation duty. However, 21% of households were homeless and not in priority need so assistance would be limited for these households. The remaining 31% households were mostly eligible but not homeless.

Figure 1. Homeless decisions made by local authorities in Wales 2002/03 – 2010/11



2.3 Demographics of homeless people presenting to local authorities

- 2.3.1 Tables 1-3 show the age, gender and ethnicity of households who made a homeless application to a local authority in 2010/11. In relation to age, most homeless applications were made by households headed by a person 25 years and over (62%), a further 32% of applications were made by heads of household aged 18-24 and a minority (6%) were made by 16-17 year olds. The most notable difference between age groups was that nearly all 16-17 year olds who were homeless were found to be in priority need, whereas decisions for all other applicants reflected the general trends in decisions. This difference is a result of the legislation which categorises 16-17 year olds as vulnerable due to their young age.
- 2.3.2 The proportion of men and women making homeless applications was roughly equal but the decisions made about their status within the homelessness legislation differed. More than half of all women were determined to be in priority need, whereas this applied to only one third of all men. It is likely that the priority status of female headed households is actually a reflection of the priority given to households with dependent children, most of which are headed by women (discussed later in this chapter).
- 2.3.3 The vast majority of homeless households were white (92%) and the decisions made in relation to white and non-white households were very similar, with a slightly higher proportion of non-white households determined to be in priority need (50% compared to 43% for non-white households).

Table 1. Local authority homelessness decisions by age of head of household (2010/11)

DECISION	AGE					
	16-17		18-24		25 and over	
Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need	570	62%	1945	43%	3740	42%
Eligible, homeless and in a priority need, but intentionally so	30	3%	220	5%	340	4%
Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	0	0%	1010	22%	1995	22%
Eligible, but not homeless	315	34%	1310	29%	2735	31%
Ineligible households	0	0%	25	1%	80	1%
Total (sum = 100%)	915	6%	4510	32%	8890	62%

Table 2. Local authority homelessness decisions by gender of head of household (2010/11)

DECISION	GENDER			
	Male		Female	
Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need	2360	34%	3895	53%
Eligible, homeless and in a priority need, but intentionally so	295	4%	295	4%
Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	2255	33%	750	10%
Eligible, but not homeless	1975	28%	2385	32%
Ineligible households	45	1%	60	1%
Total (sum = 100%)	6930	48%	7385	52%

Table 3. Local authority homelessness decisions by ethnicity of head of household (2010/11)

DECISION	ETHNICITY			
	White		Non-white	
Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need	5485	43%	550	50%
Eligible, homeless and in a priority need, but intentionally so	560	4%	15	1%
Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	2635	21%	290	26%
Eligible, but not homeless	3975	31%	215	20%
Ineligible households	60	0%	30	3%
Total (sum = 100%)	12715	92%	1100	8%

2.4 Households accepted as homeless and in priority need

- 2.4.1 Additional data is returned to Welsh Government on the characteristics and experiences of households determined to be in priority need. Table 4 illustrates that nearly half of all households in priority need were a priority because the household included dependent children or a pregnant woman. Prison leavers were the second largest priority need group, constituting 14% of all households found to be in priority need, whilst fleeing domestic violence or threatened violence was also a large priority need group (11%). It is quite clear that most households in priority need fell into a relatively small number of priority need categories.
- 2.4.2 More detailed analysis of Table 4 reveals that two thirds of households in priority need because of dependent children or a pregnant woman were headed by a single woman. Households in priority need because they were fleeing domestic violence, or they were threatened with violence, were also predominantly headed by a female (86%). By contrast, men formed the majority of households where the priority was a mental illness/learning disability (61%), leaving the armed forces (80%), or leaving prison (92%). It is apparent that the most populated priority need groups (dependent children, prison leaver, fleeing domestic violence or threatened violence) were dominated by particular genders.
- 2.4.3 Having established that priority needs groups are characterised by particular household types, Table 5 shows why these different household types became homeless. Couples with dependent children predominantly became homeless due to the loss of rented or tied accommodation (48%). The importance of secure accommodation is clearly key to the prevention of homelessness for these households. Single parent households faced a wider range of causes, including the loss of rented accommodation but also relationship breakdown (violent and non-violent), and parents or other relatives and friends no longer willing or able to accommodate them. These trends were true for both female and male headed single parent households, although the vast majority of single parent households were female (94%).
- 2.4.4 The reasons for homelessness amongst single women in priority need differed slightly to those of single women with dependent children. Whilst a similar, although slightly lower proportion, were homeless because of a violent or non-violent relationship breakdown (29%), only 11% were homeless because of a loss of rented accommodation. Instead, approximately 40% of single women in priority need were homeless because parents or other relatives and friends were no longer willing or able to accommodate them. The reasons for homelessness amongst single men in priority need were markedly different to the reasons recorded for men with dependent children. Nearly half of all single males in priority need became homeless as a result of leaving institution or care. In fact, single men made up 84% of all households in priority due to leaving an institution or care.

Table 4. Priority need groups by household type (2010/11)

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PRIORITY NEED GROUP										
	Dependent children or pregnant woman (n=2885)	Old age (n=160)	Physical disability (n=375)	Mental illness/ learning disability (n=395)	Care leaver 18-20 years old (n=145)	16-17 year old (n=455)	Fleeing domestic violence or threatened violence (n=700)	Leaving armed forces (n=25)	Prison leaver (n=890)	Homeless in emergency (n=35)	Other vulnerability (n=150)
Couple with dependent children	23%	-	1%	1%	-	-	1%	20%	-	-	7%
Single parent household with dependent children, Male applicant	4%	-	-	-	-	-	1%	-	-	-	-
Single parent household with dependent children, Female applicant	55%	-	4%	1%	-	2%	37%	-	-	14%	10%
Single person household, Male applicant	-	50%	55%	61%	48%	46%	9%	80%	92%	43%	53%
Single person household, Female applicant	12%	34%	23%	30%	48%	46%	49%	-	8%	29%	20%
All other household groups	6%	16%	17%	6%	3%	5%	3%	-	-	14%	10%
Total incl. censored data (sum = 100%)	46%	3%	6%	6%	2%	7%	11%	0%	14%	1%	2%

Table 5. Reasons for homelessness by household type (2010/11)

REASON FOR HOMELESSNESS	HOUSEHOLD TYPE					
	Couple & dependent children (n=700)	Single parent & dependent child, Male applicant (n=130)	Single parent & dependent child, Female applicant (n=1885)	Single person, Male applicant (n=1795)	Single person, Female applicant (n=1325)	Other (n=370)
Parent no longer willing or able to accommodate	20%	15%	14%	15%	29%	24%
Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	5%	12%	7%	6%	11%	12%
Breakdown of relationship with partner, Non-violent	-	27%	10%	7%	6%	1%
Breakdown of relationship with partner, Violent	1%	4%	27%	3%	23%	5%
Racially motivated violence or harassment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other form of violence or harassment	2%	-	3%	3%	6%	4%
Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home)	6%	-	4%	1%	1%	5%
Rent arrears on local authority or other public sector dwellings	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rent arrears on housing association or RSL dwelling	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rent arrears on private sector dwellings	4%	-	3%	1%	-	1%
Loss of rented or tied accommodation	48%	27%	26%	10%	11%	23%
In institution or care	3%	4%	1%	48%	9%	3%
Other	12%	12%	5%	7%	5%	20%
Total incl. censored data (sum = 100%)	11%	2%	30%	29%	21%	6%

2.5 Households in temporary accommodation

- 2.5.1 The Housing Act 1996 requires that if a local authority has reason to believe an applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need, they are required to ensure that secure accommodation is available whilst a decision is made as to the duty (if any) owed to the household. The Welsh Government statutory data on homelessness does not show what proportion of households in priority need are accommodated temporarily in this way as data for each quarter only shows how many households are in temporary accommodation and how many priority need decisions were made – the two are not directly related as homelessness decisions for some households in temporary accommodation will have been made in previous quarters. However, our analysis of a sample of homelessness data in six local authorities shows that approximately 48% of priority need households were accommodated temporarily, whilst 53% of households in priority need but intentionally so, were accommodated temporarily. A very small proportion of non-priority households were also accommodated temporarily.
- 2.5.2 Figure 2 illustrates the types of temporary accommodation used for all homeless households. It shows that the largest percentage was private sector accommodation leased by either the local authority or RSL (37%), whilst a further 16% was within local authority or RSL stock. Notably, hostels were used for 13% of households and B&Bs for 9%. Interestingly 18% of households in temporary accommodation were recorded as homeless at home, which means they were temporarily remaining at home but they were recognised as homeless.
- 2.5.3 Figure 3 illustrates trends in the use of temporary accommodation types between 2002/03 and 2010/11. It illustrates a peak in bed and breakfast use and households homeless at home in 2004/05, which reflects the introduction of new priority need groups in the legislation. Significant decreases in the use of these temporary accommodation types are evident after 2004/05 and to some extent the reduction in B&B use is likely to be the result of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2006. The reverse trend is seen in the use of private sector accommodation leased by local authorities and RSLs.

Figure 2. Types of temporary accommodation provision for homeless households in Wales (2010/11)

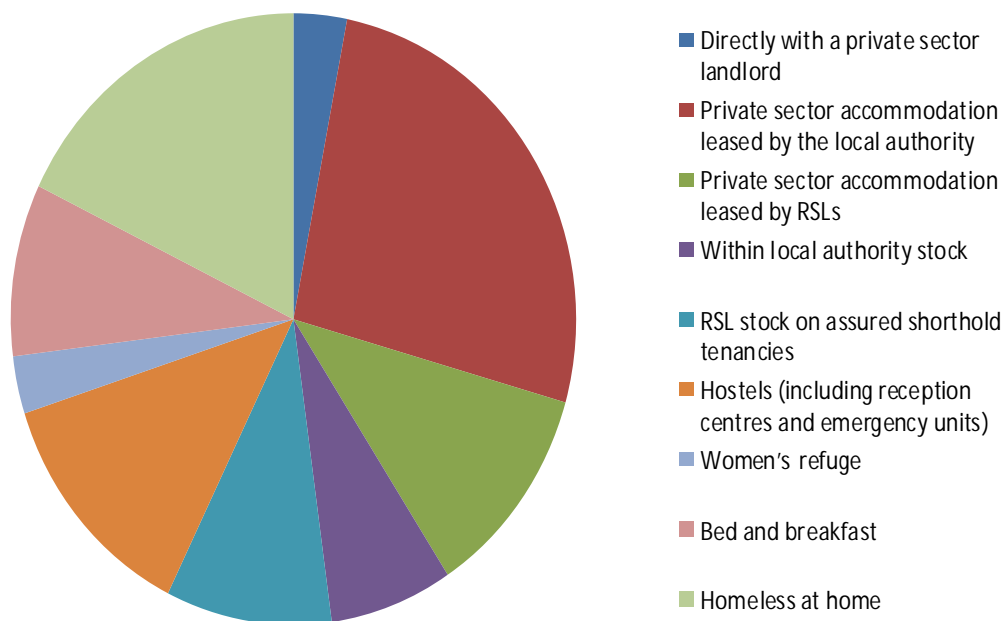
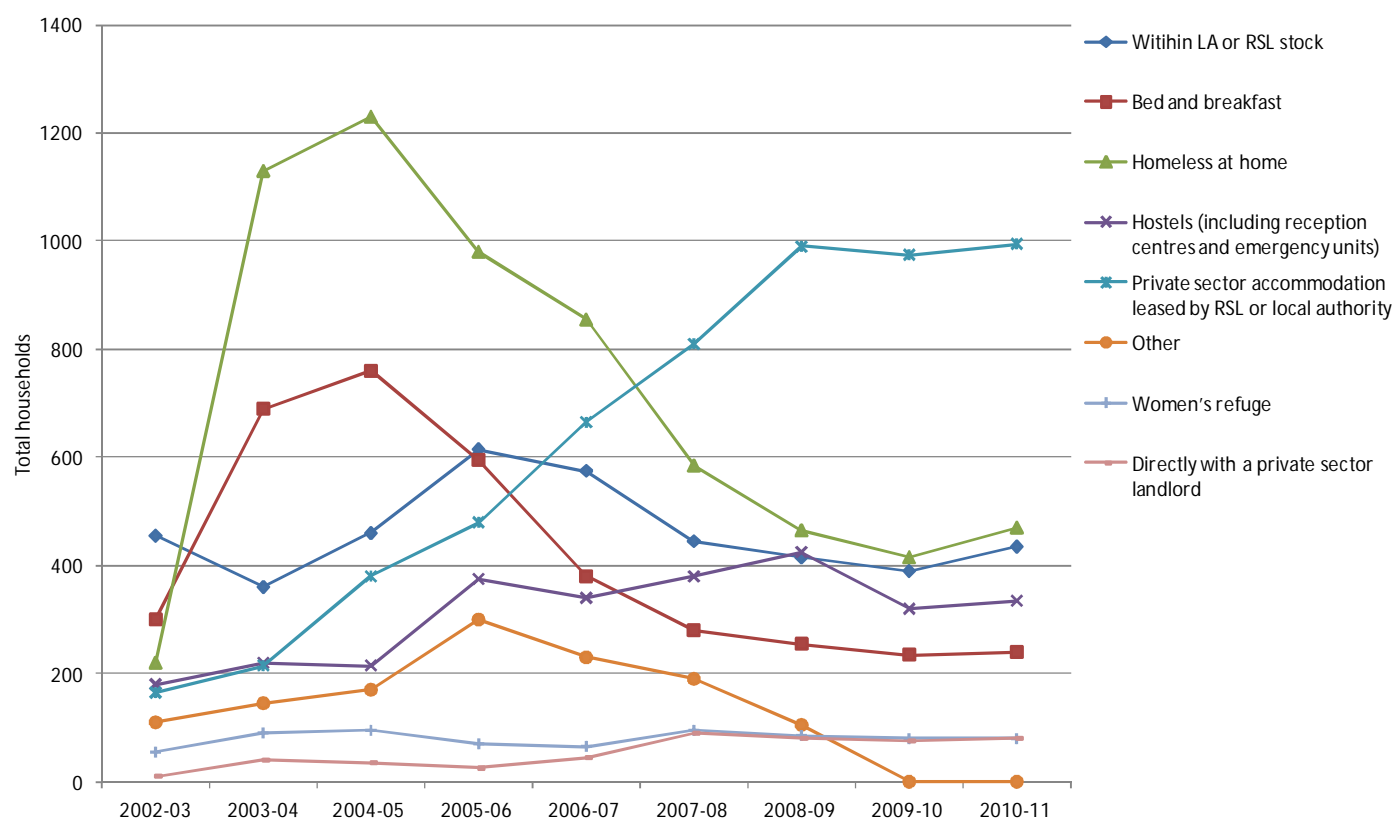


Figure 3. Trends in types of temporary accommodation provision for homeless households in Wales (2002/03 – 2010/11)



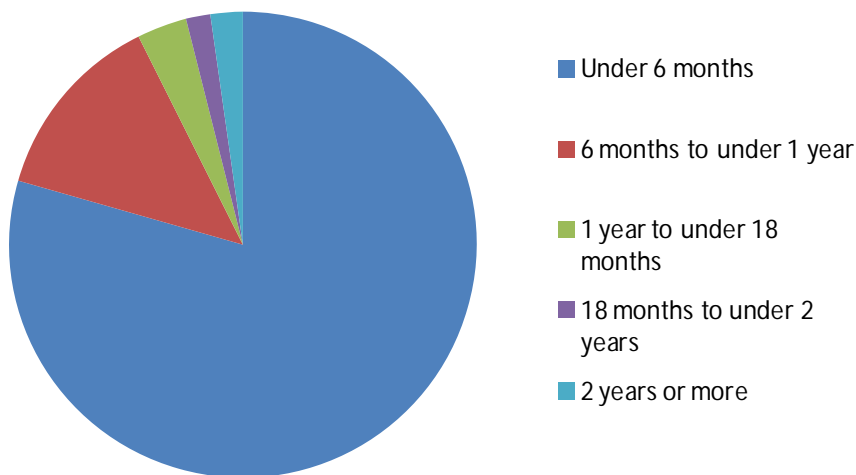
2.5.4 Table 6 illustrates the types of accommodation occupied by different households. The key difference appears to be between single person households and those with dependent children. Single person households (male and female) were more likely than those with dependent children to be accommodated in hostels and bed and breakfast accommodation. Households with dependent children tended to be accommodated in private sector accommodation leased by the local authority or RSLs.

Table 6. Type of temporary accommodation occupied by household type (2010/11)

TYPE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION	TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD					
	Couple & dependent children (n=365)	Single parent & dependent child, Male applicant (n=55)	Single parent & dependent child, Female applicant (n=825)	Single person, Male applicant (n=630)	Single person, Female applicant (n=465)	Other (n=135)
Directly with a private sector landlord	4%	-	3%	4%	2%	-
Private sector leased by the local authority	37%	27%	35%	25%	16%	19%
Private sector leased by RSLs	14%	18%	18%	5%	11%	7%
Within local authority stock	7%	9%	6%	10%	6%	11%
RSL stock on assured shorthold tenancies	10%	18%	9%	13%	9%	4%
Hostels (inc. reception centres & emergency units)	7%	9%	7%	21%	22%	11%
Women's refuge	-	-	4%	-	10%	4%
Bed and breakfast	1%	-	1%	2%	10%	4%
Homeless at home	21%	18%	17%	19%	15%	41%
Total incl. censored data (sum=100)	14%	2%	31%	30%	18%	5%

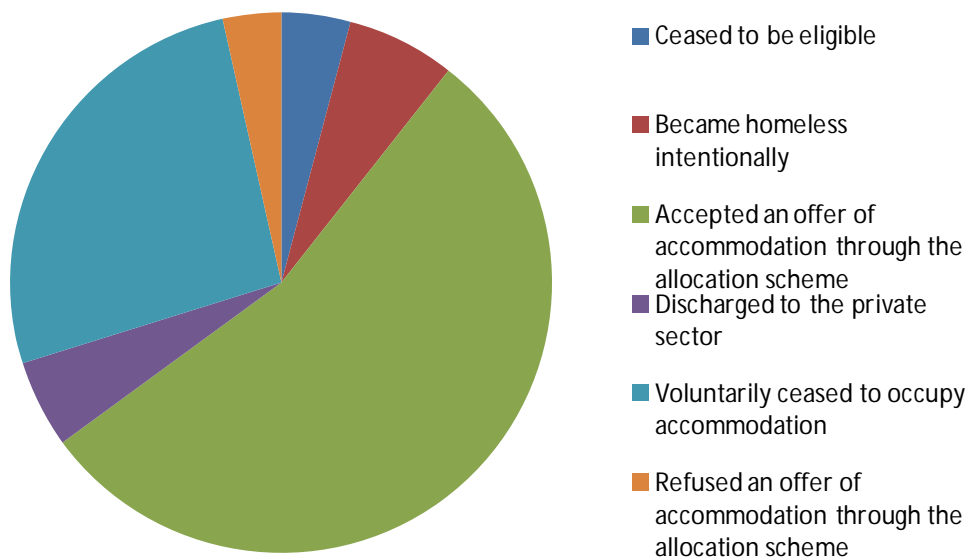
2.5.5 Figure 4 shows that 79% of households spent less than six months in temporary accommodation and a further 13% spent less than one year there. Whilst the vast majority of households who were allocated temporary accommodation were there for a relatively limited period of time, it is important to note that a minority do spend more than one year there.

Figure 4. Length of time spent in temporary accommodation by homeless households in Wales (2010/11)



2.5.6 Figure 5 shows that over half of households left temporary accommodation on accepting an offer of accommodation through the allocation scheme, 5% were discharged into the private rented sector and 4% ceased to be eligible. Therefore, it appears that more than 60% of households temporarily accommodated will have accommodation when they leave their temporary homes. The 6% of households who became homeless intentionally may face continued homelessness as there is no further duty to provide accommodation. The remaining 29% of households mostly ceased to occupy the accommodation voluntarily, which would suggest they found alternative accommodation but the sustainability of this is unknown.

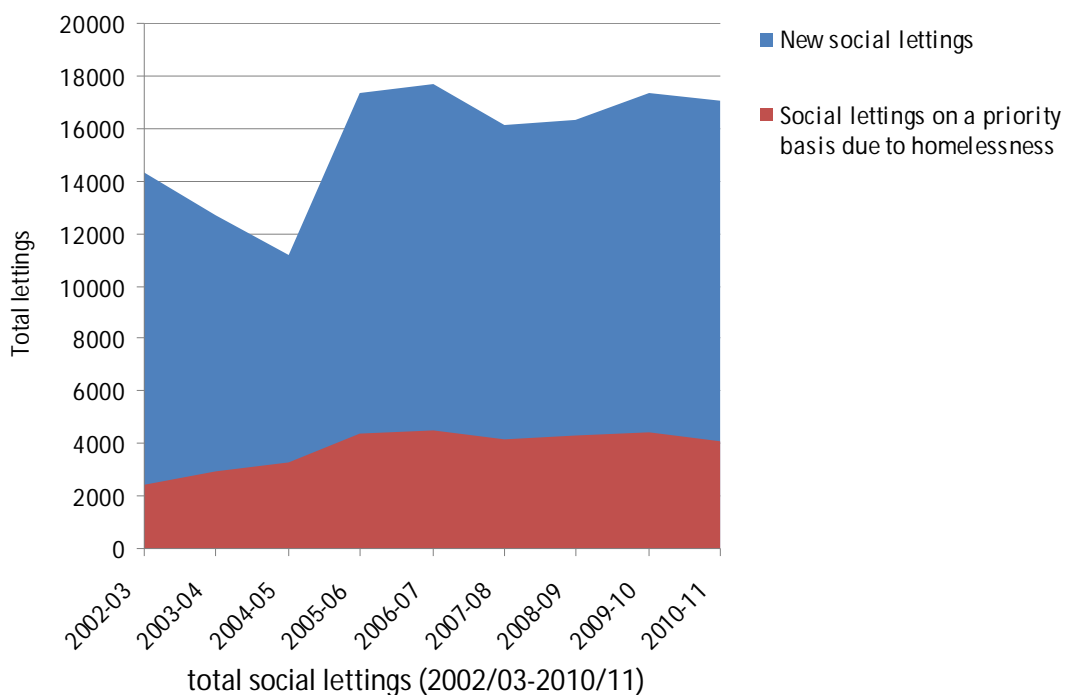
Figure 5. Reasons for homeless households leaving temporary accommodation in Wales (2010/11)



2.6 Access to social rented accommodation

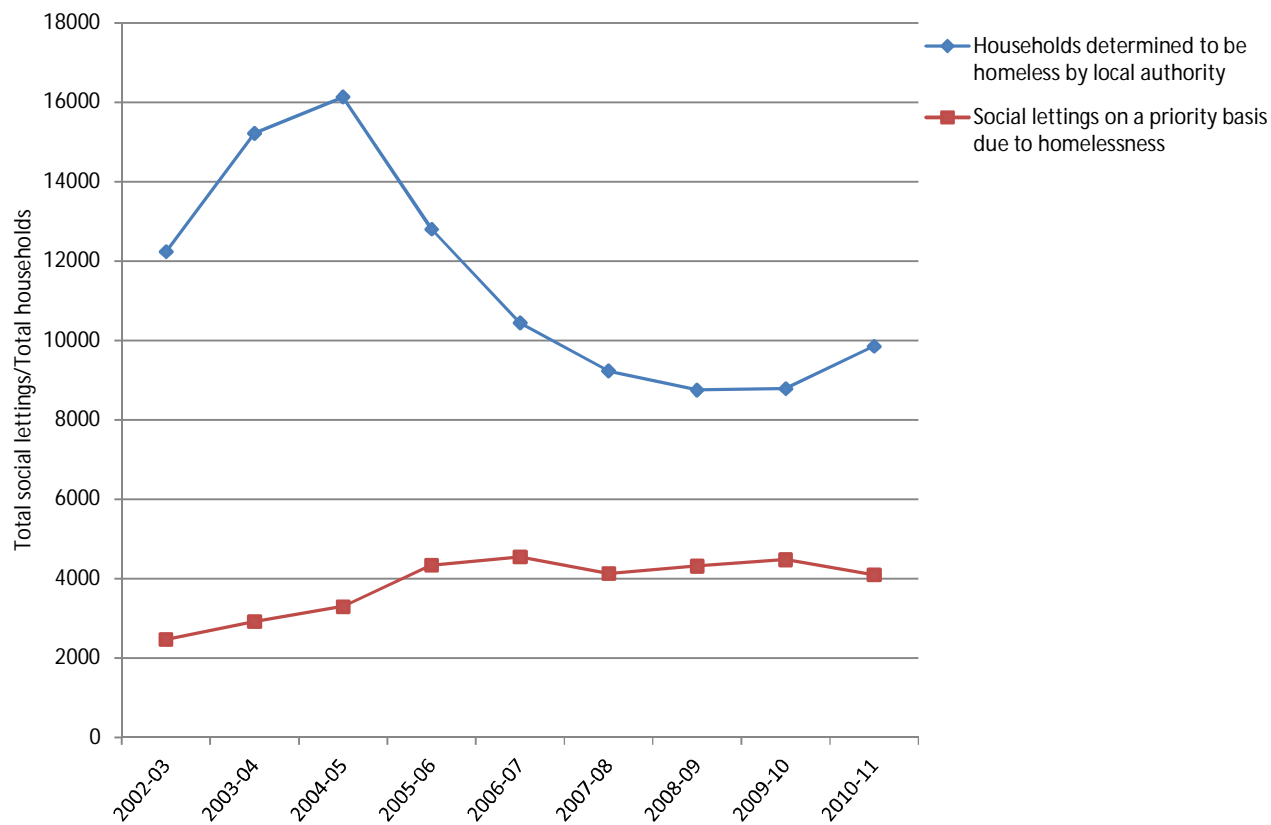
2.6.1 Figure 5 demonstrated that most households leaving temporary accommodation accessed a social rented tenancy. This final section of Chapter 2 examines what proportion of social lettings were made on a priority basis due to homelessness relative to the total number of social lettings. Figure 6 shows that absolute numbers of lettings to homeless households on a priority basis increased steadily until 2005/06, when it reached a consistent level of lettings at approximately 4,000 per year. The total number of social lettings dropped significantly in 2004/05, and then reached a fairly consistent level from 2005/06 at approximately 17,000 per year. Hence, since 2004/04 approximately one quarter of all social lettings have been made to homeless households.

Figure 6. New social lettings made to households on a priority basis due to homelessness relative to



2.6.2 A significant proportion of homeless households are not determined to be in priority need and therefore do not access social rented accommodation. Figure 7 reiterates the fact that fewer households have been determined to be homeless (whether they are in priority need or not) since 2004/05 when the prevention work of local authorities heightened. However, the total number of social lettings to homeless households has remained constant in that period which means a greater proportion of homeless households have been housed in social rented accommodation.

Figure 7. New social lettings made to households on a priority basis due to homelessness relative to total number of households determined to be homeless by local authority (2002/03-2010/11)



Chapter 3

Homelessness prevention

Key findings

- Trends in homelessness decisions in Wales show a fall in total decisions between 2004/05 and 2009/10. It is highly likely that this is the result of an increase in homelessness prevention work by local authorities during that period.
- According to the Welsh Government Performance Indicator, over the last three years homelessness has been prevented for approximately 60% of cases, ranging from 98% to 19% between local authorities in 2010/11. The vast differences between local authorities raise concerns about the validity and reliability of the data.
- Analysis of local authority data on homelessness decisions, with a new 'homeless prevention' decision added, showed that 47% of homelessness cases were treated as homeless prevention cases. Homelessness prevention falls largely outside of the statutory framework and yet it constitutes nearly half of all decisions.
- There is a very limited difference in the age and ethnicity of homeless prevention case households when compared to the percentage of all households making a homeless application to the local authority.
- Whilst single males constitute the highest percentage of any household type in prevention cases (28%), this falls significantly below the proportion of households who present to the local authority and are single males (37%). The underrepresentation of single males in prevention cases is balanced by their overrepresentation under other statutory decisions; 71% of households not in priority need and 54% of intentionally homeless households were single men.
- Efforts to prevent homelessness are not restricted to a particular cause of homelessness, although prevention is limited for cases where the cause is leaving an institution or care.

3.1 The scale of homelessness prevention in Wales

3.1.1 Trends in homelessness decisions in Wales show a fall in total decisions between 2004/05 and 2009/10. It is highly likely that this is the result of an increase in homelessness prevention work by local authorities during that period. The Welsh Government defines homeless prevention as:

- Homelessness is prevented when the potential homelessness of a household has been resolved and this is sustained for a period of 6 months. For example, homelessness is prevented where a household facing domestic violence is enabled to stay at home through target hardening measures, or a household facing mortgage arrears is enabled to stay at home through the mortgage rescue scheme. Homelessness has not been prevented if the household enters temporary accommodation.
- Potentially homeless households are those households who approach a local authority for advice and/or assistance in relation to their current housing circumstances and where the local authority substantiates the household's claim that they are likely to become homeless unless the local authority intervenes.

3.1.2 Since 2007/08 Welsh Government has published a performance indicator on homelessness prevention which shows the number of cases where homelessness is prevented as a percentage of all potentially homeless cases. According to these statistics, over the last three years homelessness has been prevented for approximately 60% of cases, ranging from 98% to 19% between local authorities in 2010/11.

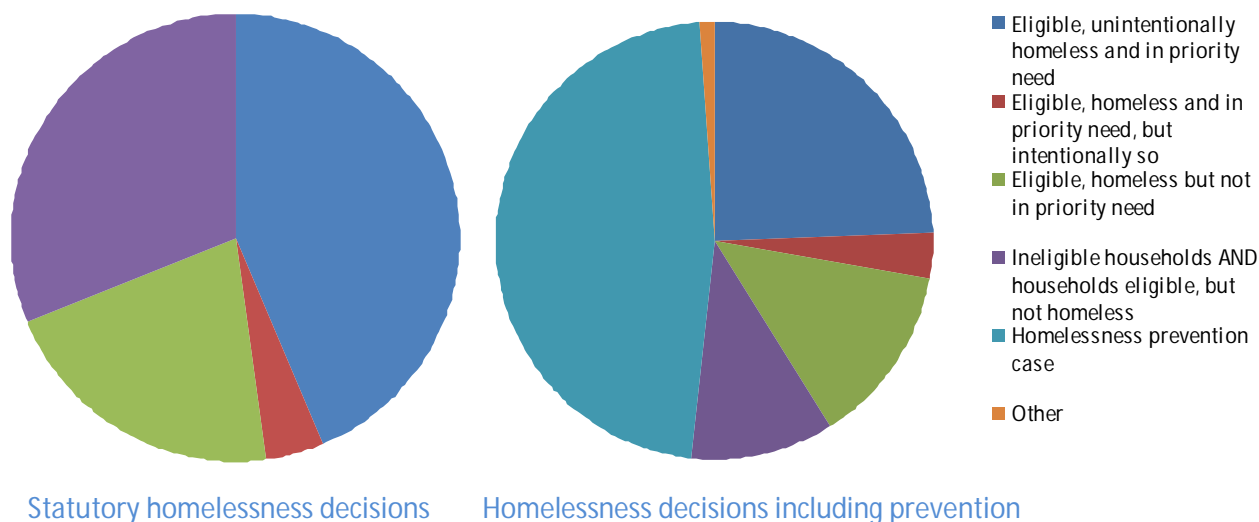
3.1.3 The vast differences between local authorities raise concerns about the validity and reliability of the data. Moreover, there is no additional information on the types of households for whom homelessness is prevented. In this study we sought to develop a greater understanding of homelessness prevention in Wales by exploring the data held in a sample of local authorities. This has revealed that local authorities adopt at least two different approaches towards recording homelessness prevention:

- **Integrated 'outcome' approach:** These local authorities will record homeless prevention as an outcome for the household. The authority will attempt to prevent homelessness for all households. Where the authority is successful, the case will be recorded and integrated with statutory homelessness decisions as 'not homeless'. Data returned to Welsh Government for the prevention PI will show a low prevention rate as most households are classified as potential prevention cases and homelessness is prevented for only a proportion of these.
- **Independent 'decision' approach:** These local authorities will record homelessness prevention as a decision. Where a prevention decision is made, household data is recorded separately and whilst homelessness is prevented for the majority of these households, homelessness will not be prevented for others; a proportion of these will then be referred to the statutory homeless team. Most households identified as a prevention case under the independent 'decision' approach will not appear in the statutory homelessness data (WHO 12). Moreover, PI returns on homelessness prevention to Welsh Government will only be based on this relatively small and very specific group of households, resulting in a high success rate.

3.1.4 Comparing the homelessness prevention data held by local authorities is extremely challenging. In local authorities where an independent 'decision' approach is adopted, it is straight forward to determine what proportion of households are prevention cases as the data is held separately. In local authorities adopting an integrated 'outcome' approach, the task is more difficult because the data is hidden within the statutory homelessness data. For the purpose of this review, homelessness prevention outcomes were used to determine which households were prevention cases and we subsequently recoded the decision for the households as a prevention case. Whilst this process is not ideal, it provides a much clearer indication of prevention activity relative to statutory homelessness activity.

3.1.5 Analysis of the revised local authority data on homelessness decisions, with a new 'homeless prevention' decision added, shows that 47% of homelessness cases were treated as homeless prevention cases. This provides a significant new insight into the allocation of local authority resources. Homelessness prevention falls largely outside of the statutory framework (there is a duty to produce a homelessness strategy which includes homelessness prevention) and yet it constitutes nearly half of all decisions.

Figure 8. Statutory homelessness decisions compared against recoded homelessness decisions including a prevention decision



3.2 Demographics of homeless prevention case households

3.2.1 There is a very limited difference in the age, gender and ethnicity of homeless prevention households, when compared to the percentage of all households making a homeless application to the local authority. The only notable difference is that 59% of prevention cases are female headed households, compared to an average of 52% of all households making a homeless application. This gender difference is much more pronounced when the types of households are examined.

3.2.2 Statutory homelessness data only provides the household type for households in priority need. Our analysis of a sample of local authority data provides new information on the household types of non-priority need households, as well as prevention case households.

3.2.3 Whilst single males constitute the highest percentage of any household type in the prevention cases (28%), this still falls significantly below the proportion of households who present to the local authority and are single males (37%). Table 7 shows that the underrepresentation of single males in prevention cases is balanced by their overrepresentation under other statutory decisions; 71% of households not in priority need and 54% of intentionally homeless households were single men.

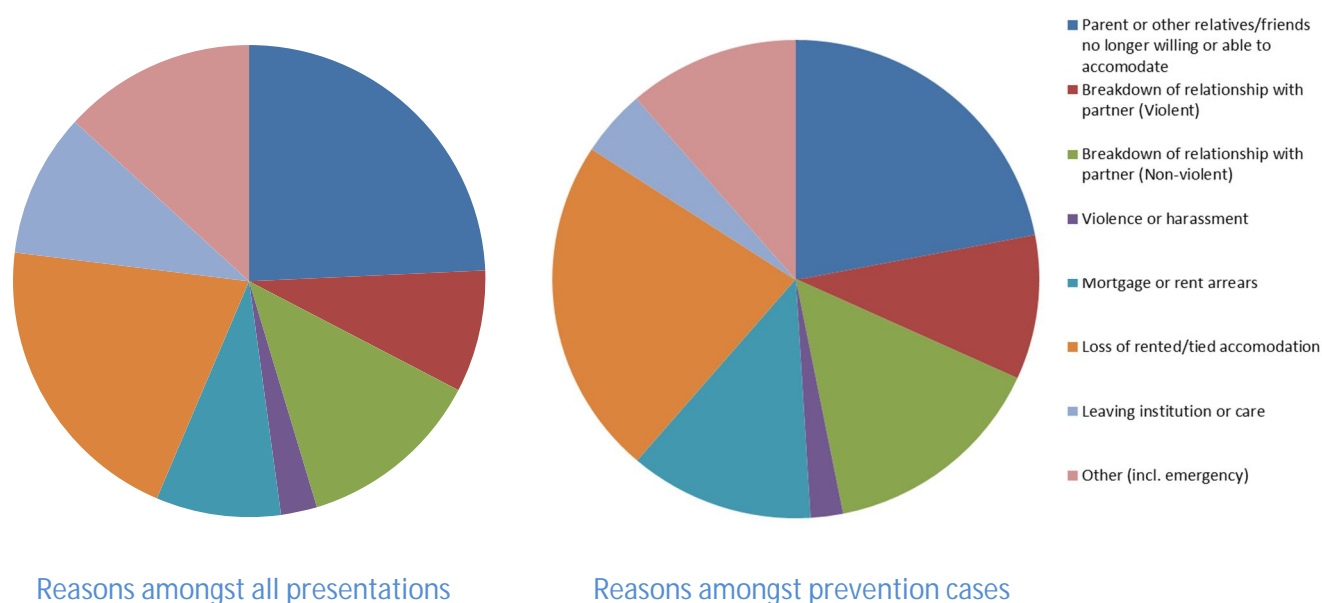
Table 7. Homelessness decision by household type (Apr-Sep 2011)

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	HOMELESSNESS DECISIONS (INCLUDING PREVENTION)					
	Eligible, unintentionally homeless & priority need	Eligible, homeless & priority need, but intentional	Eligible, homeless, but not in priority need	Ineligible households AND households eligible but not homeless	Homeless prevention case	Other
Couple with dependent children	11%	13%	1%	7%	12%	8%
Single parent household with dependent children, Male applicant	3%	0%	1%	3%	2%	0%
Single parent household with dependent children, Female applicant	24%	14%	2%	18%	21%	27%
Single person household, Male applicant	33%	54%	71%	38%	28%	35%
Single person household, Female applicant	18%	13%	17%	23%	19%	24%
All other household groups	10%	5%	8%	11%	17%	5%
Total incl. censored data (sum = 100%)	25%	3%	13%	11%	47%	1%

3.3 Reasons for homelessness amongst prevention case households

3.3.1 Figure 9 shows that the reasons for homelessness amongst homeless prevention case households were not remarkably different to those of all other households making a homeless presentation. Perhaps the most notable difference is that leaving institution or care was the reason for homelessness for 10% of all cases, whereas it was the reason for only 4% of prevention cases. It appears that efforts to prevent homelessness are not restricted to a particular cause of homelessness, although prevention is limited for cases where the cause is leaving an institution or care, a worrying trend given this group of individuals is easily identifiable.

Figure 9. Reasons for homelessness for all households compared against reasons for prevention cases



Chapter 4

The duration of homelessness assistance

Key findings

- The current legislation creates three homeless groups, which we have categorised in terms of the time taken to close their case-files; these being low, medium and high duration cases.
- Low duration homeless cases represent the majority of the Local Authority caseload (83 percent), having the shortest case duration (45 days), in addition to a low percentage of temporary accommodation use for short periods of time. Homelessness prevention work was highest amongst this group (49 percent).
- As medium duration suggests, these cases represented the mid range of case duration taking an average of 251 days; also having above average levels of temporary accommodation use. This group does however represent a comparatively high proportion of the caseload when compared to the high duration group, at 14 percent. The medium duration group had an above average percentage of homelessness acceptances, 39 compared to 25 percent for the total caseload. In addition, homelessness prevention work was high (though technically below the average of 47 percent) for this group, at 40 percent.
- High duration clients have significantly longer case file durations than the low intensity group (868 days), alongside greater use of temporary accommodation for extended periods of time. This group does however represent a small proportion of the total caseload, 3 percent. A large proportion (56 percent) of these households were owed a full duty under the current legislation.
- There were no statistically significant demographic variations between the 3 groups, based on age, sex, ethnicity or household type.

4.1 Introduction

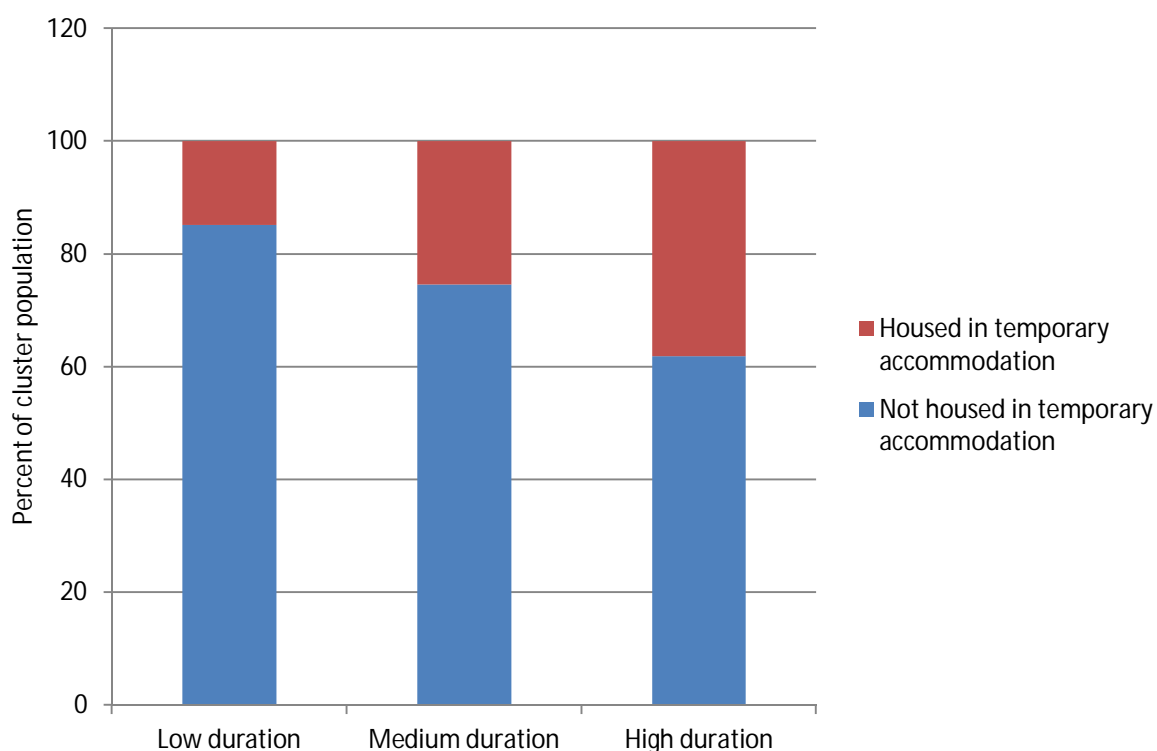
4.1.1 Currently very little is known about the length of time that households are homeless. Hence, this chapter uses local authority data to explore variations in the length of time that homelessness cases are open. Furthermore, the duration of cases are compared against household characteristics and the priority need status of households.

4.2 High, medium and low duration homelessness assistance

4.2.1 Cluster analysis (a statistical technique) was used to examine a sample of local authority data. This statistical technique compares similarities and differences between households and groups those households together who have similar characteristics and experiences. This analysis revealed three distinct groups. Firstly, the low duration group had the shortest average case file length (45 days), and made up the majority of the cases analysed (83 percent). The medium duration group had an average case file length almost six times that of the low duration group, at 251 days, and comprised 14 percent of the caseload. Finally, though the high duration group represent a small percentage of Local Authority caseload (3 percent) the average length of their case files was 19 times more than those of the low duration group (at 868 days). For full characteristics of each group, see Appendix 2.

4.2.2 Generally, there were no statistically significant differences between the groups in terms of sex, age, ethnicity, household type or reason for presenting. This being said, a slightly higher than average proportion of single mothers and households aged 25 years and over were present in the high duration group. Figure 9 illustrates that variations in temporary accommodation use did emerge as statistically significant. Moving from the low to high duration group, the use of temporary accommodation increases, from 15 percent to 38 percent. The length of time spent in temporary accommodation also increases with the duration of the case (low = 49 days; medium = 177; high = 592).

Figure 9. Percentages of households allocated temporary accommodation by duration of homeless case



4.2.3 Of further significance were differences in Local Authority decisions between the three groups. Perhaps most interestingly, those who were accepted as being owed a full duty by the Local Authority were found to a greater degree in the high duration group, 56 percent compared to an average of 25. By contrast, a

very high percent (49 percent) of low duration cases were prevention cases and only 12 percent of high duration cases were recorded as prevention cases. 40 percent of medium duration cases were prevention cases, and though this is technically below average for the total caseload (47 percent), it illustrates that the resources allocated to prevention are significant.

Chapter 5

'Hidden' homelessness

Key findings

- The current figure for homelessness in Wales significantly underestimates the scale of homelessness.
- It is estimated that at any single point in time in 2002 there were approximately 19,000 single person households homeless or threatened with homelessness in Wales, in addition to those already accounted for under Local Authority homelessness statistics. Of particular interest to this review is the group of people provided with hostel accommodation and not accounted for in local authority data. In Britain in 2002 this group was estimated to be 25,000 single households at any single point in time and 29,000 single households annually (Kenway and Palmer 2003). This would equate to approximately 1,450 single households in Wales.
- A sample of case files from a non-statutory direct-access homelessness service indicates that single men were over-represented at such services, with men accounting for 82 percent of service users compared to 38 percent of homelessness acceptances reported to Welsh Government.
- Approximately half of the service users accessing direct-access assistance had no local connection to Cardiff. More specifically, 1/3 of these service users with no local connection were from outside of Wales.
- A disproportionately high percentage of women were in hostels prior to presentation at the homelessness service, whilst rough sleeping men were more common than rough sleeping women.
- Over half of the service users attending the direct access homelessness service reported substance misuse and/or a mental health issue. Furthermore, findings support previous studies into the multiple needs of homeless people, with the co-occurrence of mental health and substance misuse being a significant aspect of service users needs profiles

5.1 Hidden homelessness in Wales

- 5.1.1 Many households who are either homeless or threatened with homelessness will not be accounted for in local authority statistics – they constitute the ‘hidden homeless’. In order to provide a more complete account of homelessness in Wales, and in particular to identify households who are not accessing homelessness assistance under the existing legislative framework, this chapter attempts to quantify the possible scale and nature of hidden homelessness in Wales, with a particular focus on those households who are most vulnerable and in need of assistance (i.e. hostel and day centre users).
- 5.1.2 Several studies have painstakingly sought to quantify the scale of ‘hidden homelessness’ (Fitzpatrick et al 2011, Kenway and Palmer 2003, Jones and Pleace 2010, Reeve 2011). Perhaps the most widely cited estimate is that of Kenway and Palmer (2003), which estimated approximately 310,000-380,000 single people in Britain were homeless and unaccounted for in statutory homelessness data at any point in time (Table 8).

Table 8. Hidden homeless population estimate for Britain at any point in time (2002)

Group	Estimated population
Those who have been provided with supported housing (hostels/YMCAs/shelters) and not considered statutorily homeless	Around 25,000
Bed and breakfast and other boarded accommodation and in receipt of Housing Benefit	Around 50,000
People at imminent risk of eviction due to rent arrears	Around 2,000
Squatters	Up to 10,000
Concealed households sharing overcrowded accommodation with family or friends: (people who neither own nor rent the property they are living in and are neither the spouse, partner nor dependent child of the owner/renter)	170,000 – 220,000
Concealed households sharing accommodation with family or friends which is not overcrowded but where the head of household deems the arrangement unsatisfactory	55,000 – 70,000
Total hidden homeless population	310-380,000

Source: Adapted from Kenway and Palmer (2003)

- 5.1.3 If the distribution of these individuals was proportionate to the population sizes in England, Scotland and Wales, it could be claimed that in 2002 19,000 single households (5% of the British figure) were homeless and unaccounted for in statutory homelessness data at any point in time in Wales. This estimate is certainly not up-to-date and the assumptions underpinning Kenway and Palmer’s (2003) work, although clearly well considered, are at times based on significant guess-work due to the lack of available data. However, this estimate of the hidden single homeless population in Wales does provide some indication of the scale of homelessness not accounted for in the statutory data previously discussed. Of particular interest to this review is the group of people provided with hostel accommodation and not considered to be statutorily homeless. In Britain in 2002 this group was estimated to be 25,000 single households at any single point in time and 29,000 single households annually (Kenway and Palmer 2003). This would equate to approximately 1,450 single households in Wales. The remainder of this section focuses on the experiences of this group of homeless people because, unlike other groups, they are currently accessing some form of crisis support and appear to have no alternative accommodation or support.

5.2 Households accessing non-statutory direct access accommodation and assistance

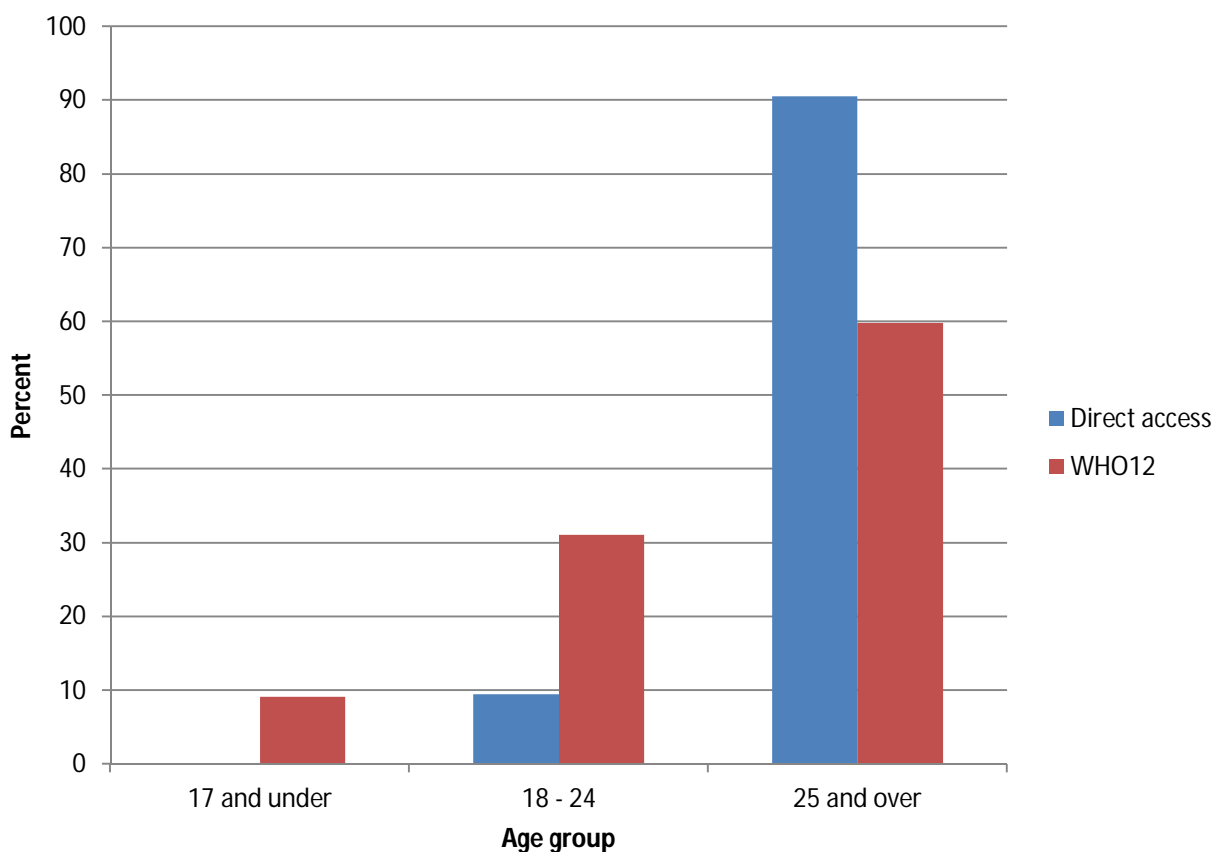
- 5.2.1 In order to gain an insight into the characteristics and experiences of households who use non-statutory direct access homelessness services, this section of the report presents analysis of data from a large direct access day centre in Cardiff. Whilst experiences in the centre cannot be seen as representative of all direct access services, it will illustrate any limitations of the existing legislation and its implementation as it relates to this group of homeless people.

5.2.2 The research examined a sample of 108 case files, which were closed between 1st April and 30th September 2011. Clients were assigned a case file if the support required was relatively complicated or it would take a long period of time. The total number of clients seen during the sample period was 471, whilst total sessions held with clients were 1047. Therefore, this analysis accounts for approximately 23 percent of clients between April and September 2011, these represent the more resource intensive clients.

Demographics of homeless people accessing direct-access assistance

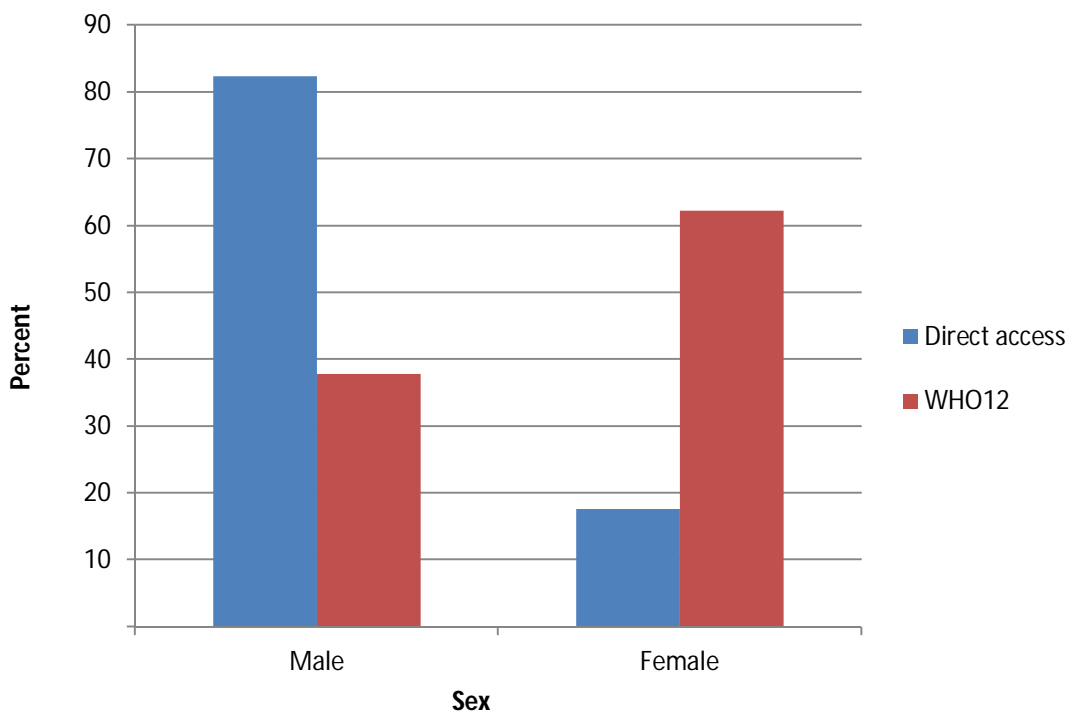
5.2.3 Figure 10 illustrates that compared to national homelessness acceptances, service users were older, with 91% of clients being 25 or over, compared to 60 percent for the national figure. This higher representation of people aged 25 and over is likely to reflect the priority need given to young people aged 16-17 and young care leavers in the homelessness legislation. The higher representation of people aged 25 and over is consistent with findings of large-scale surveys of hostel users (Reeve 2011).

Figure 10. Comparison between direct-access service data (April – September 2011) and WHO12 acceptances (2010/11) by age of head of household



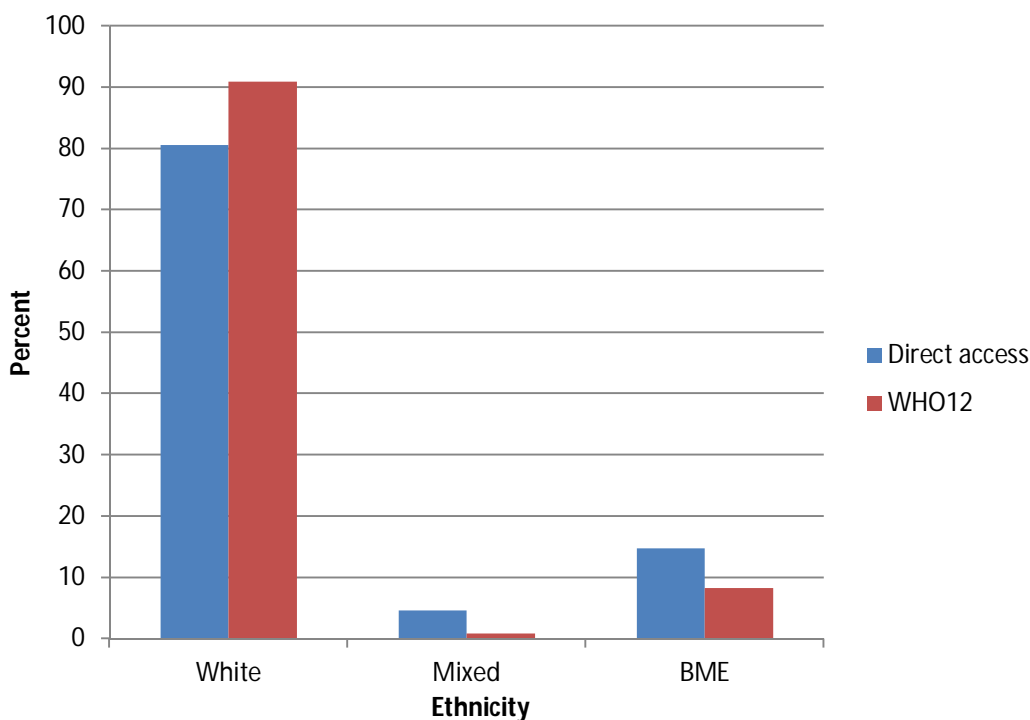
5.2.4 Analysis of statutory homelessness data showed that women were more likely to be in priority need than men. Hence, it is perhaps to be expected that a disproportionate percentage of direct access service users were male; 82 compared to 38 percent for homelessness acceptances nationally (Figure 11). Notably, the majority of clients were single male households. These findings again echo the results of Reeve’s (2011) large-scale survey of hostel users in England.

Figure 11. Comparison between direct-access service data (April – September 2011) and WHO12 acceptances (2010/11) by sex of head of household



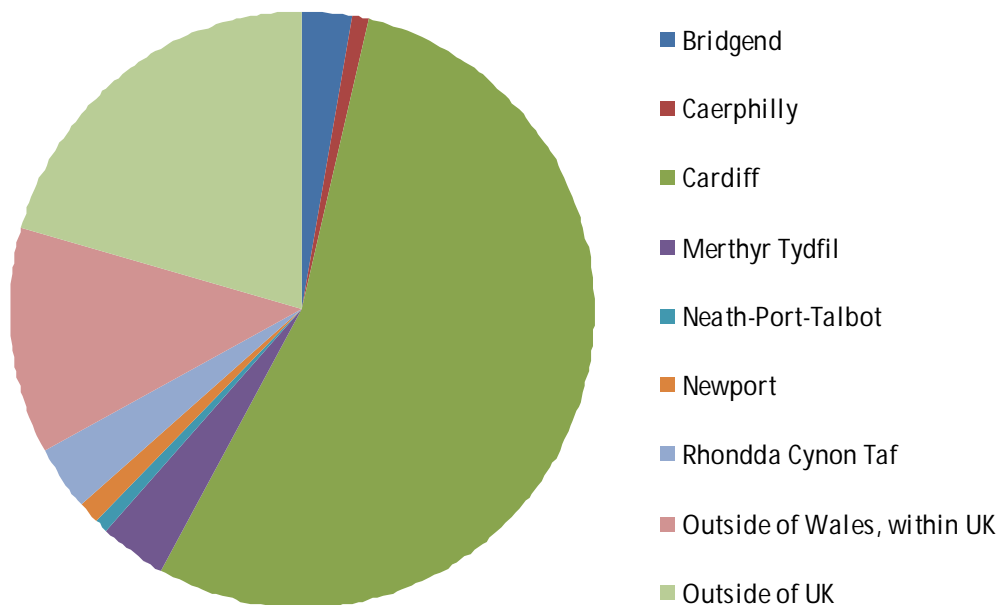
5.2.5 Figure 12 shows that a slightly higher proportion of direct-access service users came from BME and mixed ethnicity backgrounds, compared to national homelessness acceptances. The reasons for over representation of service users from BME and mixed ethnicity backgrounds are not easily explained with reference to the legislation. A separate study is being undertaken on this issue by Shelter Cymru.

Figure 12. Comparison between direct-access service data (April – September 2011) and WHO12 acceptances (2010/11) by ethnicity of head of household



5.2.6 Figure 13 shows that approximately 46 percent of the direct access service users were from outside of the Cardiff area. However, 67 percent were from within Wales, whilst roughly one third of clients were from outside of Wales. Just over one fifth of clients were from outside the UK. Such findings cannot be directly compared to those for households accepted as homeless and in priority need by local authorities as the data is not available. However, it is highly unlikely that an equivalent number of people with no local connection would access statutory support in any given local authority.

Figure 13. Breakdown of “local connection” of direct-access service users



Household Accommodation prior to accessing direct-access assistance

5.2.7 Roughly a quarter of clients were rough sleeping prior to accessing support at the direct-access service, whilst a further 18 percent were in a hostel (Figure 14). These findings generally mirror the results of large-scale hostel surveys in England (Reeve 2001), although rough sleeping is even more dominant in other studies. Data on prior accommodation broken down by sex, shows a disproportionate percentage of female clients were in hostels prior to presentation when compared to men. Furthermore, rough sleeping is particularly endemic to men-compared to women (Figure 15).

Figure 14. Household accommodation prior to accessing the direct-access service (Apr – September 2011)

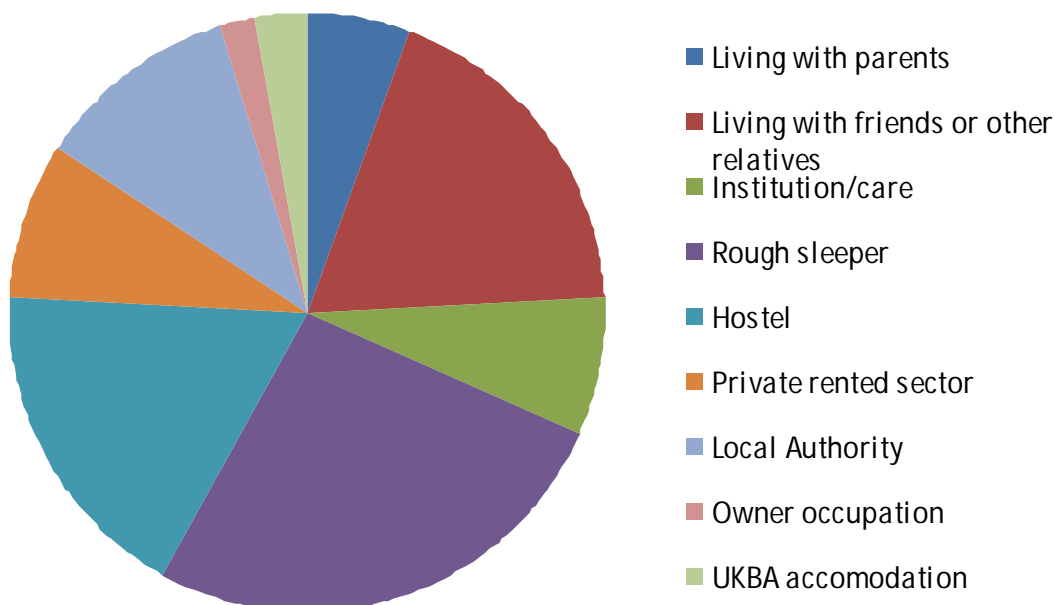
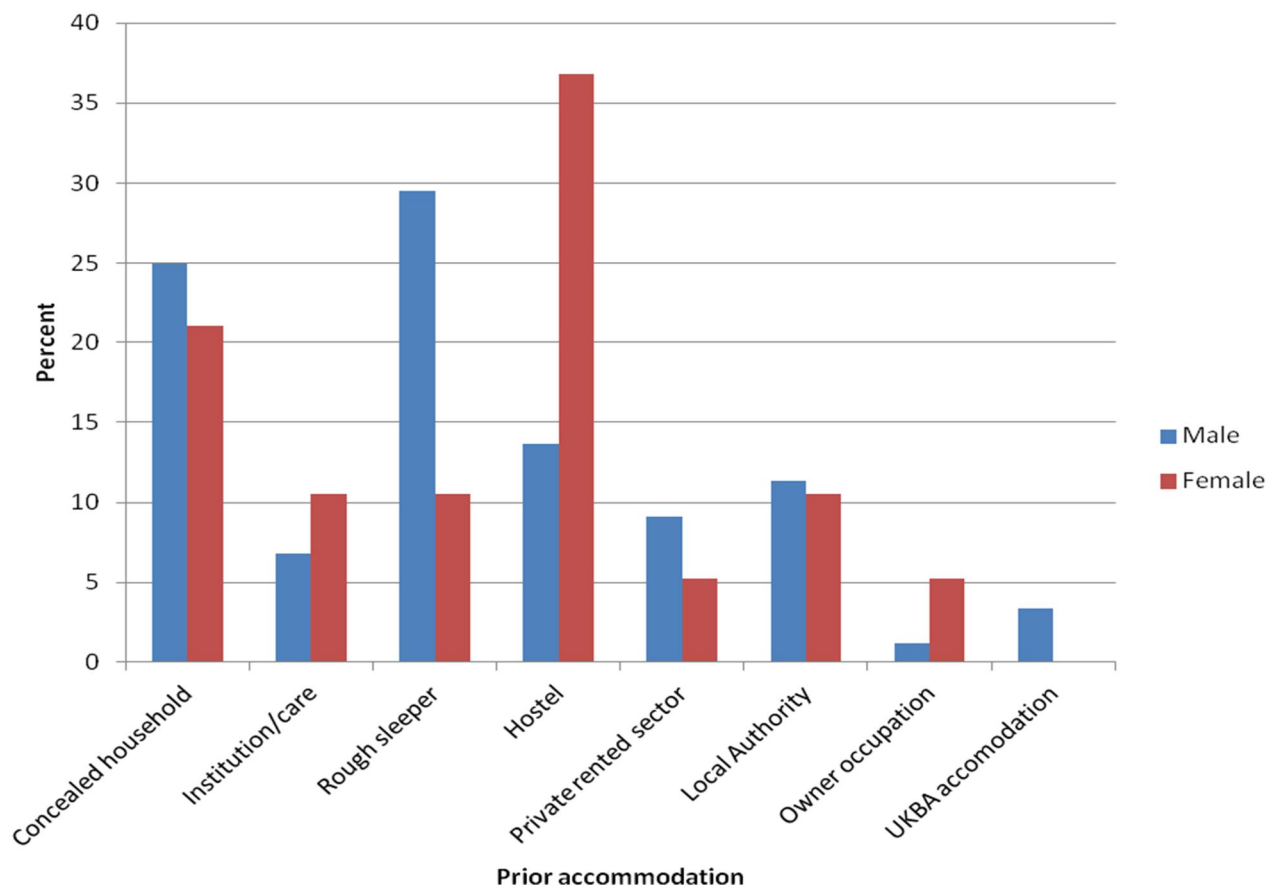


Figure 15. Household accommodation prior to accessing direct-access service (April – September 2011) by sex of household



Household support needs amongst direct-access service users

5.2.8 In terms of need, mental health and substance misuse issues were highly reported for this sample of service users (Table 9). Statistical analysis also indicates that the co-occurrence of mental illness and substance misuse was a significant feature of this group, with roughly 76 percent of those reporting a mental health issue also having a substance misuse problem. Notably, the prevalence of mental health and substance misuse issues is higher than amongst the hostel user population in Reeve’s (2011) study in England. The support needs of homeless households accepted as homeless under the homelessness legislation are not reported to the Welsh Government and yet most local authorities do record this data. It is likely that households accessing direct-access assistance have a higher prevalence of substance misuse and mental health issues.

Table 9. Support needs of households accessing direct-access services (April – September 2011)

SUPPORT NEED	SELF-REPORTED BY HOUSEHOLD (%)	
	Yes	No
Household member pregnant	1	99
Elderly	4	96
Physical disability	16	84
Mental health issue	50	50
Personality disorder	8	92
Substance misuse	59	41
Learning disability/difficulty	4	96
Domestic violence	3	97
Prison leaver	7	93
Household in an emergency	3	97
Refugee	5	95
Failed asylum seeker	3	97
Other	11	89
Not Known	1	99

Chapter 6

Challenging decisions: advocating for household rights

Key findings

- Currently, data on legal challenges of Local Authority homelessness decisions are not collected by one single body.
- New analysis of data from a housing legal advice organisation suggests that as a result of the legislative framework significant resources are allocated to carrying out different degrees of legal challenge against homelessness decisions by local authorities.
- It is estimated that in Wales over a 6 month period (April to September 2011) 12 percent of decisions made by Local Authorities may have been challenged. The majority of these challenges were made via verbal or written representation by bodies in Wales.
- It is estimated that just over 200 homelessness challenges progress to a formal appeal annually.

6.1 Challenges to local authority homelessness decisions

- 6.1.1 There is currently no single figure which gives the total number of legal challenges made against Local Authority homelessness decisions in Wales. In order to arrive at an estimate, data was obtained from an organisation providing housing and homelessness legal advocacy. Information was gathered on the number of legal challenges represented over a 6 month period within 3 Local Authorities in Wales. These were then up-rated to reflect the Legal Services Commission coverage of the organisation within the particular Authorities, thereby giving a more robust estimate of total challenges within these Authorities. It was subsequently possible to arrive at an estimate of the percentage of total decisions which were challenged, broken down by the type of challenge (Table 10), and these were then applied to the total Local Authority decisions in Wales for the same 6 month period.
- 6.1.2 Table 10 shows that an estimated 12 percent of Local Authority decisions in Wales, for a 6 month period, were challenged, and of these challenges 1 percent of the total decisions (108 cases) reached the stage where a formal appeal was made. Although formal challenges make up a small percentage of overall decisions, they still represent additional costs (monetarily and in terms of time) both to the Legal Services Commission in funding the legal challenge and to the Local Authority in representing itself. The largest proportion of challenges on decisions were through verbal and written representation (815 cases), this being roughly 11 percent of total decisions over the 6 month period.

Table 10. Estimated number of challenges on Local Authority homelessness decisions in Wales (April to September 2011)

	Number	% of total decisions
Number of LA decisions	7485	-
Total challenges of LA decision	922	12
Verbal representation	485	6
Written representation	329	4
Formal s202 or county court appeal.	108	1

Source: WHO12; Housing advocacy organisation

Chapter 7

Conclusions: the impacts of existing homelessness legislation in Wales

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 This final chapter summarises the known impacts of the current homelessness legislative framework in Wales by drawing together the findings from the review of homelessness literature in Wales and all elements of data analysis. In addition, reference is made to the preliminary findings of a parallel study being undertaken with homeless service users.
- 7.1.2 The impacts of existing legislation are discussed in relation to key elements of the legislative framework (priority need, homelessness prevention, intentionality, local connection, and accommodation duties), with two final sections considering broader resource-related issues: the duration of homelessness assistance and the extent to which local authority decisions are challenged.

7.2 The prioritisation of homeless people's needs

- 7.2.1 The first overarching observation on trends in homelessness data is that when additional priority need groups have been incorporated into the legislative framework in the past, significant increases in applications have been observed.
- 7.2.2 Priority need categories are currently used to ration limited housing resources. Only those found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need are owed a full housing duty and there is also a duty to provide temporary accommodation to households determined to be homeless and in priority need but intentionally so.

Who is in priority need?

- 7.2.3 In 2010/11 44% of all households who made an application to their local authority were homeless, in priority need and unintentionally so. However, one in five households were homeless but not in priority need and were therefore owed no accommodation duty.
- 7.2.4 Most households making a homeless application were older than 25 and white, whilst the gender split was roughly equal. However, a relatively high proportion of 16-17 year olds and females were determined to be in priority need. This reflects the impact of the priority need categories.
- 7.2.5 Most households in priority need fell into a relatively small number of priority need categories; households with dependent children or a pregnant woman (46%), prison leavers (14%) and households fleeing domestic violence or threatened violence (11%).
- 7.2.6 The most populated priority need groups were dominated by particular genders; females were more likely to be in priority need because of dependent children, or they were threatened with violence. Men formed the majority of households where the priority was a mental illness/learning disability, leaving the armed forces, or leaving prison.
- 7.2.7 Having determined who was in priority need, statutory homelessness data also indicates why these households became homeless. Couples with dependent children predominantly became homeless due to the loss of rented or tied accommodation (48%). Single parent households faced a wider range of causes (loss of rented accommodation, relationship breakdown, and parents/other relatives/friends no longer willing or able to accommodate). Nearly half of all single males in priority need became homeless as a result of leaving institution or care.

Who is not in priority need?

- 7.2.8 Welsh Government data includes no information on the types of household who are not in priority need and yet most local authorities hold this information. New analysis of a sample of local authority data showed that 71% of households not in priority need were single men.

- 7.2.9 The current figure for homelessness in Wales significantly underestimates the size of the homeless population as it only includes those who made a homeless application. The data does not account for those households who did not approach the local authority either because they were unaware of the assistance available or they believed they would not get any assistance if they did make an approach.
- 7.2.10 It is estimated that at any single point in time in 2002 there were approximately 19,000 single person households homeless or threatened with homelessness in Wales, in addition to those already accounted for under Local Authority homelessness statistics. Of particular interest to this review is the group of people within these figures who are provided with hostel accommodation and not accounted for in local authority data. In Britain in 2002 this group was estimated to be 25,000 single households at any single point in time and 29,000 single households annually (Kenway and Palmer 2003). This would equate to approximately 1,450 single households in Wales in 2002.
- 7.2.11 This study analysed a sample of data from one large direct access homeless service provider in order to determine the characteristics of these non-priority households. It must be noted that the sample of cases only included those who had accessed advice from staff, which is likely to over represent households with higher level support needs.
- 7.2.12 Data from the direct access provider indicates that men were over-represented at such services, accounting for 82 percent of service users. Approximately half of the service users at the Cardiff service had no local connection; roughly 1/3 of clients were from outside of Wales.
- 7.2.13 Over half of the service users attending the service reported substance misuse and/or a mental health issue. These findings are supported by existing literature which concludes that vulnerable single adults are often left without appropriate accommodation and support.

A service user perspective

- 7.2.14 The parallel study undertaken with homeless service users in Wales revealed clear perspectives on the priority need clause. Service users felt that it was painful to have to prove vulnerability in order to be deemed a priority. They commented;

'The pain of having to 'prove' your vulnerability to local authorities before anyone will help you... It's all or nothing.' (Service user)

'How upsetting it is to ask for help at the most vulnerable time of your life and be told not only will no one help you but leave feeling like you were spoken down to by housing staff.' (Service user)

7.3 Homelessness prevention

- 7.3.1 Trends in homelessness decisions in Wales show a fall in total decisions between 2004/05 and 2009/10. It is highly likely that this is the result of an increase in homelessness prevention work by local authorities during that period.
- 7.3.2 According to the Welsh Government Performance Indicator, over the last three years homelessness has been prevented for approximately 60% of cases, ranging from 98% to 19% between local authorities in 2010/11. The vast differences between local authorities raise concerns about the validity and reliability of the data.
- 7.3.3 New analysis of a sample of local authority homelessness data showed that 47% of homelessness cases were treated as homeless prevention cases (i.e. no statutory homelessness application was taken or a decision was made but homelessness was prevented for the household). Homelessness prevention falls largely outside of the statutory framework (although there is a duty to produce a homeless strategy which includes prevention measures) and yet it constitutes nearly half of all decisions.

- 7.3.4 There was a very limited difference in the age and ethnicity of homeless prevention households when compared to the percentage of all households making a homeless application to the local authority.

For whom is homelessness prevented?

- 7.3.5 Whilst single males constituted the highest percentage of any household type in prevention cases (28%), this falls significantly below the proportion of households who presented to the local authority and were single males (37%). By contrast, single males were overrepresented amongst households not in priority need (71%) and those who were intentionally homeless (54%).
- 7.3.6 Efforts to prevent homelessness were not restricted to a particular cause of homelessness, although prevention was limited for cases where the cause is leaving an institution or care.

7.4 Intentionality

- 7.4.1 Local authorities have a duty to determine whether a household in priority need is intentionally homeless and if so there is a duty to provide temporary accommodation for a reasonable period to enable the household to find alternative accommodation. The local authority is also required to assess the housing needs of the household before providing advice and assistance. Only 4% of households were determined to be in priority need and intentionally homeless, making this a very small proportion of households for whom a homelessness decision is made.
- 7.4.2 New analysis of a sample of local authority homelessness data showed that 54% of intentionally homeless households were single men. The data also showed that 53% of households in priority need, but intentionally so, were accommodated temporarily.
- 7.4.3 Existing studies of intentional homelessness decisions, and the ongoing parallel service user perspective study, claim that amongst key stakeholders and service users in Wales there is general consensus that being found intentionally homeless is detrimental to the household.

7.5 Migration of homeless households and local connection

- 7.5.1 Statutory homelessness data and indeed local authority homelessness data more generally holds very little information on local connection decisions. Consequently, any assessment of the impacts of this element of the legislation is based upon existing, largely qualitative research.
- 7.5.2 Existing studies suggest that some local authorities witness significant levels of homeless applications from recent migrants and the local connection test enables the local authority to manage limited resources. These studies have also highlighted some concern that the local connection test is used as a gatekeeping tool and that it restricts the ability of a homeless person to move to seek employment.
- 7.5.3 In our analysis of data held by one direct access service provider, approximately half of the sample of service users had no local connection and roughly 1/3 were from outside of Wales.

7.6 Duties to provide suitable accommodation

- 7.6.1 Local authorities have a duty to provide temporary accommodation to homeless households where they have reason to believe that the household may be in priority need. For households who are determined to be in priority need and not intentionally so, the local authority also has a duty to provide suitable accommodation. Analysis of Welsh Government data and a sample of local authority homelessness data provides a clear picture of the use of temporary accommodation and allocation of social housing to homeless households.

Temporary accommodation

- 7.6.2 Analysis of a sample of local authority data revealed that approximately 48% of priority need households were accommodated temporarily, whilst 53% of households in priority need, but intentionally so, were accommodated temporarily in the sample period between April and September 2011.
- 7.6.3 Welsh Government data shows the types of temporary accommodation allocated to these households. Trends over time show a peak in bed and breakfast use and households homeless at home in 2004/05, which reflects the introduction of new priority need groups into the homelessness legislative framework. Significant decreases in the use of these temporary accommodation types are evident after 2004/05 and to some extent this is likely to be the result of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2006. The reverse trend is seen in the use of private sector accommodation leased by local authorities and RSLs, which saw a significant increase in use after 2004/05.
- 7.6.4 Welsh Government data illustrates that the type of temporary accommodation allocated is related to the type of household being accommodated. Single person households (male and female) were more likely than those with dependent children to be accommodated in hostels and bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 7.6.5 In 2012/11 79% of temporarily accommodated households spent less than six months there and a further 13% spent less than one year.

Settled accommodation

- 7.6.6 More than 60% of households had settled accommodation when they left their temporary accommodation; the vast majority of these exits were via the local authority allocations scheme, although 5% of all exits were into the private rented sector. Most of the remaining households ceased to occupy their accommodation voluntarily which means they may have found alternative accommodation but they might also have returned to unsuitable accommodation. The sustainability of these outcomes cannot be assessed through existing data.
- 7.6.7 The reliance on the social rented sector means that since 2004/05 approximately one quarter of all social lettings have been made to homeless households.

Support

- 7.6.8 Existing literature concludes that appropriate housing-related support is key to successful housing outcomes for many households. Many of the studies emphasise the need to look at homelessness in the context of other forms of social exclusion, or other support needs because they are inextricably linked.

7.7 The duration of advice and assistance

- 7.7.1 Relatively little is known about how long different types of household are assisted by local authorities, which means there is only a partial understanding of how resources are being allocated: are some households assisted for very long periods of time and if so what are the characteristics of these households? This review provides new data, enabling local authorities to consider whether certain households could be assisted to find suitable accommodation more quickly and most probably reduce both the trauma of being homeless and the resources required to assist for longer cases.
- 7.7.2 Under the current legislative framework it appears that there are three homeless groups, which we have categorised in terms of the time taken to close their case-files; these being low, medium and high duration cases:

Low duration homeless cases represent the majority of Local Authority caseload (83 percent), having the shortest case duration (**45 days**) in addition to a low percentage of temporary accommodation use for

short periods of time. Homelessness prevention work was highest amongst this group (49 percent of households).

As *medium duration* suggests, these cases represented the mid range of case duration taking an average of **251 days**; also having above average levels of temporary accommodation use. This group did however represent a comparatively high proportion of the caseload when compared to the high duration group.

High duration homeless cases had significantly longer case file durations than the low intensity group (**868 days**), alongside greater use of temporary accommodation for extended periods of time. This group did however represent a small proportion of the total caseload; 3 percent. A large proportion (56 percent) of these households were owed a full duty under the current legislation.

7.8 The implementation and enforcement of legislation

- 7.8.1 Existing studies repeatedly conclude that legislation is interpreted and applied differently across Wales, particularly in relation to homelessness prevention, priority need and intentionality. Whilst flexibility is important as local contexts vary, inconsistent decisions also result in legal challenges under the current rights-based framework.
- 7.8.2 Preliminary research on the perspectives of stakeholders on the existing legislation raised concerns that too much time was spent determining a household's eligibility and challenging these decisions, rather than allocating the time and resource to assisting the household.
- 7.8.3 In order to provide a greater understanding of the allocation of resources to this 'decision-challenge' element of the existing framework, the review explored the extent to which local authority homelessness decisions were challenged.

Legal challenges

- 7.8.4 Using data from one organisation providing housing legal advice and advocacy in Wales, the degree of legal challenge was estimated for Wales. Our estimates over a 6 month period (April to September 2011) indicated that 12 percent of decisions made by Local Authorities may have been challenged to some degree. The majority of these challenges were minor and made via verbal or written representation by bodies in Wales. However, it was estimated that just over 200 homelessness challenges progress to a formal appeal annually.

Duties to implement the homelessness legislative framework

- 7.8.5 A final observation under this theme emerged from the review of homelessness literature in Wales. There is repeated recognition that duties associated with the homelessness legislative framework lie with the local authority housing department. Studies have commented on the lack of strong linkages between the homelessness legislative framework and departments other than housing.

7.9 Conclusion

- 7.9.1 This review of the impacts of the homelessness legislative framework in Wales quantifies the impacts of different elements of the legislation. Drawing this data together reveals five key messages:

1. A vital safety net is provided

The current legislative framework provides a safety net for many homeless households. Whilst there are limits to who is able to access this assistance, the overwhelming finding is that an important safety net exists to provide a housing solution for those in need of assistance.

2. Assistance is selective and rigid

The safety net provided under the current legislation is selective and rigid. The legislation sets the framework for selecting which households are in priority need because a rigid set of housing entitlements must be rationed. The inclusion of priority need groups results in a situation where households must prove their vulnerability. Moreover it allows for some, mostly male, vulnerable homeless households to be turned away due to their lack of priority status. Households who are owed a fully accommodation duty under the existing framework enter a rigid and linear system which can result in long periods of time in temporary accommodation before finally accessing a social rented tenancy. The reliance on the social rented sector leads to a high proportion of social lettings being made to homeless households.

3. Homelessness prevention work is effective but its role within the legislative framework is ambiguous

Much of the work undertaken by local authorities is in the prevention of homelessness and yet the legislative framework is not explicit about how this prevention assistance lies alongside the right to accommodation that a household would have if they were in priority need. Research has demonstrated the effective nature of much of the homelessness prevention work in Wales and yet under the current framework local authorities could be challenged for gatekeeping in a high proportion of prevention cases. Notably, homelessness prevention work tends to be much more inclusive (i.e. all household types are assisted), less rigid (i.e. a wider range of solutions are explored), and cases are dealt with far quicker.

4. Homelessness legislation is applied inconsistently and this has implications for households and resources

Existing studies repeatedly conclude that legislation is interpreted and applied differently across Wales. Whilst flexibility is important as local contexts vary, inconsistent decisions result in inconsistent outcomes for households. One positive element of the existing rights-based framework is that many households will access legal advocacy support in order to challenge local authority decisions. However, there are two key limitations. Firstly, without any sector-wide regulation and monitoring the outcomes for a proportion of households will go unchallenged and yet they may have rights to additional assistance. Secondly, the current framework requires that a significant amount of time is spent determining a household's eligibility and challenging these decisions, rather than allocating the time and resource to assisting the household. Under the existing legislative framework, it could be argued that the balance between assisting households and processing decisions is currently weighted towards process.

5. The collection and analysis of homelessness data in Wales is limited

It is perhaps no surprise that an academic should make a final point on data collection and analysis, however this point is pertinent, particularly if the impacts of any changes to the legislation are to be monitored and evaluated. A significant volume of data is returned to Welsh Government and much can be learnt from its analysis. However, a lot could be done to ensure its consistency, particularly in relation to homeless prevention data which currently appears to be meaningless. Additional household data should also be returned on households not in priority need. Finally, holding this data at an individual household level would provide much greater opportunity to understand homelessness in Wales.

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Appendix 1. Key literature on homelessness in Wales – study summaries

Title	Homelessness legislation in Wales: stakeholder perspectives on potential improvements
Author	Peter Mackie and Simon Hoffman
Year	2011
Source	www.cplan.cf.ac.uk/homelessness
Summary	Current homelessness legislation is evaluated in interviews with key stakeholders across Wales. Elements of the legislation are highlighted in terms of what is seen as positive as well as those areas that may need to be amended in order to meet the needs of individuals.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 Semi structured stakeholder interviews. • Additional perspectives gained via email. • Two key questions explored: ‘What are the positive elements of the current legislation?’ and ‘What are the deficiencies in the current legislation?’
Key messages	<p>Broad perspectives on the impacts of the legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many stakeholders overarching view of the legislation was that it is effective and only requires minor alterations. However a small number felt that the current legislation requires ‘radical change’ but did not provide information on how this could be achieved. • The stakeholders felt the safety net provided by current legislation is important and must remain. • A key concern for stakeholders was the way current legislation and its implementation leads to inappropriate resource allocation, towards processes rather than to meet the needs of people. • Several stakeholders suggested that there needs to be an improvement in links between homelessness legislation and other statuses. Homelessness needs to be seen as more than a housing issue and the multiple needs of homeless people should be considered. <p>Homeless prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of stakeholders involved perceive that homelessness legislation does not encourage early intervention. • Particular concerns were raised by some about the lack of clear direction for Local Authorities to intervene as soon as they know a person is liable to become homeless. This specifically relates to authorities where a person must be within 28 days of becoming homeless before they intervene. • Stakeholders also specifically suggest that prevention elements of the legislation should include education on homelessness and life skills in schools. <p>Priority need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of stakeholders were supportive of current priority need categories, with the frequent exception of prison leavers. • Most believed that some sort of prioritisation structure was necessary to ensure provision of resources to the most vulnerable. Although many remarked they would aspire to provide everyone with a full service stakeholders perceived this was not achievable in practical terms. • Stakeholders on the whole contested the current approach towards prison leavers on the basis that there was little evidence that providing accommodation reduces recidivism. It was also seen as a difficult process to find accommodation for prison leavers. Many stakeholders suggested that accommodation should only be provided to prison leavers with conditions

attached.

- Some stakeholders point out that additional priority groups may also be needed for example to more effectively meet the needs of homeless young people, single homeless people as well as a number of other groups.
- A number of stakeholder's views support the idea that everybody needs assistance for example the view that current legislation incentivises the need to become or appear more vulnerable. Defining a proving vulnerability is perceived as difficult.

Intentionality

- There were mixed views on the intentionality test and whether or not it should remain. However there was widespread agreement that consequences of being found intentionally homeless are detrimental.
- The majority felt the test must remain to prevent misuse of entitlements provided by legislation.
- A number felt it should remain but there should be provision for those found intentionally homeless to prevent negative consequences.
- Some suggest the test should be removed altogether because it disproportionately affects certain groups and is seen as punitive not allowing people to learn from their mistakes.

Local connection

- There were also mixed views on the local connection test.
- The majority of stakeholders felt it should remain but that it can be misused in order to gatekeep and that if it is to remain then the most vulnerable must remain to be exempt.
- A minority felt the test should be removed, their most notable critique being that it leaves homeless people at a disadvantage compared to their non-homeless peers in terms of mobility to seek employment.

Guidance, interpretation and consistency

- All stakeholders believe that up-to-date statutory guidance must be available in order to reduce significant problems of misinterpretation.
- Particularly in relation to priority need categories and intentionality.

Housing outcomes (*inc. comments on Suitability of Accommodation Order 2006*)

- The stakeholders felt accommodation entitlement must be more flexible and should include the private rental sector, albeit with clear monitoring of standard and sustainability.

Non-housing support outcomes

- Based on the contention that homelessness is often more than just a housing problem, many stakeholders raised concerns that legislation does not put in place sufficient requirement for relevant and wider support to be provided.

Title	The effects of recent migration on Local Authorities' allocation of housing and actions under homelessness legislation
Author	Simon Inkson
Year	2009
Source	new.Wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/research/newideasfund/complete/3895860/?lang=en
Summary	The report examines the effects of homelessness legislation on allocation and homelessness applications, in particular in relation to determining local connection. A number of recommendations are made for reconsidering the definition of local connection and providing clearer guidance.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of literature and data sources • Case study of 6 Local Authority areas • Analysis of data and statistics • Interviews with key officers • Consultation with elected members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of randomly selected sample files from 2005 – 2008 including 790 homelessness cases where the authority had reached a decision and 907 new tenants housed in Local Authority tenancies or Housing Association tenancies following nomination by Local Authorities.
Key messages	<p>Local connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across the 'six counties', 28.7% of homeless applications are from recent migrants, and recent migrants represent 22.8% of households that Local Authorities accept they have a duty to accommodate. • Level of demand is not felt evenly across the 6 counties, the 3 counties with large Victorian seaside towns experience a higher level of demand from homelessness applicants who are recent migrants. • In relation to local connection officers charged with investigating and determining homelessness applications followed guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly Government. • All key stakeholders interviewed felt the 6 months residence period was too short to determine a local connection. • Due to the relatively high availability of private rented accommodation and out of season holiday lets in the 6 authorities it was felt it was too easy for someone to move to the authority for 6 months then when accommodation was no-long available present as homeless and demonstrate a local connection. • A majority view was that a minimum period of 12months should be required in order to demonstrate a local connection. <p>Guidance, interpretation and consistency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authorities felt that although they must take into account guidance they do have some freedom to determine what constitutes 'normal residence'. By adopting a blanket policy to determine local connection of homeless applicants the report suggests Local Authorities could be restricting their discretion. • Local connection provisions are a feature of the allocation schemes of each of the six counties, however the level of priority given to people with a local connection varies considerably. • Officers believed that recent migrants have had little impact on the allocation of social housing.. • Many elected members however took a different view and felt that the impact of recent migrants had prevented local people from accessing social housing and had other additional related negative impacts on their areas. • The report finds that the word 'local' means different things to different people and this may lead to negative perceptions of the local connection provisions. • The report makes a number of recommendations including that The Welsh

	<p>Government should revise its code of guidance on allocations and homelessness as a matter of urgency in particular making sure guidance is clear on how local connection and normal residence operate in this context.</p>
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- Promote and support training of officers on determining local connection.
- Consider increasing the definition of local connection from 6 to 12 months.

Title	Necessary but not sufficient: housing and the reduction of re-offending
Author	Caroline Humphreys and Tamsin Stirling
Year	2008
Source	www.wlga.gov.uk/english/equalitypublications/research-report-necessary-but-not-sufficient-housing-and-the-reduction-of-re-offending/
Summary	A range of methods were used to gather a full picture of housing and reduction of re-offending. The report details gaps in service provision for offenders/ex-offenders which may lead to increased recidivism; it also explains how strategic changes could prevent this.
Methods	<p>The project involved 2 phases</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevant literature and web search Semi structured interviews with representatives of national stakeholder organisations. Questionnaires for Housing associations, criminal justice/community safety organisations 2. Structured discussions with a range of housing, criminal justice/ community safety networks/groups. Follow up of a range of practical examples detailed in phase 1. Two case studies. Assessing views of service users
Key messages	<p>Broad perspectives on the impacts of the legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report suggests the way which high risk offenders/ex-offenders access housing support is not effective. There is an over reliance on homelessness legislation as the route for re-housing people leaving prison, many find themselves excluded from housing waiting lists due to problems with previous tenancies. • Tackling the gaps in service provision identified within this report will require innovation and ability to try new ways of working. • The report recommends that housing and criminal justice should link strategically in order to prevent gaps in provision. <p>Priority need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report finds a clear evidenced link between accommodation and reduction in re-offending rates. However although accommodation is necessary to reduce re-offending it is not on its own sufficient. • In certain groups of offenders such as those subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and those defined as Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) the link between accommodation and a reduction in re-offending is even stronger. • The report suggests this makes a robust case for providing appropriate accommodation to reduce re-offending and increase community safety. • Practitioners in the study identified particular groups of the offender/ex-offender population that tend to be especially challenging in terms of their housing and support needs. These included offenders/ex-offenders subject to MAPPA, Sex offenders, mentally disordered offenders and PPOs. <p>Guidance, interpretation and consistency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the point of view of the practitioners the current strategic framework is overly complex and contains contradictions and tensions which make implementation more difficult. <p>Housing outcomes (<i>inc. comments on Suitability of Accommodation Order 2006</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report finds that accommodation and support that offenders/ex-offenders do access is often not appropriate. It can be the wrong type and in the wrong place. • In particular it is noted that there is a lack of ability for high risk offenders/ex-offenders to move areas.

- There is a general underuse of the private rental sector as an option for high risk offenders/ex-offenders. The report suggests that the not inconsiderable challenges of using the private sector often stand in the way. However there are examples in Wales where using private rental accommodation has been highly effective.

Non-housing support outcomes

- The report identifies key gaps in provision of support for those offenders/ex-offenders with high or complex needs.
- It is proposed that a continuum of provision is needed in relation to levels of surveillance and support including opportunities for people to move from high to lower levels of support.
- Many people leaving prison find themselves on housing waiting lists therefore having to stay in insecure accommodation which can increase re-offending and reduce community safety.

Title	The impact of devolution: housing and homelessness
Author	Steve Wilcox and Suzanne Fitzpatrick with Mark Stephens, Nicholas Pleace, Alison Wallace and David Rhodes
Year	2008
Source	www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/impact-of-devolution-long-term-care-housing.pdf
Summary	The report details the effects of devolution in 1999 on housing and homelessness across the 4 nations. The effects on homelessness in Wales are numerous; prevention and provision efforts are discussed.
Methods	NA
Key messages	<p>Broad perspectives on the impacts of the legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report suggests that an ideal system for homelessness would combine the strengths of homelessness prevention strategies seen in England and Wales with the robust statutory safety net available in Scotland. <p>Homeless prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since devolution Wales has seen official promotion of a prevention/housing options approach. This has seen a large drop in levels of statutory homelessness acceptances. Concerns has been raised about whether these trends represent genuine reduction in levels of homelessness or if they arise at least in part from Local Authorities 'gatekeeping' which may lead to denial of applicants legal rights. Mortgage rescue schemes have now been introduced in Wales (albeit on a small scale) which prevents homelessness by allowing home owners to convert their owner-occupied homes into social housing tenancies. The 'pre-action protocol' has also been introduced which ensures lenders are only granted possession acts as a last resort. <p>Priority need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report suggests that the vigorous roll out of the 'homelessness prevention' approach could be seen as raising the statutory assessment threshold and therefore reducing the safety net. <p>Housing outcomes (<i>inc. comments on Suitability of Accommodation Order 2006</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of social housing lettings taken by statutorily homeless households has risen. Data from England shows that statutorily homeless households are more 'needy' or socially disadvantaged. However there is no data on this for Wales.

Title	An evaluation of homeless prevention projects
Author	Tamsin Stirling
Year	Ongoing
Source	
Summary	The report evaluates the effectiveness and the difference made by 16 short-term homelessness prevention projects, funded by the Welsh Government. A number of suggestions are made in order to support prevention programs.
Methods	<p>Housing + Cymru were asked to evaluate the 16 one year projects as well as provide support and consultation to allow monitoring and evaluation from the outset.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on how best to implement monitoring and evaluation of the projects was gathered via web search and meetings with project coordinators and representatives of the Supporting People and Homelessness Strategy Working Group. • Throughout the projects visits were made to support the evaluation. • The project has been extended to July 2012 to allow some projects additional support. • Questionnaires were issued at the end of the year to evaluate the support and advice they were given by Housing+Cymru.
Key messages	<p>Homelessness prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivising homelessness prevention activity – the current funding framework for Local Authorities can act as a disincentive to investment in homelessness prevention projects. The adoption of an alternative set of performance measures incorporating prevention activity would provide a better view of homelessness performance and help remove the disincentive. • Regional projects and local variation – the provision of funding on a regional (or multiple-authority) basis has produced varying outcomes at a local level. The Welsh Government could consider promoting regional or national initiatives that add to local approaches. • Mainstreaming time limited projects – there should be an explicit Welsh Government expectation that projects are mainstreamed by delivery organisations after funding ends. • Disseminating information – organisations benefitting from Welsh Government funding should be expected to disseminate information about, and learning from projects. <p>Priority need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report recommends that the Welsh Government considers whether the priority need order should focus on offenders who have served a sentence of a specific length. <p>Local connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report suggests that the Welsh Government considers whether it is acceptable to use housing gateways to give priority to people with a local connection

Title	A review of the implementation of the homelessness legislation by Local Authorities in Wales
Author	Tamsin Stirling
Year	2004
Source	www.Wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/research/housing/homelessnesslegislation/?lang=en
Summary	A review of homelessness legislation was carried out from Nov 2002 to May 2003. Over all the changes that had been made to the legislation at the time were broadly welcomed by key stakeholders, there are numerous areas of good practise and effective projects which aim to prevent and tackle homelessness, however they are not available universally across Wales.
Methods	<p>The review was carried out between November 2002 and May 2003.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires were sent to Local Authorities and all were invited to one of 3 enquiry days to discuss implementation of the legislation. • National representative bodies were also invited to comment via meetings, written or telephone. • 150 voluntary sector organisations were also contacted. • A literature review of relevant publications was also carried out. • Statistical data was also analysed by looking at Welsh Housing Statistics and the Local Authority returns. • The review was overseen by a steering group consisting of Assembly Members and representatives of external bodies.
Key messages	<p>Broad perspectives on the impacts of the legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The changes to the legislation on homelessness have been broadly welcomed by all organisations and there are significant areas of good practice as well as innovative and effective projects in place to prevent and tackle homelessness. • However the review shows the good practise is not uniformly available to homeless people across Wales. <p>Homeless prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review suggests that the way in which housing, leaving home, and employment education can be built into the secondary school curriculum and into the work of the youth service should be re-assessed. <p>Priority need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities experience significant problems in seeking suitable temporary accommodation and finding appropriate permanent accommodation and support for 16- and 17- year olds. <p>Guidance, interpretation and consistency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for coherent approaches which put homelessness policies within a wider strategic context. Homelessness is an issue which requires a multi-agency response at both national and local levels. • A number of Local Authorities recognised that the quality and availability of advice they provide is insufficient to inform people of all possible housing options and does not fully meet the legal requirements of Homelessness Act 2002. • The research carried out by Shelter Cymru, First Contact, indicates that a combination of poor reception services and a poor standard of advice provided by some authorities may result in people being denied the chance to access assistance to which they are entitled. • A concern was found with the use by some Local Authorities of their exclusion policies to prevent homeless households being housed permanently within their own stock. • There is evidence that Local Authorities are not following the Code of Guidance in their assessments of people vulnerable due to domestic violence and ex-offenders. • There is a major concern that Local Authorities are setting arbitrary time-limits within

which ex offenders and ex armed services personnel have to apply as homeless.

Housing outcomes (*inc. comments on Suitability of Accommodation Order 2006*)

- Some authorities are unable to discharge their duty to individuals or households because no suitable accommodation is available. Temporary accommodation is in limited supply in some areas and for specific client groups, such as ex-offenders, or people with substance or alcohol addictions.
- There is an increase in the use of Bed and Breakfast; an unsuitable form of accommodation for vulnerable homeless groups.
- Use of out-of borough placements is also rising, with the related problems of people losing contact with local support networks and support services.

Title	The Impact of Intentional Homelessness Decisions on Welsh Households' Lives
Author	Jacqueline Campbell
Year	2011
Source	www.sheltercymru.org.uk/images/pdf/ImpactIntentionalHomelessness.pdf
Summary	This study aimed to examine the impact of being assessed as intentionally homeless on Households in Wales. Regardless of opinion on the necessity of the intentionality test, the overarching view was that being found intentionally homeless has a negative outcome for both individuals and society.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 households found intentionally homeless in Wales were interviewed. • 28 staff from voluntary and statutory organisations in Wales & Scotland were also interviewed.
Key messages	<p>Intentionality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interviews showed that being assessed as intentionally homeless can dramatically reduce the chances of a household securing stable accommodation in both the short and long term. • Stakeholder opinion was split, with some viewing intentionality as a fair and necessary aspect of the legislation that provided an incentive for tenants to behave and a way of managing scarce resources. • Others including some Local Authority housing workers believed intentional homelessness is an unhelpful classification that does not necessarily lead to sustainable housing. • Many of the people interviewed agreed that finding households Intentionally homeless has a financial impact on other services such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social services • The criminal justice system, including probation and police services • Hostels, including emergency accommodation and night shelters • Health services • Voluntary organisations • Many households interviewed had unmet support needs which, paired with a personal crisis, triggered their homelessness and impaired the household's capacity to make rational deliberate choices regarding their housing. <p>Housing outcomes (<i>inc. comments on Suitability of Accommodation Order 2006</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interviews showed that being assessed as intentionally homeless often means households have to access the private rental sector which has issues due to cost. • Intentionally homeless households are also more vulnerable to accepting a poor standard of accommodation. • Intentional homelessness decisions can also create increased pressure on friends and family who have to accommodate the household during a time of crisis. • Repeat homelessness results from a lack of affordable and accessible accommodation for intentionally homeless households there is also a failure to address support needs that interfere with the ability to secure and maintain a tenancy. <p>Non-housing support outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interviews revealed that households assessed as intentionally homeless often report disorientation in their personal relationships and increased social exclusion. Other issues included interference with education, training and employment. • A number of households assessed as intentionally homeless suffer from some degree of depression and anxiety, which is likely to worsen following the intentionally homeless decision. • Substance misuse issues were also likely to increase. • Physical health is likely to deteriorate especially if it leads to periods of street dwelling. • There were also a number of households that have mental health issues that have not been addressed and that are interfering with their ability to maintain tenancies.

Title	This time round: exploring the effectiveness of current interventions in the housing of homeless prisoners released to Wales
Author	Peter Mackie
Year	2008
Source	www.sheltercymru.org.uk/images/pdf/ExPrisonersReport.pdf
Summary	The research investigated the effectiveness of current interventions in the housing of homeless prisoners released to Wales. Broadly speaking the research finds that there has been improvement in housing interventions however there are questions of continuity of Wales wide support. There remains a lack of suitable accommodation for homeless prison leavers.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A qualitative method was adopted. • Interviews were conducted with prison leavers as well as with other key stakeholders. • Six Representative Local Authorities were identified which had relatively high numbers of prison leavers and findings were extrapolated to the whole of Wales. • A representative sample of 27 prison leavers was interviewed. • 27 stakeholders from Local Authorities, Housing Associations and probation/prison areas and were also interviewed and/or completed questionnaires.
Key messages	<p>Homelessness prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The findings of the report suggest that pre-custody probation services should give offenders initial information on housing and support them to maintain or end tenancies where necessary. • Another recommendation suggests accommodation should be found earlier for prisoners. Good practise has been found in a number of areas that have a dedicated Housing Officers for prison leavers and where housing providers visit the prison to discuss housing options with prisoners. <p>Guidance, interpretation and consistency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although support provided by Local Authorities has been perceived positively, a number of prison leavers report having low expectations of the support and services they can access. This is often because of negative experiences in the past. • The report suggests housing interventions are required earlier in the prison sentence and should be consistently available throughout Wales and in England where prisoners are due to be released to Wales. <p>Housing outcomes (<i>inc. comments on Suitability of Accommodation Order 2006</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of prison leavers reported that housing interventions in prison and the community have improved in recent years. However there are questions of continuity across Wales. • Many of the prison leavers reported not often having felt settled in their housing histories. Factors identified that may help prison leavers to feel settled included: i) Suitable location, ii) Long term affordable and decent accommodation, iii) Support maintaining tenancies and support for substance use problems, iv) and support with employment. • The study finds that continuity of support is of utmost importance. • Supported housing for prison leavers appears to have the most successful outcomes in terms of maintaining tenancies and reducing issues of substance use. • Floating support should be available for those living in the private rental sector. <p>Non-housing support outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prison leavers in the study frequently reported the need for support with substance misuse issues. Both they and many of the other stakeholders felt this was closely related to reoffending. • Housing interventions should not be seen as separate from other support needs and consequently the prison service should arrange more mental health and employment support throughout the prison sentence.

Title	Clear intentions: reforming intentional homelessness in Wales
Author	John Pritchard
Year	2007
Source	www.sheltercymru.org.uk/images/pdf/Clear%20Intentions.pdf
Summary	The report argues that intentional homeless decisions do nothing to resolve accommodation and support needs of vulnerable people in Wales. It suggests that intentional homelessness needs to be revised in particular ending intentional homelessness for all under 25s and providing support for all other households in order to deal with underlying needs.
Methods	NA
Key messages	<p>Intentionality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report states that the effects of intentional homelessness are far reaching and condemns people found to be intentionally homeless to transient lives in often insecure or unsuitable accommodation, or with friends or family or even sleeping rough. • It exacerbates social exclusion and poverty. • The report states people are being found intentionally homeless for reasons as diverse as inability to manage personal finances to behavioural issues caused by mental ill-health and in the case of young people as a consequence of often routine family conflict. • The report demonstrates that finding a person intentionally homeless does nothing to deal with the cause of problems affecting the individual and leads to further exclusion of often vulnerable households. • It argues reforming intentional homelessness would enable Local Authorities and their partners to act more flexibly and proactively to assist people. • The proportion of people found intentionally homeless in Wales increased despite numbers of homeless presentations decreasing from the year 2001 to 2006. • Intentional homeless is also said to be economically costly in terms of the cost of repeat episodes of homelessness and repercussions of people remaining in a cycle of poverty and exclusion. • A number of cases are presented where vulnerable person have been found intentionally homeless which has gone on to have very negative outcomes for the individuals and families involved. <p>Guidance, interpretation and consistency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report suggests that often Local Authorities and courts do not in practise define intentional homelessness as a whether someone has made a conscious decision to lose a home but whether something an applicant did or did not do lead to their homelessness whether they intended that to happen or not.

Title	A sustainable option? Home ownership and mortgage possession actions in Wales
Author	John Pritchard
Year	2008
Source	www.sheltercymru.org.uk/images/pdf/Mortgage%20Report%20English.pdf
Summary	Research was undertaken looking into the experiences of people with mortgage arrears who had recently lost their homes, were facing possession action or threat of action. The project primarily explored the reasons behind the trend in actions; looking at when and how households access advice and assistance with the aim of identifying actions that could prevent arrears occurring leading to repossession.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided by a steering group. • Survey of 30 households that had experienced mortgage problems. • A small number of case studies of repossession cases were also assessed.
Key messages	<p>Summary of main findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The major motivations for home ownership are security, long-term investment and providing an inheritance for children. • Households often do not shop around before deciding on a mortgage. • Households are confident at the start about their ability to pay the mortgage. • Some households commit to unaffordable mortgages and experience difficulties at early stages. • Three main problems caused mortgage difficulties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ill-health (leading to loss of income) - Relationship breakdown and family problems - Unemployment or reduced income • There are significant overlaps between these main groups and a combination of factors, including financial over-exposure and the pressure of additional loans. • Insurance cover is inadequate. Many households have some insurance but are often confused as to what is covered and the length of the policy. It is often felt to be costly and complex. • The sample highlights the growth of sub-prime lending, its influence in the market and the level of action associated with this sector. • Households often attempt to deal with financial problems by borrowing further. <p>Homelessness Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice services are not sufficiently well promoted to people with mortgage difficulties. <p>Non-housing support outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The insecurity and threat of losing the home places pressure on households, leading to mental and physical ill-health. Children are also affected by the insecurity of the situation.

Title	Living in Wales - the housing and homelessness experiences of central and east European migrant workers
Author	James Radcliffe and Jacqueline Campbell
Year	2010
Source	www.sheltercymru.org.uk/images/pdf/MigrantWorkersReport.pdf
Summary	The research looks at the housing and homelessness experiences of Central and Eastern European migrant workers in Wales. The research revealed that migrant workers may be liable to facing housing issues and are unable to access or not aware of support available.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A literature and data review was conducted • In-depth interviews were conducted with 93 migrant worker households in three preselected case study areas. • In-depth interviews were also carried out with a small sample of Roma migrant workers in Cardiff. • Key stakeholders in the three areas were also interviewed.
Key messages	<p>Definition of homelessness and threatened with homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study defines homelessness according to the broad definition used by the Welsh Assembly Government “Where a person lacks accommodation or where their tenure is not secure” (WAG, 2005, P.50). • The report itself refers to ‘Rooflessness’ where by a person is rough sleeping, ‘Houselessness’ where by a person or family is sofa surfing or living in a hostel and ‘Threatened with imminent homelessness’ in which a person is given notice to leave accommodation with no alternatives arranged. <p>Migrant Workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The literature and data review suggests that migrant workers may be liable to face housing issues that can lead to homelessness. • 28 of the 93 participants had been ‘homeless’ as defined above at some point during their time in the UK. Most of these households were ‘hidden homeless’. • Homelessness is often linked to unemployment in this group as accommodation is often ‘tied’ to a job. • Many migrant workers were unaware of support they might be able to access. It is suggested that improvements are made in regard to improving information available for migrant workers. • Migrant workers with No Recourse to Public Funds were at particular risk if they found themselves in housing difficulty. • Migrant workers are also at risk of poor housing with overcrowding and disrepair being major issues for a number of the people interviewed.

Title	Report on youth homelessness: everyone's business – no one's responsibility
Author	NAFW Social Justice and Regeneration Committee
Year	2007
Source	www.assemblyWales.org/b02fe7256d342615795f1b775b082d74.pdf
Summary	The Social Justice and Regeneration Committee review the provision of services for young homeless people and the role of Local Authorities in applying relevant legislation to youth homelessness issues. Good practise and areas for change or development are identified.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence was gathered from numerous sources including the voluntary sector and Local Authorities as well as from young homeless people themselves.
Key messages	<p>Homelessness prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organisations involved in the report unanimously felt that prevention of homelessness should be given higher priority. Evidence was gained from relevant stakeholders that supports the idea that early intervention can improve outcomes. Unfortunately the evidence also suggested that early intervention rarely occurs and when it does it is uncoordinated or piecemeal. The report suggests that people should be identified at a young age and action taken to prevent homelessness then. Education and mediation are presented as potential successful methods of preventing youth homelessness <p>Priority need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report suggests that in WLGA and Local Authorities positive changes have been made in terms of tackling youth homelessness. However work still needs to be done. <p>Intentionality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report found various examples of intentionality being used inappropriately across Wales. A number of organisations suggest that intentional homelessness should not be used for young or vulnerable people. A number of suggestions were made about how intentionality should be handled. For example following the system in Scotland where by authorities can help people found intentionally homeless by finding them accommodation for up to 12 months. <p>Guidance, interpretation and consistency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of voluntary sector organisations reported that the level of service provided varies widely and is patchy and inconsistent. <p>Housing outcomes (<i>inc. comments on Suitability of Accommodation Order 2006</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern was expressed about the use of housing options approaches as it may be off putting for young people as they may be concerned about being forced to return home or to accept substandard accommodation Many other witnesses also expressed concern that the private rental sector is often not appropriate for young people. The benefits system doesn't allow young people to receive enough money to pay rent. It can also leave young people unsupported without the skills necessary to live independently and manage financially. Often leading to a cycle of homelessness.

Title	A study of models of accommodation and support for young single homeless people
Author	Caroline Humphreys, Tamsin Stirling, Simon Inkson and Anne Delaney
Year	2007
Source	www.simoninkson.com/services/research
Summary	This briefing sets out the challenges facing the Assembly Government, local government and partner organisations with regard to homelessness. A number of examples of good practise are detailed and recommendations made in particular towards the prevention of homelessness.
Methods	NA
Key messages	<p>Homelessness prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of schemes are identified in the briefing as being successful in preventing homelessness. These include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘Personal Housing plans’ developed by Bridgend County Council and Shelter Cymru. A system which assesses the needs of homeless or poorly housed people and assisting them to find realistic solutions to their issues. - A shift to focus on prevention by Cardiff County Council through the development of a homeless prevention ‘toolkit’. - Family mediation work by Llamau which seeks to resolve family disputes that may lead to young people becoming homeless. - Tenancy Support Schemes in Rhondda –Cynon- Taf that supports vulnerable people at risk of homelessness to manage their own lives and tenancies. - Money advice provided by Torfaen County Borough Council and Torfaen CAB. - And a number of others • The briefing recommends the introduction of housing options and leaving home education become part of the national curriculum in Wales. <p>Guidance, interpretation and consistency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report suggests that although homelessness may appear to be a priority area for the Welsh Government this is not reflected directly in resource allocation. • Effective practise should be shared using mechanisms such as Excellence Wales <p>Housing outcomes (<i>inc. Comments on Suitability of Accommodation Order 2006</i>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The briefing recommends an increase in funding for social housing, temporary accommodation and homelessness prevention. 4. It also recommends that a deadline should be set to eliminate use of B&B accommodation for homeless households.

Title	Multiple Exclusion Homelessness in the UK: Key Patterns and Intersections
Author	Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Sarah Johnsen and Michael White
Year	2011
Source	www.wmrhf.org.uk/assets/SP&S_MEHIntersectionsPaper.pdf
Summary	Preliminary results are presented from a study of 'multiple exclusion homelessness' (MEH) in the UK. The study shows how homelessness is strongly related to other forms of deep social exclusion.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative study • 452 interviews conducted with people who had experienced MEH • MEH was defined as having experienced homelessness as well as experiencing one or more additional domains of deep social exclusion. • People were interviewed in 6 Urban locations across the UK • The sample was taken from users of low threshold services who had experienced at least one form of homelessness.
Key messages	<p>Multiple exclusion homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study found that there was a large overlap of people who had experienced homelessness (98%), institutional care (62%), substance misuse (70%) and street culture activities (67%). This compares to 15% of people interviewed who had experienced homelessness alone. • The study suggests that the results show that homelessness is common amongst people who have experienced any form of deep social exclusion. • The report states that responses to homelessness must be coordinated in order to succeed. • Migrants were shown to be more likely to have slept rough. The report suggests the problems faced by migrants are more structural (related to welfare, labour market and housing systems) where as non-migrants issues were more individual (related to personal vulnerabilities and support needs).

Title	Tackling homelessness and exclusion: Understanding complex lives
Author	Theresa McDonagh
Year	2011
Source	www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/Tackling_homelessness_and_exclusion_understanding_complex_lives.pdf
Summary	The paper examines findings from 4 projects examining the interaction between homelessness and other support needs. People with severe complex needs are shown to be at risk of falling through gaps in service provision particularly men in their 30s.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The results of 4 studies looking at homelessness and other support needs are combined in this report. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homelessness and other low threshold services were randomly sampled in 7 cities across the UK - Questionnaires were completed with all users of these services - Interviews were conducted with a selected sample.
Key messages	<p>Broad perspectives on the impacts of the legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with severe complex needs are at serious risk of falling through the cracks in service provision. There needs to be an integrate approach across housing, health and social care. <p>Priority need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most complex needs were experienced by homeless men aged 20-49 with those in their 30s were most affected. <p>Non-housing support outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a major overlap between more extreme forms of homelessness and other support needs. • Traumatic experiences in childhood are very common amongst most street homeless people. Suicide attempts and self harm are also all too common.

Title	Homelessness in rural Wales
Author	Paul Milbourne, Rachel Hughes, Simon Hartwell
Year	2006
Source	www.Walesruralobservatory.org.uk/reports/english/Rural%20Homelessness%20Report.pdf
Summary	The study aimed to assess the scale and geography of rural homelessness in Wales. It also looks at the provision of services for rural homeless persons in Wales. Rural homelessness is shown to have increased dramatically and awareness of the problem is thought to be low.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical analyses of the Welsh Government Homeless data. • Semi-structured interviews with 6 national organisations with knowledge of homelessness in Wales. • 6 Case studies were also carried out on local homelessness projects
Key messages	<p>Key Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural homelessness has increased in recent years with 36% of all homeless acceptances being from rural authorities. This is an increase of 309% between 1978 and 2005. <p>Priority need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority needs of homeless persons in rural Wales are largely the same as those in Urban and Valley locations. <p>Local connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness in rural areas is often viewed as a non-local problem with it thought to be mainly associated with in-moving groups. However the case study in the research shows homelessness amongst local and non-local persons are roughly equal. <p>Guidance, interpretation and consistency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agencies and authorities involved in the research reported viewed homelessness as a significant issue but most considered that there was only low level recognition of homelessness amongst counsellors, media, residents and homeless people in rural areas.

Title	Youth homelessness in the UK
Author	Deborah Quilgars, Sarah Johnsen and Nicholas Pleace
Year	2008
Source	www.jrf.org.uk/publications/youth-homelessness-uk
Summary	After a period of change in homelessness legislation this study examines whether these changes have been effective in tackling youth homelessness. The study makes particular reference to the effects of the extension of priority need categories and the new focus on prevention.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent review of literature and statistics and 6 case studies. • Consultation with young people and with key national experts.
Key messages	<p>Broad perspectives on the impacts of the legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over all the agencies involved in the study felt that policy was moving in the right direction however young people themselves were less positive highlighting the difficulties they still face in finding appropriate affordable accommodation. <p>Homelessness prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report suggests tensions remain about the role and timing of some interventions, and there was scope for further development of earlier 'pre-crisis' interventions, including parenting programmes • Effective prevention also requires the creation of affordable housing pathways for young people. • There was suggestion from all countries that prevention work be taken even further in particular work with families, such as mediation. <p>Priority need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More young people were accepted as homeless following the extension of the priority need categories. However numbers have fallen in both Wales and England in the last 3 years. <p>Housing outcomes (<i>inc. comments on Suitability of Accommodation Order 2006</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While there is wide availability of floating support agencies young people reported there was still a lack of high quality temporary accommodation. Periods of rough sleeping and stays in B&B were still too common. <p>Non-housing support outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness can compound or instigate existing mental health problems or drug misuse amongst young homeless people. • There is also a strong association between homelessness and withdrawing from education, training or employment.

Title	Beyond the rhetoric of youth homelessness: telling it like it is
Author	Julia Buchanan <i>et al</i>
Year	2010
Source	www.glyndwr.ac.uk/en/Contactus/PressOffice/Pressreleases2011/FiguresfailtorecognisetrueextentofhomelessnessinWrexhamreportfinds/TheFile,20170,en.pdf
Summary	In this study a number of young people from Wrexham who have experienced homelessness alongside other multiple needs were interviewed. The young people viewed support given in temporary accommodation as positive and provision in services used mainly by older homeless people as not appropriate for them.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative research • 20 young homeless people with multiple difficulties were interviewed in Wrexham • Transcripts were analysed using NVivo
Key messages	<p>Priority need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young men aged 18+ are less likely to be given priority need status so are less likely to be allocated housing association or housing authority. This can lead to multiple exclusion from society. The young people felt that this element of the priority need definition should be changed. • Many young people felt intimidated to go to night shelters that were used by more established older homeless persons. <p>Housing outcomes (<i>inc. comments on Suitability of Accommodation Order 2006</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the young people in the study reported they wanted secure permanent accommodation however a number of them reported they had been placed in unsuitable accommodation. • Many of the young people also reported that they felt judged by staff in the homelessness section. <p>Non-housing support outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The young people interviewed in the study reported that once they had become homeless accessing services to meet their complex multiple needs was more difficult. • Almost half the young people in the study had been looked after by the Local Authority. The literature reviewed suggests that care leavers with significant needs require greater integrated intervention, without which they risk increased disadvantage. • Many of the young people had not had the opportunity to develop skills necessary for independent living such as meal planning and budgeting. Support that they had experienced in this area was highly valued. • The young people also value friendships and support they gain from other young people in similar situations to themselves.

Title	Developing effective accommodation services for young people in contact the Youth Justice System in Wales.
Author	Russell Sykes, Llamau
Year	2011
Source	
Summary	The report assessed the views of key stakeholders and young people both with and without experience of the youth justice system. It suggests the provision of mainstream housing related support and increased joint working will increase successful outcomes for young offenders.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review • Engagement stakeholders and semi-structured interviews with 75 16-17 year olds who had experiences of homelessness. • Development work with local stakeholders and service users in four areas.
Key messages	<p>Key findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint working between agencies needs to be improved • Young people's experiences of services also need to be improved in order for them to have successful outcomes. This can be achieved by drawing on good practise in other areas. • An individual approach needs to be adopted, adapting housing and support needs to meet the needs of young offenders with complex needs. • There is an over-reliance on the homelessness sector upon release. <p>Homelessness prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interviews revealed that there was significant room for improvement in the delivery of homeless prevention in the secure estate. • Barriers should be reduced for young offenders in temporary accommodation that prevent them from accessing training and employment. <p>Priority need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The literature review shows that there is considerable evidence suggesting that providing appropriate accommodation for both young and adult offenders can prevent reoffending. • Within the sample of 75 young people interviewed no significant differences were found between the housing related support needs of young people with involvement in the youth justice system and those without such involvement. <p>Housing outcomes (<i>inc. comments on Suitability of Accommodation Order 2006</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority stakeholders considered that housing and support needs for young offenders can best be met in mainstream provision.

Title	The Social Housing Cycle: Lettings and Homelessness 1980-2005
Author	Michael Jones
Year	2006
Source	rehttp://new.Wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/research/housing/socialhousingcycle/?lang=enport
Summary	The paper suggests that there is a cycle of supply and demand for social housing which follows the house price cycle but in an inverted relationship. The number of households judged to be homeless has also tended to rise when house prices rise. There are a number of potential reasons for this including the number of priority need judgements and accessibility of other forms of accommodation.
Methods	NA
Key messages	<p>Priority need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper shows that the number of households accepted as homeless and priority need increased dramatically from 3,695 in 1999 to 10,040 in 2004. • There is shown to be a particularly large increase in the number of households accepted as homeless and priority need due to vulnerability. • There is a shown to be a very large attrition rate from households accepted as homeless in priority need to the number of these persons who are actually rehoused. • The shift towards single people being accepted as homeless and in priority need has increased the proportion of lettings allocated to priority need homeless. <p>Housing outcomes (<i>inc. comments on Suitability of Accommodation Order 2006</i>)</p> <p>A number of explanations for the increase in homelessness judgements are given in the report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It may be that sharp increases in house prices affect the availability and price of accommodation in the private rented sector to which potentially homeless people would otherwise have recourse, as owners are encouraged to sell. • It may be that the declining supply of available lettings encourages a behavioural change on the part of applicants as they seek to maximise their chances of being offered a letting by presenting via the homelessness route rather than the register. • Rapid increases in house prices may have a psychological effect on family and friends, in reducing their willingness or ability to continue to offer accommodation to lodgers whose prospects of moving to their own accommodation in near future are diminishing.

Title	The Housing Histories of People who have experienced homelessness.
Author	The Welsh Assembly Government
Year	2004
Source	http://new.Wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/research/housing/housinghistories/?lang=en
Summary	The housing histories of people who had successfully moved out of a homeless situation were analysed with the aim of identifying factors which led to the successful resolution of homelessness problems. Support was identified as being a major factor in the success of moving on from homelessness.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In depth interviews were conducted with 30 people aged 18 – 65 across Wales. The sample had used homelessness services at some point in their lives but had been living independently for 12 months or more.
Key messages	<p>Homelessness prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High quality advice was identified by the study to be important in the prevention or resolution of homelessness. People who had been in homeless situations or who had been at risk of homelessness reported they would act on advice of people they trusted and that it would be good to be able to get advice from frontline workers such as police, GP and solicitors. Discharge from institutions such as hospital or prison should be accompanied by advice and information about housing and homelessness. <p>Housing outcomes (<i>inc. comments on Suitability of Accommodation Order 2006</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaining appropriate accommodation and creating a 'home' was identified by the participants as being a significant factor in resolving their homelessness. Almost all the interviewees had received support from temporary accommodation and/or tenancy support so this is an important factor in ending homelessness. The condition and location of the accommodation was also important if a person felt they were in an unsafe area they were less likely to want to stay. 50% of the participants had used hostels or refuges and they felt that safety in these places was also a factor. Moving on from temporary accommodation should be accompanied by support. Support was the most significant intervention identified by the participants. The accounts reveal that support must be person centred, flexible and not time limited. Support can also provide links to mainstream life such as community involvement and employment which was seen to be important for successful move on. <p>Non-housing support outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some participants reported support for detoxification and help with substance issues was key in their ability to move out of homelessness.

Appendix 2. Full cluster analysis results for high, medium and low duration cases

		<i>Percent & Days</i>			
		Low duration	Medium duration	High duration	Total
Sex	Male	47	53	46	48
	Female	53	47	54	52
Age group	16 - 17	3	3	1	3
	18 - 24	31	28	23	30
	25 and over	66	68	76	67
Ethnicity	White	96	97	97	96
	Mixed	0	0	1	0
	BME	4	3	1	4
Household type	Couple with dependent child/ren	10	10	13	10
	Single male with dependent child/ren	2	2	4	2
	Single female with dependent child/ren	19	18	23	19
	Other	13	13	5	13
	Single female	20	17	18	19
	Single male	37	39	38	37
Urban/Rural indicator*	Urban	40	48	35	41
	Rural	60	52	65	59
Housed in temporary accommodation*	No	85	75	62	83
	Yes	15	25	38	17
Reason for presentation	Parent or other relatives/friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	24	25	30	24
	Breakdown of relationship with partner (Violent)	8	8	7	8
	Breakdown of relationship with partner (Non-violent)	13	11	11	13
	Violence or harassment	3	2	2	2
	Mortgage or rent arrears	8	10	6	9
	Loss of rented/tied accommodation	21	15	25	21
	Leaving institution or care	9	12	12	10
	Other (incl. emergency)	13	17	7	13
Decision*	Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need	21	39	56	25
	Eligible, homeless and in priority need, but intentionally so	3	3	7	3
	Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	13	15	20	13
	Ineligible households AND households eligible, but not homeless	12	2	2	11
	Homelessness prevention case	49	40	12	47
	Other	1	0	2	1
Mean case time (days)*		45	251	868	98
Mean time spent in temporary accommodation (days)* ^a		49	177	592	111
Total (sum=100)		83	14	3	

* Significant at 1 percent level

a. Where temporary accommodation used

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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 the Welsh Government.